

Society of St. Vincent de Paul, 420 W. Watkins Road, Phoenix AZ 85003

## Media Advisory

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Community Agencies welcome Arizona's new residents with a Holiday Party

Katrina evacuees continue on their journey toward a new life

For many of us, the holidays are the time of year where we welcome people into our lives and encourage them to feel at home. We share our prayers, our meals, our money and our time in the spirit of giving.

It has been more than a year since Hurricane Katrina ravaged the Gulf Coast and of the thousands who arrived in Phoenix last year, there is still of group of evacuees struggling to mend their lives in a place that doesn't yet feel like home.

St Vincent de Paul, Lutheran Social Ministry of the Southwest and Catholic Social Charities would like to welcome our evacuees home with a Holiday Party, Saturday, Dec. 2<sup>nd</sup> from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Mt. of Olives Lutheran Church, 3546 E. Thomas Road in Phoenix. After a year in our desert, the evacuees are no longer visitors, but members of our community and as long as this segment of our community suffers, we will be there to help.

While many community agencies have worked to ensure this holiday season is better than the last, many of Arizona's evacuees still have a long journey ahead. Collaboration between Lutheran Social Ministry of the Southwest, St. Vincent de Paul and Catholic Social Charities has resulted in a long-term recovery program called, Katrina Aid Today. The program is aimed at helping evacuees establish self-sufficiency long after the initial outpouring of community support.

By actively connecting evacuees to their community, Arizona's new residents will meet new friends, find support in the friendship of fellow evacuees and foster relationships with community organizations that will further aid in their recovery and establish our evacuees as permanent residents.

**WHAT:** Holiday Party to Welcome Arizona's New Residents

**WHY:** More than year after the arrival, Katrina evacuees are no longer visitors, but members of our community.

**WHEN:** Saturday, December 2<sup>nd</sup> from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

**WHERE:** Mt. of Olives Lutheran Church, 3546 E. Thomas Road in Phoenix.

**Photo Ops:**

- 11- Noon – children's arts and crafts
- Noon-1:00 – Lunch is Served
- 1-1:30 – awards presentation (five awards for case workers and volunteers who have shown outstanding dedication in aiding our evacuees).

- 2:30 - Surprise Holiday Guest (Santa Claus) will bring toys for the kids.
- Jazz and gospel music performances throughout the afternoon.

-30-

*The Society of St. Vincent de Paul is a non-profit organization, dedicated to serving the poor and providing others with the opportunity to serve. Programs include services for the homeless, medical/dental care for the working poor, five charity dining rooms, thrift stores, a transitional housing shelter and general assistance for individuals in need.*