

# Disaster Relief Foundation, donors aiding carriers harmed by hurricanes



## NALC Disaster Relief Foundation

Make a donation by sending a check or money order to NALC:

Disaster Relief Foundation  
100 Indiana Ave. NW  
Washington, DC 20001-2144

### Damage left in the path by Hurricane Helene

Photo by Florida Fish and Wildlife



**M**any letter carriers found themselves and their homes in the path of the pair of hurricanes that hit the Gulf Coast this fall. Almost as soon as the hurricanes had passed, the NALC Disaster Relief Foundation (DRF) followed to give immediate assistance to affected carriers.

Hurricane Helene made landfall as a Category 4 storm at Florida's Big Bend on Sept. 26 and moved north to swamp Georgia, North Carolina and Tennessee, causing widespread flooding in mountainous regions. Hurricane Milton struck two weeks later, hitting Florida's western coast Oct. 9 as a Category 3 storm and traversing the state before going out into the Atlantic Ocean.

The wind, storm surge, rain and flooding from both storms caused damage to the homes or cars of several letter carriers. Fortunately, there were no reports of carriers losing their lives.

NALC created DRF in 2018 after many branches asked for help getting donations or other assistance to their

fellow carriers facing disasters. DRF acts as a central unit to provide carriers in need immediate help.

Led by DRF President Christina Vela Davidson, the foundation quickly identifies carriers who are affected by disasters and disseminates aid as soon as possible. The aid might include emergency grants or supplies such as water, food, clothing and postal uniform items. Working closely with local branch leaders, DRF also helps NALC members whose homes are uninhabitable by offering emergency grants so they may be able to find temporary housing or transportation, as well as helping them apply for additional grant funds once the weather clears and they are able to assess their damage.

The foundation maintains a trained volunteer network to respond quickly to disasters. Grants are provided for property damage sustained to a primary residence, automobile or personal property from causes such as hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, wildfires, earthquakes or severe storms, and are provided only to NALC members.

The foundation relies on donations from NALC members. "Our donors make our work possible," Davidson said. "It's gratifying to know that you can help a fellow letter carrier in need, and that if you need help someday, DRF will be there for you."

### A one-two punch in Florida

Florida's Gulf Coast was soaked by both hurricanes—before the state had time to clean up from Helene, Milton pummeled it again.

Milton made landfall between Tampa and Fort Myers, an area represented by West Coast Florida Branch 1477. Branch President **Joe Henschen** said a number of carriers were displaced

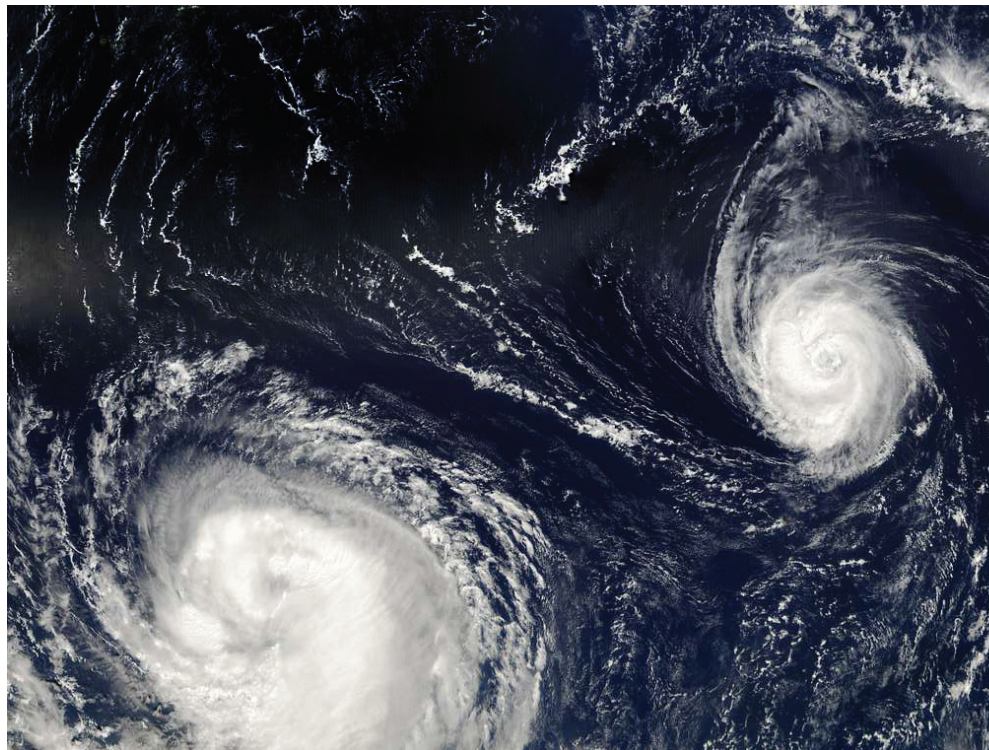
from their homes or lost other property. “I’ve probably verified, I want to say, 27 carrier families that lost a substantial amount of property, personal property, cars,” he said. “I think 12 of them are not in their homes right now. They’re drying it out and then trying to get back.”

