

LAURA MILLER

MAYOR



CITY OF DALLAS

MEDIA ADVISORY

**For Immediate Release:
May 18, 2006**

**Contact: Meranda Carter Cohn
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Mayor Miller to be Updated on Progress of Phase II: Project Exodus

**Mayor to ride along with caseworkers--hired through a
grant from the *Mayor's Disaster Relief Fund*-- on visits to
clients from hurricane**

WHEN: Friday, May 19, 2006 at 10 A.M. (at first location)

WHERE: Client #1: Highland Hills Apt. Client #2: Hidden Creek Apt.
5706 Highland Hills Dr. #231 4407 Hatcher St. #156
Dallas, TX 75241 Dallas, TX 75210

**WHO: Mayor Laura Miller, Project Exodus Project Coordinator
Rocky Vaz, caseworkers**

MORE:

On Friday, Mayor Miller will see first-hand how caseworkers are helping hurricane evacuees living in Dallas to get back on their feet by providing much needed case management services. Rocky Vaz-Project Coordinator of Project Exodus will be taking Mayor Miller for a ride-along on visits to two different clients. The first client they will visit will be receiving an initial assessment, while the second client will be receiving a follow-up visit.*

Over the past few weeks, these caseworkers have been working on a one-on-one basis to determine both the immediate and long-term needs of evacuees currently in Dallas. A thorough triage of every individual, combined with intensive case management is allowing them to create an action plan toward independence for the evacuees.

In late March, after funding hotel expenses for those evacuees not eligible for FEMA extensions, remaining monies from the *Mayor's Disaster Relief Fund* (\$500,000) were allocated to bring on additional case managers to help with the long-term needs of the evacuees in the Project Exodus program.

((MORE))

BACKGROUND:

The *Mayor's Disaster Relief Fund* was established on September 9, 2005 after the city identified a pressing need to move Hurricane Katrina evacuees from temporary housing at the Dallas Convention Center and Reunion Arena into more permanent housing. Mayor Miller, businesses, foundations, and individuals worked together to raise \$2.7 million to help evacuees with immediate needs.

To date the fund has helped 771 families – approximately 2,900 individuals – with rent and utilities for 60 days. It also assisted in furnishing the apartments with household necessities, like furniture, bedding and cookware.

Because of aid from FEMA and the Dallas Housing Authority, there are funds remaining to assist with longer term needs making Phase II of the Project Exodus effort possible.

In March, the *Mayor's Disaster Relief Fund* awarded a \$500,000 grant to the City of Dallas to hire 10 caseworkers. The caseworker positions will last one year and do not require city funding.**

Other agencies that received grants from the *Mayor's Disaster Relief Fund* are Big Brothers Big Sisters of North Texas, Dallas Metrocare Services, Jewish Family Services, North Dallas Shared Ministries, The Stewpot and the Wilkinson Center.

*Both clients have agreed to allow media to observe their meetings with caseworkers. We ask you respect their privacy and the sensitivity of their circumstances.

**For more information, see attached "Project Exodus II Interim Status Report".

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