



tbaranowski@houstonjewish.org
(713) 729-7000

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Federation immediately distributes \$1.6 million for urgent flood relief efforts

(September 8, 2016) — The Jewish Federation of Greater Houston Flood Committee met into the late hours of the night Thursday, September 7, to begin allocating money from the Hurricane Harvey Relief Fund to meet immediate needs. The Federation has raised \$8.9 million to date.

“We believe it was important to take swift action. We must provide immediate, necessary resources for our community, which is struggling after Harvey’s crippling devastation,” said Federation Flood Committee Chair Joe Kornfeld.

The \$1.6 million initial grant includes a \$1 million allocation to Jewish Family Service for individuals and families who need financial aid to recover from the storm. It is currently estimated that more than 1,000 of Houston’s Jewish families’ homes flooded and the list is expected to grow.

Additionally, all day school and early childhood education families who flooded; and Jewish communal professionals, clergy, staff, faculty and employees who flooded will be eligible for a one-time, immediate \$1,000 cash grant. Individual schools and community institutions will send a letter to impacted families and individuals about these funds.

Any Jewish community members seeking financial assistance should fill out the JFS Harvey intake form at <http://bit.ly/HarveyIntakeForm>. Questions can be directed to JFS either via phone 713-667-9336 or in person at 4131 S. Braeswood.

The Federation has also earmarked \$10,000 to JFS for Holocaust Survivors Trauma Support to provide counseling for Holocaust Survivors impacted by Harvey.

A total of \$145,000 was also given to rabbis at 29-area congregations for discretionary flood-related distribution. Each congregation received \$5,000.

“Given our goal to facilitate the rebuilding of this community as quickly as possible, we acknowledge that local rabbis have the deepest understanding of immediate needs on the ground and are the leaders who are best suited to put these funds to good use,” said Federation President & CEO Lee Wunsch.

Additionally, the Federation provided \$100,000 to the Houston Hebrew Free Loan Association – to pool with \$50,000 from Houston HFLA; and \$100,000 from the New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Cleveland HFLAs – to create a Harvey Relief Fund of \$250,000 for Houston’s HFLA to distribute for business and personal loans for hurricane-related expenses.

Camp Harvey at Congregation Emanu El, operated by Greene Family camp and the Evelyn Rubenstein Jewish Community Center, was able to continue this past week with a grant from the Federation of up to \$50,000. The camp provided free childcare so Jewish community members could focus on fixing their homes or return to their jobs while schools remain closed. The camp provided activities and three free meals each day.

The Federation also provided \$10,000, which included a donor matching gift, to the Gulf Meadows Church with whom the Federation has a longstanding relationship.

The Federation Flood Committee plans to allocate additional funds in the coming weeks and months to help address near- and long-term needs required for the entire Jewish community to recover.

“The dedicated group of community volunteers on our Flood Committee have worked briskly in the wake of Hurricane Harvey to help our community recover from this overwhelming natural disaster,” said Barbara Bratter, Federation Vice President of Planning & Allocations. “We will continue to provide every available resource to meet this ongoing need.”

Fundraising efforts continue as the impact of Hurricane Harvey on the Houston Jewish community was overwhelming. To donate to the Federation’s Hurricane Harvey Relief Fund visit houstonjewish.org or text CHAIHOUSTON to 91999.

Through the generosity of our donors and working with our network of affiliates and partners, the Jewish Federation of Greater Houston mobilizes a collective response to improve the lives of Jews here at home, in Israel and around the world. We are dedicated to supporting and sustaining our vibrant and caring community, and to ensuring that our shared traditions endure. Focusing on growing and changing needs in our community, we cultivate new and ongoing programs that nurture and strengthen Jewish life.