“We have carriers at Madeira Beach and St. Pete Beach, Bradenton Beach, you know, and all of those communities were pretty much off-limits. I mean, the carriers that lived out there lost pretty much everything.” Henschen said. “We had a carrier in Punta Gorda who, just as she was getting the flood waters out of her house, then Milton came along and took off part of her roof and things, and then rain got in,” he said. “She’s back to square one.”

Some postal facilities were also damaged, forcing carriers to relocate temporarily. “Right now, Bradenton Beach is working out of an adjacent city in Largo,” he said. “Our carriers at St. Pete Beach are working in another St. Pete office. So they’re having to commute to go out to St. Pete Beach.” Some carriers evacuated before the storm and had trouble getting back home due to gas shortages.

The storm surge from the hurricanes brought so much devastation, he noted, because wet homes in the hot, humid conditions grow mold, and the water can be contaminated. At St. Pete Beach, adjacent to St. Petersburg, “everything you can imagine was in that water, so sewage and everything else,” he said. The sand that was carried inland can’t simply be dumped back on the beach either. “They’ve got some pretty big machines out there just sanitizing the sand in order to put it back on the beach.”

Carriers seeking help from the Disaster Relief Foundation filled out a



simple form, and some received immediate deposits to their bank accounts to help them get back on their feet. “If their home wasn’t habitable,” he said, DRF “immediately deposited money in their accounts to help them get a place to stay. Then they can apply for additional monies.”

“The amazing thing is, honestly, the carriers who are out carrying mail every day, many of them didn’t have as bad of damage, but they may still have blue tarps on their roofs and they’re showing up for work and doing the job, so that’s pretty inspiring.”

### Safe from water but not wind

Retired Branch 1477 member **Robert Brown** stayed in Florida after hanging up his satchel following 36 years of carrying the mail. He rode out Hurricane Milton at his home in St. Petersburg, which was made of sturdy cinder block and was not in an evacuation zone. But Milton found a way to damage his house.

“I’m not in a flood zone. I’m on higher ground in St. Pete. I’m not waterfront. So I didn’t have to worry about storm surge,” he said. “The only worry was the 100-year-old oak tree in my back yard.”

Milton’s eyewall, where the highest winds were blowing, went over

his home. The area experienced wind gusts of more than 100 miles per hour.

“Down came the tree,” he said. “I was home when it happened. It’s like, ‘Oh, crap.’ And then you hear a board breaking, plywood breaking, board splitting, cracking. Then it starts moving, cracking more as the wind shifts, it falls a little deeper,” he said. “Oh, crap.”

“Then the rain was coming in,” Brown said. “The wind is still blowing. The trees are falling deeper. The water is coming into the kitchen. I’m throwing a few towels down. That isn’t something that just keeps coming and coming. Between the wind and the rain and everything is pitch black, you can’t see anything because the power was already out. So it wasn’t until the next morning that I went out the front door and looked and went, ‘Holy crap, the whole tree came down.’ I was hoping it was just a branch.”

