



**For Immediate Release**

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## **Katrina, Tsunami Lessons Can Drive Haiti Fundraising Giving Institute, Giving USA offer Advice**

Glenview, IL (Jan. 18, 2010) – How much will Americans end up donating to the Haitian earthquake relief efforts? If past disasters like Hurricane Katrina and the Asian tsunami provide guidance for today's efforts, the result is likely to be in the billions.

In 2006, for example, Giving USA Foundation reported that American individuals, corporations and foundations donated \$7.37 billion in 2005 for disaster relief in the aftermaths of the hurricanes that struck the Gulf Coast of the United States, the Asian tsunami and an earthquake in Pakistan. An additional \$1.17 billion was raised for hurricane relief in 2006.

And just as of today, the Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University reported that \$189.9 million has been donated to 43 organizations for relief efforts. This tracks with the five-day fundraising response to the Asian tsunami and the 2005 hurricanes.

Giving USA Foundation and Giving Institute: Leading Consultants to Non-Profits, urge citizens to give wisely yet cautiously. The two organizations, headquartered in Glenview, Ill., have been tracking charitable contributions since 1954, and also provide advice to non-profit organizations around the world. The emotionally draining images being broadcast are riveting and striking, and bolster the natural desire of Americans to respond to need; they donated an estimated \$307.65 billion to charity in 2008.

Facts are hard to come by right now from the island nation of Haiti, and they keep changing hour-by-hour as the world tries to come to grips with the devastation suffered there in the aftermath of the 7.0 earthquake last Tuesday. Americans—generous by nature—are looking for the best ways to aid those who need it most.

Looking to lessons learned in the aftermath of recent disasters, Institute Chair Nancy L. Raybin, speaking on behalf of the Giving Institute member firms, and Foundation Chair Edith H. Falk, speaking for the board of the Foundation, offer advice to both nonprofits working in the trenches of relief efforts and to Americans who want to help.

First, for relief organizations, don't overlook corporate partners. Corporations donated \$1.38 billion in 2005 for disaster relief efforts. While, as always, the bulk of donations

came from individuals (\$5.83 billion in 2005), companies can have a role to play in this most-recent crisis.

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If past is, indeed, prologue, then the bulk of the donations will go to human service organizations providing for basic needs, such as the Red Cross. For smaller organizations that do not have the same high profile as the Red Cross, getting your message out to donors will be difficult, but not impossible. With this crisis, electronic communications such as text messaging, Facebook, twitter and email seem to be driving the appeals process; use these tools to alert potential donors of the work you do, and provide back-up information on your Web site. Make it easy for potential donors to feel comfortable that their contribution is going to be used responsibly.

For individuals looking to do the most good with their dollars, the two groups provide the following advice:

- Check out the charity through groups such as Guidestar, [www.guidestar.org](http://www.guidestar.org), and the Better Business Bureau, [www.bbb.org](http://www.bbb.org), to ensure they are legitimate
- Donate to reputable organizations that are known for their expertise in times of disaster and making sure that money gets to the right places
- Investigate how a charity intends to spend the dollars raised and who will cover the administrative costs. Don't avoid giving to charities that will use some donations for administrative costs; it takes resources to manage and distribute contributions responsibly. But look for nonprofits that direct at least 75 percent of gifts to programs.
- Read the guidelines published by the White House at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/HaitiEarthquake> to find out the best ways to help victims and groups that are helping those affected by the earthquake
- Resist the urge to go to the damaged area to provide help; watch for news of requests for volunteers. At this time, volunteers are being actively discouraged from trying to travel to Haiti
- Those looking to donate time, supplies or funds should contact the Center for International Disaster Information (CIDI) at 703/276-1914, or visit them online at <http://www.cidi.org/incident/haiti-10a/>

“The news coming out daily just reinforces the need for America to help its island neighbor,” said Raybin. “We at the Institute stand ready to advise charities on their best plan of action now during this time of turmoil and tumult and over the next several months.”

Added Falk, “As the source for data on charitable giving, we will be watching closely to see how America responds to this tragedy in the coming weeks and months, and to what degree social media influences giving.

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“Of course, just like with past disasters, once the earthquake news is replaced by other headlines, the need will continue to exist, so we encourage Americans to give thoughtfully and often.”

#### **About Giving USA Foundation™**

Originally formed by the American Association of Fundraising Counsel (now Giving Institute: Leading Consultants to Non-Profits) as the AAFRC Trust for Philanthropy in 1985, Giving USA Foundation has as its mission to provide education and knowledge about charitable giving in the United States. For more than 50 years, the Institute and/or Giving USA Foundation has published the annual report *Giving USA*, which provides data on who gives what to whom in America. For more information on the Foundation and its research, visit [www.givingusa.org](http://www.givingusa.org).

#### **About Giving Institute: Leading Consultants to Non-Profits:**

Giving Institute: Leading Consultants to Non-Profits, an international association of leaders in the philanthropic consulting field, is headquartered in Glenview, Ill. Its 35 member firms have specialties in all areas of non-profit consulting, including fundraising, executive search, capital campaigns, feasibility studies and marketing communications. Its mission is to advance the practice of philanthropy through research, education and best practices. Formerly known as the American Association of Fundraising Counsel, it was founded in 1935 and is know for, among other things, composing the industry’s first code of ethics, a code still used today. For more information, visit [www.givinginstitute.org](http://www.givinginstitute.org).

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