



NATIONAL VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS ACTIVE IN DISASTER

PRESS RELEASE

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Disaster survivors to receive one standard of care Faith-based & relief groups settle on principles

September 15, 2009 -- More than 20 faith-based organizations in the United States for the first time have set minimum standards of care in a 10-point document that defines how to minister emotionally and spiritually to people in times of disaster.

"It is a true realization of their faith when Catholics, Scientologists, Protestants, Evangelicals, Buddhists and Jews can sit down together and define the standards of spiritual care for the benefit of disaster survivors," said Diana Rothe-Smith, executive director of National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster. Forty-nine U.S. organizations make up VOAD.

"Rather than put aside their differing beliefs, they have mutually embraced them, and this extraordinary document is the result," said Rothe-Smith.

Explicitly outlined in the set of standards are protections for survivors, at what is often a vulnerable time. Without adequate care for those who seek it, spiritual, emotional and psychological challenges can last well beyond when homes or businesses are repaired.

The 10 points to the Spiritual Care Points of Consensus are:

- Basic concepts of disaster spiritual care
- Types of disaster spiritual care
- Local community resources
- Disaster emotional care and its relationship to disaster spiritual care
- Disaster spiritual care in response and recovery
- Disaster emotional and spiritual care for the care giver
- Planning, preparedness, training and mitigation as spiritual care components
- Disaster spiritual care in diversity
- Disaster, trauma and vulnerability
- Ethics and Standards of Care

"As significant as the adoption of these points of consensus is the cooperation conversation that took place among these partners to form them," said the Rev. Kevin Massey, a current National VOAD board member. "We did not start with consensus; rather, it was created through respectful conversation."

Working collaboratively, the members of National VOAD are the driving force behind disaster recovery in

the United States. National VOAD facilitates cooperation among every major non-profit and faith-based disaster response organization in the U.S. National VOAD agencies focus on all stages of disaster -- preparedness, relief, response, recovery and mitigation. In 2008, these organizations provided more than \$200 million dollars in direct financial assistance and more than 7 million hours in volunteer labor.

For more information, contact Diana Rothe-Smith at 1-703-778-5088.

To learn more about National VOAD and the work of its member organizations, or to review the Points of Consensus in its entirety, visit www.nvoad.org.