Brown had to wait three days to find a tree company with a crane to remove the tree. The tree company charged him \$25,000.

As soon as he contacted DRF, it provided him with cash to help.

“Boom, they put in a \$1,000 [deposit directly to his bank account] right away, which is, wow, fantastic,” he said. DRF later committed to providing more funds, he added, “which is great,

## Hurricanes, DRF donors (continued)



Joseph Constandy shows where his house was knocked off its foundation.

because that will cover the deductible from the home insurance.”

Until the roof is fixed, Brown is living in the home with a tarp over it.

### Disaster far from shore

Hurricane Helene brought damage far inland by dumping rainwater in mountainous areas, causing flash floods. Asheville, NC, was hit hard, and Asheville Branch 248 member **Joseph Constandy**, a 10-year carrier, was one of the carriers affected when his home in Black Mountain, east of Asheville, was knocked off its foundation.

“My house sits near a creek,” he said, “and the creek came higher than it’s ever been. It flooded me out. Then

it took my back yard, took the foundation with it. Now my house is hanging over the creek.” Downstream, many homes were washed away completely, so he considers himself lucky.

Constandy tried to evacuate, but couldn’t because bridges on either side of the road were washed out. He was able to seek shelter at a neighbor’s house and is living there until his home is repaired. The bridges and roads were repaired a few days later so he could leave the area, but when power and cell service were down, he had to climb a mountain to get a signal on his phone to reach the outside world.

Constandy said his house can be saved by putting it back on the foundation, but that’s obviously not easy. He’s hoping to get a contractor to get it done before another flood.

DRF sent him a simple application for help by email and sent him an initial grant immediately, with more relief pending. “They said that they heard about some of us carriers out here were hit pretty hard,” he said. “They said, ‘Definitely with all your damages, we’ll help you out, and just get in the paperwork and all that.’”

### How to help

As 2024 comes to a close, letter carriers should consider donating to DRF, NALC President Brian L. Renfroe said.

“The foundation helps letter carriers in need every year,” he said, “but to continue to help them, we need support from our members.”

The foundation provides aid in the form of supplies or grants, and it maintains a trained volunteer network to respond quickly to disasters. Grants are provided for property damage sustained to a primary residence, automobile or personal property from

causes such as hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, wildfires, earthquakes or severe storms, and are provided only to NALC members.

Members do not have to wait for emergency relief or insurance claims to be settled to apply. Applications must be received within 120 days from the date of the natural disaster, unless the applicant can provide sufficient reasons for a delay. The application for a relief grant is on the foundation’s website, [nalc.org/disaster](http://nalc.org/disaster).

Every penny of donations to DRF go directly to individual carriers or branches needing assistance—no administrative costs are deducted.

“Your donations help our members who receive assistance to get back on their feet quickly,” Davidson said. “Those carriers, and the DRF, are eternally grateful for your continuing support. Remember you never know when it may be you who needs the help,” Davidson said. “Giving a little or a lot helps make a difference; thanks again from the bottom of my heart, sisters and brothers. Today and every day, I am here for you.”

Donations can be sent to: NALC Disaster Relief Foundation, 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001-2144; or made by credit card at [nalc.org/ndrf-donate](http://nalc.org/ndrf-donate). The foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization; contributions to DRF may be tax-deductible. It is recommended that you consult your tax advisor.

On the following pages are this year’s donors to DRF. Please donate now to be recognized in the December 2025 issue.

