

## Outpouring of Local Charity Shown For Katrina Victims

By **DEBORAH MADISON**  
*Specially Written for The Westfield Leader*

AREA — After surviving one of the most horrendous disasters in United States history, the victims of Hurricane Katrina's wrath must now rely on the kindness of strangers to

rebuild their lives. Most local churches, corporations and many retail stores are also sponsoring collections to send to various relief organizations.

Among the many local churches and synagogues that are contributing to the relief effort, Evangel Church of Scotch Plains, in coordination with Convoy of Hope, a Missouri-based relief organization, has rented a truck to fill with supplies to bring down to the affected region. Church members loaded up the truck Tuesday after-

noon with food and supplies, household items and toiletries, as well as a palette of water donated by Shop-Rite of Clark, and left for the Gulf Coast region.

A second, larger truck will also be going down next Tuesday with additional supplies. The truck will be driven down by a church member John DiGiorgio of Rahway to the Slidell, Miss. area where Convoy of Hope will set up relief tents.

Pastor Kenneth Brennan told *The Leader* that the church took up a special donation on Sunday of \$75,000, which they will match two to one, totaling \$225,000. Ninety-percent of that money will be donated to Convoy of Hope, with the other 10 percent being used for truck-supplies.

Evangel also plans on partnering with a church in the affected area, eventually sending down teams of construction crews to help them rebuild. Pastor Brennan said that Louisiana was one of the first states to send assistance to New York during the 9-11 disaster, and that the Bible admonishes those who help those in need.

The Scotch Plains Library is donating all of their fines for the week to the relief effort, reported Library Director Meg Kolaya. The Fanwood Library Director Dan Weiss said the borough's library would also be donating fines.

Ms. Kolaya also recommended that people check out the legitimacy of a charity before donating. The Scotch Plains Library has a list of legitimate charity organizations and patrons can call the library for this information.

Stanley Stone, Executive Vice President of the Jewish Federation of Scotch Plains, said that his organization

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**ACTS OF KINDNESS...**Last Sunday afternoon, nine-year-old Michaela Winberg and her two friends baked brownies and sold them in front of her father's store on Quimby Street in Westfield. The girls raised \$200 to help victims of Katrina. The fourth grade Westfield girls donated the money to the Red Cross on Elm Street. Pictured above, from left to right, are: Jenna Helfand, Rebecca Kiefer, and Michaela.

Maureen Kaufman, interim Executive Director of the local chapter, told *The Westfield Leader* that they have been instructed to collect and send monetary donations only at this time. She said that she expects that other items will be collected and shipped at later dates.



**NEW JERSEY RESPONDS...**Captain Michael Brennan of the Westfield Fire Department leaves for parts unknown in the Gulf states Saturday with 38 pounds of survival gear. He and his teammate, firefighter Tom Ryan (not shown) must be prepared to live in the wild, volunteering for a minimum of 30 days to perform their rescue duties under Federal Emergency Management Agency command. Westfield Mayor Andy Skibitsky looks on as part of the contingent to see them off.

## New Jersey Emergency Volunteer Professionals Leave to Gulf States

By **HORACE CORBIN**  
*Specially Written for The Westfield Leader*

WESTFIELD — One thousand, two-man firefighter teams from across the nation went to the Gulf Coast states over the weekend to help in Hurricane Katrina disaster relief.

New Jersey and Union County towns including Westfield, Cranford, Hillside, Union, Springfield, Plainfield, Linden and Elizabeth have volunteer professional teams that departed Saturday to parts unknown in the Gulf states. This mobilization has been underway since Thursday, and the personnel

become part of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) rescue efforts.

The firefighter teams carry with them survival gear for living in the wild while performing their rescue work: military rations, water filters and such equipment. The men have volunteered for a minimum 30-day period.

Union County has coordinated six firefighters for the federal decontamination deployment. Five volunteers are from Elizabeth and one is from Union. New Jersey emergency medical response teams consisting of state employed physicians, nurses, respi-

ratory therapists and crisis counselors are also being deployed to regular and field hospitals in Baton Rouge, La.

It is expected that other personnel will be dispatched on a longer-term basis as the Gulf region transitions in this unprecedented disaster.

Officials report that the unconditional commitments to this disaster are also mindful of the regular service obligations of these forces in their home communities.

