

OperationOC Successes

Hurricane Katrina 2005 — Activation Level #3

OperationOC is a trademark of the Orange County Rescue Mission. The identity was created as a portal to rescue the least, the last, and the lost during and post disaster.

The OperationOC story begins in late 2005 Atlantic hurricane season. With a record-breaking 28 named tropical storms including 15 hurricanes, three names stand out among them...Katrina, Rita and Wilma.

More than 1,000 hurricane evacuees came to the Orange County area after their homes and livelihoods were destroyed, many because of extended family in the area. It was with this in mind that the Orange County Rescue Mission established OperationOC, a collaborative private/public response to the devastation racked upon our Gulf Coast neighbors now coming into our community to rebuild their lives.

Countless victims were left displaced, unemployed, homeless, hungry, destitute and worst of all, hopeless. The first challenge for OperationOC was to anticipate the needs and services required to address the complex issues related to disaster recovery. Their immediate needs upon arrival in Orange County were of the most basic level; emergency assistance with such survival necessities as food, clothing, and shelter. As time progressed, needs emerged for self-sufficiency focused services to help families and individuals rebuild their lives, such as housing deposit assistance, educational training and childcare.

Once they came to OperationOC, evacuees would have their immediate and long-term needs assessed and, based on this assessment would continue to receive services through the Drop-In Center, Kingston Graduated Rental Assistance Program or Strong Beginnings Case Management Model.

A drop-in resource center was established at Orange County Rescue Mission's Village of Hope in the City of Tustin. Here, evacuees could find representatives from various community agencies to assist them based on their individual or familial situation. This one-stop center also included a clothing room where evacuees could "shop" for new and used clothing items, as well as a food truck that supplied much needed pantry items.

Drop-in Center Goals:

1. To establish a center with key service providers for Gulf Coast evacuees where vital information can be accessed under one roof.
2. To provide increased access to Orange County's Continuum of Care by addressing evacuee needs such as shelter, food, clothing, education, healthcare, etc.
3. To streamline the coordination of resources for Gulf Coast evacuees that would serve to eliminate barriers to self-sufficiency, and assist families to integrate into the Orange County community.
4. To promote and evaluate a three-tiered, public/private partnership service model for disaster relief in Orange County.