



Deer Park Independent School District  
*Department of Communications*

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Matt Lucas, *Director of Communications*

*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

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DEER PARK---Having received word from officials that local hotels are full of families that fled Louisiana due to Hurricane Katrina, Deer Park ISD is reaching out to lend support to our neighbors from the east.

"Under federal law, families that are residing in our district---even temporarily---because they evacuated from Louisiana are considered homeless by the government," Assistant Superintendent for Instruction Mike Switzer said. "That means whether they're staying in a hotel, with family members, at a church or shelter, or anyplace else in the district, they can enroll in our schools."

Because they qualify as homeless, these children can also receive a number of services, including free breakfast and lunch, Switzer added. District staff will also work to provide free school supplies, clothes, and other items.

"These people have experienced enough tragedy and hardship over the last several days, and we'd like to do whatever we can to provide a normal routine until they can return to Louisiana," Switzer said. "We want to show them Deer Park's spirit of hospitality and compassion."

Once they are enrolled in DPISD schools, these children also qualify for counseling services. "Children deal with these types of traumas in their own way, and we want people to know that we have counselors and psychological services staff available to meet the emotional needs of these kids," Director of Psychological and Counseling Services Ginger Gates said.

(More)

Hurricane victims  
August 31, 2005  
Add 1

Children displaced by Katrina who are living in the district should contact the nearest district campus to enroll in DPISD. Principals and office staff are prepared for new students, who will receive a warm welcome into the district. District staff also delivered letters and other information to local hotels extending an invitation to displaced families from Louisiana. Children will be enrolled regardless of whether or not they have documentation from previous schools. On an individual basis, DPISD employees are also collecting food and other items to support these families.

For more information, contact the district's instruction office at 832-668-7081.

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