Fire Chief Dan Kelly recommended the Westfield team that includes Captain Michael Brennan and firefighter Tom Ryan. Firefighters Brennan and Ryan flew from New Jersey Saturday afternoon. Chief Kelly told *The Westfield Leader* that the men are chosen based on many criteria including training, experience, aptitude and the capacity of their families (if married) to carry on with minimum hardship during their absence.

Engineering, crafts and construction companies in the area are also readying volunteers to depart to the Gulf Coast states.

## Town Considering Change In Websites

By **MICHAEL POLLACK**  
*Specially Written for The Westfield Leader*

WESTFIELD — The town council, at its Tuesday conference meeting, discussed Westfield firefighters volunteering in the Gulf Coast states, town-wide measures to support victims of the Katrina disaster, a proposed World War II memorial and a new town website.

Following these discussions, which were open to the public, the council went into private session to review personnel matters including the retirement and replacement of Police Chief Bernard Tracy, plus the disciplinary hearing involving suspended police detective Sandra Chambers, as well as the new contract with

Firemen's Mutual Benevolent Association No. 30.

First Ward Councilman Peter Echausse said the town is looking at other domain names for the town's homepage, including thetownofwestfield.com and thetownofwestfield.gov. The cost to

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## Town Couple of Son With SCAD Advocates Screening of Newborns

By **CHRISTIE STORMS**  
*Specially Written for The Westfield Leader*

WESTFIELD — When Westfield residents Lauren and Michael Hammer first welcomed their son, Evan, into the world last year, he appeared to be completely healthy. He had his blood drawn, as is required for all newborns under the state mandated newborn screening, which checks for at least 20 known disorders, according to the New Jersey Department of Health website.

Because the Hammers had friends whose children had a rare metabolic disorder, they decided to pay an additional \$70 to have a more comprehensive screening that reportedly tests for approximately 30 additional disorders done simultaneously.

Six days later, they were shocked to learn Evan had tested positive for Short Chain Acyl-CoA Dehydrogenase Deficiency.

The Hammers had never heard of SCAD, a fatty acid oxidation disorder. According to the New Jersey Department of Health, children with this deficiency have trouble using fat for energy. This is because a special enzyme, which converts fat to energy, may either be missing or not working properly. If someone with the disorder fasts or goes without eating for too long, medical crises can occur, including vomiting, low blood sugar or even more serious

problems such as coma.

The state sent the Hammers to a specialist in Bergen County, who simply told them to feed Evan every 12 hours and he would be fine.

"She really minimized the disorder," Mrs. Hammer said. "But, if you go online and read stories about other kids with it, some of them have died or ended up retarded."

This led the family to pursue second opinions from metabolic genetic specialists Dr. Joan Pellegrino of St. Peter's Hospital in New Brunswick and Dr. Mark Korson of New England Medical Center in Boston.

"Dr. Korson really broke down what Evan had into laymen's terms we could understand," Mr. Hammer said.

The Hammers reported that both doctors took the disorder very seriously and put Evan on a strict regimen of eating every four hours around the clock.

This was reportedly no simple task for the busy Hammer family, which also includes a three-year-old daughter, Alexis. Mr. Hammer works long hours in ad sales for CNN in New York City, while Mrs. Hammer practices clinical social work in Summit and Westfield.

"The first year was tough. We were exhausted. We used to literally write down the time and how much he ate to the half ounce every four hours," Mrs. Hammer said.

"Every parent is usually trying to make their newborn sleep through the night," Mr. Hammer added. "So if we didn't know that he had this, we would have, too. And we'd be high-fiving each other not knowing that we could possibly be killing him."

In addition to SCAD, Evan also suffered from several unrelated ear infections and Pyloric Stenosis, which causes projectile vomiting.

"Of all the kids to have a problem keeping food inside him, did it have to be one who has to monitor every ounce of intake?" Mrs. Hammer said.

Evan had to have surgery at seven weeks old to correct the Pyloric Stenosis, and then another surgery at 16 months old to place tubes in his ears. He had to be admitted to the hospital the night before each surgery to take the extra precaution of stabilizing his glucose for several hours intravenously.

The Hammers later learned that Mr. Hammer unknowingly has an asymptomatic version of SCAD, while Mrs. Hammer is only a carrier. After DNA testing, they found that Evan's gene mutation was different than his father's. Therefore, they would never know for sure whether he might also be asymptomatic, but felt they could never take that chance.

