



Community Concerns

Children Across The Country Help New Orleans Students

(NAPSA)—As workers in New Orleans use bricks and mortar to rebuild the city, Lego is joining the efforts by asking children and parents across the nation to donate Lego bricks for schools and students in New Orleans. The company will match every Lego brick donated to the cause with a new Lego brick.

The rebuilding efforts in New Orleans are under way but locals say there is still a need for more help, especially for the schools. More than 70 percent of schools in New Orleans were damaged by Hurricane Katrina and now just seven of the city's 117 public schools remain open. The school district used to employ 3,500 but has been forced to cut its staff to just 300 people. Several displaced students are now in charter schools, but access to supplies and funding can be limited.

As the community rebuilds, it's crucial for attention to remain on returning normalcy to the lives of children affected by the disaster. Time to play and create is something every child needs, especially the children of New Orleans. But playtime is not just fun time, it's also very important in helping children learn, socialize and develop creative thinking skills that will help them throughout their lives. Teachers across the country are finding it more and more challeng-



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ing to incorporate creative free play into classroom time, a challenge made even more difficult by Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans.

"We want to inspire children and families everywhere to stay mindful of this massive undertaking, but also to contribute in a playful way to a program that provides opportunities for children in New Orleans to imagine, learn and have fun, all the while knowing their peers across the country care about their well-being," said Michael McNally of Lego Systems.

In addition to collecting Lego bricks to donate to schools, a large replica of New Orleans in the future will be built using ideas that kids send in with their donations. The structure will be

donated to The Arts Council of New Orleans. Along with their brick donations, children are asked to send drawings, photos or notes describing something they think would help New Orleans regain its strength as it rebuilds. Each idea will be considered for the structure.

"We are still surveying the devastation to public art following Hurricane Katrina," said Mary Len Costa, Director of Public Art, The Arts Council of New Orleans. "We are thrilled to receive a structure made of Lego bricks that we can display for all to see the possibility of a bright future for this great city," added Costa.

Response has already been strong, with individual households contributing to the cause, as well as teachers creating a classroom activity around the donation and scout troops and other community organizations getting involved.

Each child who donates one or more Lego bricks will receive a studded rubber wristband to recognize his or her contribution to the cause. Donations will be accepted through September 30th. For more information on where to send your donations, or if you are in a New Orleans school that wishes to participate in the program, visit www.LEGObuildersoftomorrow.com.