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Trident United Way Gives \$25,000 toward Hurricane Harvey Relief

NORTH CHARLESTON, S.C. - Trident United Way President & CEO Chris Kerrigan announced on Thursday that the organization will make a \$25,000 gift, comprised of contributions from an anonymous individual donor and funds from TUW's Emergency Reserve Fund, to the United Way Relief Fund of the United Way of Greater Houston. One hundred percent of the contribution will support those affected by the devastation in the Houston area.

Trident United Way is sending funds rather than physical goods in accordance with best practices from the U.S. Trust Bank of America Private Wealth Management, an idea that has been popularized in recent articles by CBS, NPR and a host of other national media outlets.

"One of the things that is hard for people to understand is that it typically takes a week or two after a disaster is over before people can begin to know what they really need, particularly long term," Trident United Way Director of Integrated Community Systems Cathy Easley said.

Easley has coordinated relief efforts for Trident United Way for more than 20 years and notes that while food and clothing are staples that are needed immediately, money to larger organizations that already have workers in the affected area and can coordinate larger shipments is preferable to individuals driving trucks to affected areas or holding their own fundraisers. Storage of donated items that are not planned for and housing individuals who drive to affected areas can be problematic and take attention away from rescue efforts.

Clothing is an example of well-intentioned gifts that can create more work than relief and, as a result, aren't always utilized.

"You never want to donate used clothes in a disaster because there is no place to store them or people to sort them and distribute them," Easley adds.

Easley gives an example of a local distributor who donated a semi-truck full of new shirts separated by sizes after Hurricane Matthew, which made it easy to quickly distribute to affected people. Other stories have reported large piles of donated clothing that need to be sorted and cleaned taking up runways so planes delivering aid couldn't land or eventually needing to be burned because they've sat outside in the elements too long and turned toxic.

South Carolina 2-1-1 has compiled a list of organizations taking donations, which can be found on Trident United Way's website at www.tuw.org/hurricaneharvey along with other helpful information on how to best assist in times of natural disaster.

Trident United Way is a catalyst for measurable community transformation through collective impact on education, financial stability and health. We bring people and organizations together to solve the pressing community issues that no single organization can solve alone.