Evan is now 18 months old and becoming capable of going without eating for longer intervals. Dr. Korson, who now has him on a schedule where he eats every four hours during the day and is permitted to sleep eight to 10 hours at night, monitors his progress. The American Medical Association's Heart-Healthy Diet is also recommended.

However, according to Mrs. Hammer, whenever Evan gets sick, he must go back to the every-four-hour feeding regimen.

"When he has a fever, his body is breaking everything down faster, and he is at greater risk," Mrs. Hammer reported. "It could just be a cold, but if we can't get him to eat, he would have to go to the hospital just for the IV sugar drip."

When Evan eventually goes to school, he will wear a medical alert bracelet, and the Hammers always keep SCAD protocol literature handy in the car and everywhere they travel in case of an emergency.

Although having a child with SCAD hasn't been easy, the Hammers consider themselves lucky be-

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**ADVOCATING SCREENINGS...**Michael and Lauren Hammer of Westfield are shown here with their 18-month-old-son, Evan, who was diagnosed with Short Chain Acyl-CoA Dehydrogenase Deficiency, a rare metabolic disorder detected early by a newborn blood screening, and three-year-old daughter, Alexis.

## Westfield Mayor Reminder: Leaf Collection Policy

There have been some questions recently about the fall leaf collection policy. In line with my initiative of more open communication, the following information should provide answers to these questions.

Leaves will be picked up at the curbside without mandatory bagging. However, if you choose to bag your leaves for "on call" pick up you may contact the Department of Public Works for free bags at 789-4100 ext. 600. Within 24 hours, bagged leaves will be picked up. Due to town efforts, curbside pick up without mandatory bagging will continue as an option.

The Department of Public Works employees will be collecting leaves on an "as needed" basis. We intend to pick up leaves more often so that our streets are safer for pedestrians. Please note that no leaves are permitted at the curbside before October 15.

I hope this information clears up any confusion about our town's leaf collection policy. Please look for the Leaf Collection brochure, which you should receive soon.

If you have any questions, or would like to discuss this or any other matter, please remember that I have Saturday morning office hours. You may contact my assistant Joan at (908) 789-4041 to schedule an appointment.  
 Mayor Andy Skibitsky

## Police Chief Submits Letter of Retirement

By **PAUL J. PEYTON**  
*Specially Written for The Westfield Leader*

WESTFIELD — Police Chief Bernard Tracy officially retired Tuesday night after five years in the post. Captain John Parizeau will serve as acting chief until a permanent chief is hired. Chief Tracy, with the department since 1974, submitted his letter of retirement Tuesday to the mayor and council.

As first reported by *The Westfield Leader*, Chief Tracy has accepted a position as a school security officer for the Linden Public Schools, at a salary of \$45,000. The Linden Board of Education approved the appointment at its August 17 meeting.

The governing body met with the chief in private session Tuesday night. Town Administrator Jim Gildea said he discussed his recommendation on how to proceed with the search for a new chief. The mayor and council are expected to vote on a resolution at the council's Tuesday, September 13 meeting to formalize the appointment of Acting Chief Parizeau. The appointment will be retroactive to September 7.

Mayor Skibitsky said Mr. Gildea and council members talked "about the situation, the process and how to move forward." He said the objective now is to replace Chief Tracy "with the best candidate possible."

The mayor said Mr. Gildea Tuesday night unveiled a "very thorough process" which will also be "open, fair and pragmatic" on finding a new police chief. "I'm thinking it's going to take two to three months to fill this position," Mayor Skibitsky told *The Leader* yesterday morning.

The mayor said Captain Parizeau

was chosen in part due to the fact he has opted not to be a candidate for chief, "which makes him the perfect candidate for acting chief," since he will be impartial in his new role.

The mayor said Chief Tracy did not provide a recommendation for his successor Tuesday night.

"It was really just for him to formally announce his retirement," said Mayor Skibitsky. The outgoing chief also reviewed some of his accomplishments with the department and thanked the town and the mayor and council for allowing him to serve the town as chief.

Chief Tracy will be on the payroll until January 31, 2006 due to the 100 days of terminal leave he has been awarded as a non-union employee with 30 years of service to the town.



**Chief John Parizeau**

New Acting Westfield Police Chief John Parizeau graduated from the College of New Jersey and was appointed to the department on March 29, 1981. He was promoted to Captain on February 1, 2005. He was the department's informational technology and media officer.

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