

Oakland County
Planning & Economic Development Services

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Brownies Collect Stuffed Animals for Hattiesburg Children

(February 17, 2006)

Brownie Girl Scouts from two Lake Orion elementary schools collected eleven bags of stuffed animals for the children of Hattiesburg, Mississippi as part of Main Street Oakland County's project to provide Hurricane Katrina relief and assistance.

Scouts Sarah Radke of Blanche Sims Elementary, and Shantel Robinson and Dana Dorris of Webber Elementary held a one-day stuffed animal collection drive called "Hugs for Hattiesburg." The girls asked students to donate one new or gently used stuffed animal to the collection. The girls provided two large collection boxes per school, and gathered the donations at the end of the school day. The collection was held on Wednesday, February 15. Webber Elementary Principal Sarah Manzo and Blanche Sims Elementary Principal Eric Whitney provided support for the project.

The bags were loaded onto the supply truck bound for Hattiesburg on Friday, February 17. Arrangements are being made for a Hattiesburg Girl Scout troop to accept and distribute the stuffed animals on Sunday, February 26.

"This is a very simple way the children of Lake Orion can let the children of Hattiesburg know that even though Katrina happened almost six months ago, they're in our thoughts every day," said Susan Dorris, mother of one of the Scouts.

Hattiesburg, Mississippi suffered extensive wind damage from Hurricane Katrina. Last month, Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson announced that a team to include members from Main Street Oakland County will assist in Hurricane Katrina clean-up efforts. Around 40 team members will travel by bus to Hattiesburg, leaving Friday, February 24 and returning Sunday, March 5, 2006.

The team from Main Street Oakland County will help repair the old Hattiesburg High School, a structure destined to become the University of Southern Mississippi's Department of Art and Design and Museum of Art. Damage to the building and the amount of clean-up has significantly delayed the rehabilitation project. In addition to assisting a fellow Main Street program, the assistance team will develop hands-on skills in disaster preparation & response training, historic preservation & building rehabilitation training, and leadership and team building skills.

Farmington, Ferndale, Highland, Holly, Keego Harbor, Lake Orion, Ortonville, Oxford, Pontiac, Rochester, Royal Oak and Walled Lake are members of Main Street Oakland County. More than \$334 million has been reinvested in Main Street communities in Oakland County since the program was formed here in 2000.

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