“I hope every carrier will find it in their heart to donate to the Disaster Relief Foundation now so that it can be ready when the next disaster strikes,” President Renfroe said. **PR**

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Gail Schwartz, Br. 509, York, PA  
James Shingler, Br. 542, Norristown, PA  
Gerard Gallagher, Br. 725, Southeast PA Mgd.  
William Marsh, Br. 725, Southeast PA Mgd.  
Jack Dale, Br. 920, Bux-Mont, PA  
Virginia Bux, Br. 2572, Morrisville, PA  
Jordan Costa, Br. 2572, Morrisville, PA  
Erica T. Guthrie, Br. 2572, Morrisville, PA  
Anthony Pileggi, Br. 2771, Willow Grove, PA  
Glenn Clinger, Br. 4317, Great Valley Mgd., PA  
Patrick Kelly, Br. 4973, Levittown, PA  
Joel Martinez, Br. 826, Ponce, PR  
Roberto Santini-Sierra, Br. 826, Ponce, PR  
Julio Acosta, Br. 869, San Juan, PR  
Terance McAvoy, Br. 15, Providence, RI

Stephen Simmons, Br. 57, Newport, RI  
Joseph Baker III, Br. 233, Columbia, SC  
Cindy Kennedy, Br. 439, Greenville, SC  
Jose Maldonado, Br. 439, Greenville, SC  
Levi Leverette, Br. 1871, Anderson, SC  
Thomas Givens, Br. 3902, Charleston, SC  
Jackie Oree, Br. 3902, Charleston, SC  
Joni Evans, Br. 4645, Myrtle Beach, SC  
Katherine Seaver, Br. 4645, Myrtle Beach, SC  
Rocelyn Head, Br. 4, Nashville, TN  
Steve Lassan, Br. 4, Nashville, TN  
Shawn Boyd, Br. 132, Dallas, TX  
Carolyn Wiley, Br. 132, Dallas, TX  
Leslie Doss, Br. 181, Austin, TX  
Kenneth Richter, Br. 181, Austin, TX  
Marilyn Smith, Br. 181, Austin, TX  
Reynaldo Trevino, Br. 181, Austin, TX  
Philip & Louise Jordan, Br. 421, San Antonio, TX  
James Ruetze, Br. 421, San Antonio, TX  
Kathleen M. Stygar, Br. 421, San Antonio, TX  
DeMarcus Dial, Br. 493, Tyler, TX  
Steven Wages, Br. 505, El Paso, TX  
Sanjera Johnson, Br. 569, Texarkana, TX  
Frank Ellender, Br. 842, Beaumont, TX  
Gary Mullins, Br. 1227, Wichita Falls, TX  
Larry Snyder, Br. 1227, Wichita Falls, TX  
Bryant Anderson, Br. 111, Salt Lake City, UT  
Cynthia Connors, Br. 513, Staunton, VA  
Scott Via, Br. 518, Charlottesville, VA  
David Sutton, Br. 524, Roanoke, VA  
Emily Thorley, Br. 694, Winchester, VA  
Louie Richard, Br. 3520, Northern VA  
Alan Williams, Br. 3520, Northern VA  
Mary Bartley, Br. 79, Seattle, WA  
Susan Mulholland, Br. 79, Seattle, WA  
Debra Dixon, Br. 351, Olympia, WA  
Robert James, Br. 791, Snohomish Co., WA  
Dee Ann Johnstone, Br. 791, Snohomish Co., WA  
James Frankford IV, Br. 1104, Vancouver, WA  
Ted Doan, Br. 2038, Kent, WA  
Robert Cain, Br. 66, Wheeling, WV  
Paul Riggs, Br. 359, Huntington, WV  
Rob Lloyd, Br. 531, Charleston, WV  
Robert Spurlock, Br. 531, Charleston, WV  
Robert Cowan, Br. 2, Milwaukee, WI  
Wayne Schiel, Br. 2, Milwaukee, WI  
Joshua Pietrzak, Br. 173, Oshkosh, WI  
Molly Jackson, Br. 507, Madison, WI  
Dennis Brillowski, Br. 381, Stevens Point, WI  
Ronald Bergstrom, Br. 619, Green Bay, WI  
Michael Roulette, Br. 619, Green Bay, WI  
Roger Detert, Br. 778, Merrill, WI  
Michael D. Morrin, Br. 5923, Riverton, WY

