Bridging Community Together
The Sisters of Charity Foundation of South Carolina’s Phase I Flood Relief Report
A Message from Foundation President, Tom Keith

After the disastrous flood in October 2015, the Sisters of Charity Foundation of South Carolina felt that it was important to respond to the needs of the community quickly and strategically. The Foundation began its Phase I response by assessing where the gaps were and partnering with other nonprofits to reach the rural communities that were affected.

The idea of convening and collaborating with other organizations was key to our approach. Throughout the months that followed we encouraged collaboration among funders, grantees and other organizations who wanted to address the needs of those impacted by the flood. Through our collaboration with organizations like the J. Marion Sims Foundation of Lancaster and the Sisters of Charity Foundation of Canton, we were able to give over $100,000 to communities across S.C. through 24 organizations that were helping flood victims and their families.

This report gives our community partners a deeper look at how our funds impacted families affected by the flood. The Foundation will soon begin Phase II, which focuses on more long-term issues like housing, agriculture, and supporting community rebuilding efforts.

Thank you to every person and organization that played a role flood relief across South Carolina. It was truly a team effort.

Two are better off than one, because together they can work more effectively. If one of them falls down, the other can help him up.
— Ecclesiastes 4:9
In the days after the 2015 flood, funders from across the Midlands convened at the Sisters of Charity Foundation of South Carolina. With collaboration in mind, these funders began a discussion about short-term and long-term support for South Carolinians who were devastated by the effects of Hurricane Joaquin.

Representatives from United Way of the Midlands, Colonial Life, United Way of South Carolina, Central Carolina Community Foundation, Michael Mungo Foundation, Palmetto Health Foundation and Sisters of Charity Foundation of South Carolina were in attendance.

Funders discussed the initial relief efforts of each organization. They also talked about helping victims understand and access services through communication and information sharing.

A key point of discussion at the meeting was not only about offering immediate aid to victims, but also finding ways to help them over the long-run. Topics included affordable housing, support for the elderly, transportation, health access and areas that continue to be underserved.

Discussion also focused on the importance of reaching rural areas across S.C, learning more about government action and understanding the process of accessing funds through agencies such as FEMA.

This meeting marked the beginning of the Foundation’s role in bridging organizations and individuals together to address emergency and long-term needs of flooding victims.

**Area Funders Convene to Discuss S.C. Flood and Collaboration**

- **40,000 homes** had no drinkable water
- **26,000 homes** had no electricity
Grantees Funded in Phase I

- Black River United Way
- City of Manning
- Clarendon County Community Development Corporation
- Coastal Community Foundation of South Carolina
- Cooperative Ministry
- District 5 Foundation for Educational Excellence
- Felician Center
- Greater Deep River Pentecostal Holiness Church
- Habitat for Humanity Georgetown
- Harvest Hope Food Bank
- Hearts & Hands Disaster Recovery
- Home Works of America
- Hopewell Senior Day Care Center
- Little Smurf's Daycare and Learning Center
- Mennonite Disaster Service
- Ministries on the Move for Christ
- Palmetto Animal Assisted Life Services
- Palmetto Project
- PASOs
- St. Mark Believers Holiness Church
- St. Peter Love Fellowship Ministry Center
- The Salvation Army of the Midlands
- United Way of Sumter, Clarendon & Lee Counties
- Welvista Smiles for a Lifetime

totaling: $100,350.00
Phase I Grantees Support Communities by:

- Providing Christmas gifts for 117 children
- Replacing lost furniture for 64 families
- Partnering with 312 nonprofits, state agencies, and faith organizations
- Rebuilding 12 homes
- Serving over 90,000 meals
- Assisting 32 elderly adults with utility bills
Flood Relief Grantees Connect to Rebuild

Collaboration can be intimidating. Things can get messy, or seem more challenging when additional people are involved. However, when collaboration is embraced, organizations are better equipped to reach more people, be more effective and change more lives. Home Works of America and PASOs embraced collaboration and the outcome was vast.

After the October floods, the Foundation spent time thinking about the lives of those who were affected. Among those who were impacted were immigrant families. Seeing a need in the community, the Sisters of Charity Foundation of South Carolina decided to bring Home Works of America’s attention to a potential partnership with PASOs. The Foundation recognized that immigrant families within our communities were hit hard, their homes were in need of repair and many of them would not be eligible for government aid.

That’s where Home Works stepped in.

Home Works has provided home repairs to low-income homeowners across S.C. for 20 years. After the floods, the Foundation funded Home Works in order to address the immediate needs of home repair. In total, the initial funds served a very diverse group of underserved families, repairing 12 houses, many of which were infested with mold and home to elderly residents and small children.

PASOs helps the Latino community and service providers work together for strong and healthy families through education, support and grassroots leadership development. Two women who received home repairs, Yohana and Daisy, have both lived in the United States and worked with PASOs for many years. Both women work, take care of their children and strive to make their communities better.
Prior to the flood, many homes of the clients PASOs serves needed roof, ceiling and exterior repairs. Despite this, most of the landlords were unwilling to make the necessary repairs. However, eager to expand their outreach and serve those most in need, Home Works offered assistance to these families without hesitation.

Daisy shared heartfelt thanks for the repairs at a meeting with Foundation President, Tom Keith, and Foundation Vice President for Initiatives and Public Policy, Stephanie Cooper-Lewter. Daisy shared that before HomeWorks stepped in her daughter’s asthma symptoms were intensified due to the damaged condition of their home.

“Our home had too much damage to live in,” Daisy said. “Thank you so much.”

“It is extraordinary what you all did with the homes. You never gave up with every challenge that we faced on those homes. You all left a great legacy of love and compassion among our families, neighbors and volunteers.”

— Nelly Jolley, PASOs Staff Member

Through Home Works’ collaboration with PASOs, Home Works was able to extend aid to two designated families in need. Home Works was introduced to PASOs by the Foundation and directly worked with its employees to navigate how to repair the homes of these families. PASOs helped translate legal documents, coordinated all site visits and were on site during the three building days to help the homeowners and volunteers interact.

The Home Works effort brought community volunteers from all over the country to work on the homes. This not only aided the families but increased awareness to this population’s reality. The community can be proud that a gap was bridged between two organizations looking to make change in the community.
The Sisters of Charity Foundation of South Carolina prides itself on being responsive and taking action when the needs of individuals, families, and communities are both immediate and vital. The Foundation has acted responsively and catalytically since its inception 20 years ago—the response in October of 2015 was illustrative of this spirit of service "through action, advocacy and leadership." Responding to those in serious need during the days following the flood, the mission and core values of the Foundation have guided decisions that were intended to invite collaboration, be both strategic and efficient, and ultimately to be of service to the people of South Carolina, who were in critical need.

The Foundation will continue to look forward as the efforts to restore capabilities to South Carolina and the lives of those affected by the flood have just begun. The Foundation is working with other funders, community leaders and government agencies to assess the most strategic and appropriate priorities for funding in Phase II: to implement long-range efforts to ensure that people live safely and securely after the flood.

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