## Branches, state associations, regions and others

Branch 3, Buffalo-Western NY  
Branch 4, Nashville, TN  
Branch 17, Scranton, PA  
Branch 18, Southeast MA Mgd.  
Branch 27, Memphis, TN  
Branch 38, NJ Mgd.  
Branch 39, Indianapolis, IN  
Branch 40, Cleveland, OH  
Branch 45, Springfield, OH  
Branch 51, Fall River, MA  
Branch 52, Central CA Coast  
Branch 67, Elizabeth, NJ  
Branch 79, Seattle, WA  
Branch 86, Hartford, CT  
Branch 100, Toledo, OH  
Branch 115, Wilkes-Barre, PA  
Branch 116, Fort Wayne, IN  
Branch 155, Belleville, IL  
Branch 176, Baltimore, MD  
Branch 181, Austin, TX  
Branch 198, Crawfordsville, IN  
Branch 217, Jackson, MI  
Branch 219, Aurora, IL  
Branch 223, Freeport, IL  
Branch 226, Fort Worth, TX  
Branch 246, Southwestern MI  
Branch 262, Battle Creek, MI  
Branch 264, Erie, PA  
Branch 313, Brunswick, GA  
Branch 321, Pensacola, FL  
Branch 419, Knoxville, TN  
Branch 426, Hamilton, OH  
Branch 458, Oklahoma City, OK

Branch 459, Raleigh, NC  
Branch 461, Winston-Salem, NC  
Branch 462, Huntsville, AL  
Branch 466, Lafayette, IN  
Branch 469, Mobile, AL  
Branch 489, Anderson, IN  
Branch 505, El Paso, TX  
Branch 530, Birmingham, AL  
Branch 540, Camden, NJ Mgd.  
Branch 545, Charlotte, NC  
Branch 546, Columbus, GA  
Branch 547, Elkhart, IN  
Branch 576, Phoenix, AZ  
Branch 578, Savannah, GA  
Branch 579, Adrian, MI  
Branch 599, Tampa, FL  
Branch 608, Oak Park, IL  
Branch 645, Fort Dodge, IA  
Branch 763, Columbia, MO  
Branch 780, New Bern, NC  
Branch 818, Key West, FL  
Branch 876, Goldsboro, NC  
Branch 888, Carmel, IN  
Branch 1071, South FL  
Branch 1080, Greenwood, MS  
Branch 1091, Central FL  
Branch 1096, Tuscaloosa, AL  
Branch 1119, Marietta, GA  
Branch 1127, Elizabeth City, NC  
Branch 1197, Southern IL Mgd.  
Branch 1227, Wichita Falls, TX  
Branch 1250, Hickory, NC  
Branch 1358, Tulsa, OK  
Branch 1477, W. Coast, FL  
Branch 1753, Bradenton, FL  
Branch 1779, Lakeland, FL  
Branch 1870, Downers Grove, IL  
Branch 1902, AZ Mgd.  
Branch 2008, Clearwater, FL  
Branch 2086, Burbank, CA  
Branch 2262, Burlington, NC  
Branch 2291, Starkville, MS  
Branch 2421, Greenwood, IN  
Branch 2464, Houma-Thibodaux-Lockport, LA  
Branch 2525, Escondido, CA  
Branch 2591, Deland, FL  
Branch 2613, Chapel Hill, NC  
Branch 2689, Spacecoast FL  
Branch 3126, Royal Oak, MI  
Branch 3964, Odessa, TX  
Branch 4266, Kensington, MD  
Branch 4645, Myrtle Beach, SC  
Branch 4723, Lake Jackson, TX  
Branch 4862, Roswell, GA  
Branch 5480, Venice, FL  
Branch 6156, Sun City, AZ  
NALC Region 5  
NALC Region 6  
NALC Region 8  
NALC Region 9  
NALC Region 10  
NALC Region 11  
NALC Region 12  
NALC Region 13  
NALC Region 14  
NALC Region 15  
NALC Region 16  
Alabama State Association  
California State Association  
Colorado State Association  
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