

# Postcards from Katrina™

Sharing Stories of Hope and Help



## Press Kit

2007



Where there is  
hope, there is a  
future.

- Tandra Stevenson,  
Creator of Postcards from Katrina

[www.postcardsfromkatrina.com](http://www.postcardsfromkatrina.com)

## About Postcards from Katrina™

Founded in Spring 2006, Postcards from Katrina™ (PfK) is a part of a grassroots movement dedicated to serving and healing the community through arts in Washington, DC and beyond.

PfK wants you to become a messenger of hope in a sea of despair through the Plant Hope™ Initiative. PfK promotes the power of arts in addressing social, emotional, and mental health concerns, particularly among youth, in post-traumatic situations. Recognizing art as a healing tool, PfK facilitates workshops, community service projects, and invites you to share their story of hope with a homemade postcard of original art. We also welcome music and poetry to bring awareness of help and hope in our communities.

## The Issues

**To Be of Service.** For many young people, Hurricane Katrina has been the catalyst for change and increase in community service. Currently thousands of student-run programs are making a difference in the lives of communities across America and especially in the Gulf Region.

**Stop The Violence.** College campus and communities in the Gulf, across America and in our nation's capitol are addressing violence in their backyards. Since New Year's more than twenty deaths have occurred in a two-week timeframe in the Gulf and in Washington, DC alone.

**Keep a Healthy Mind.** The stigma of mental health still exists in our communities, especially in minorities. Issues of depression, suicidal thoughts and post-traumatic stress go untreated and eventually resulting in a myriad of issues for the community: homicide, suicide, abuse, violence, alcoholism, risky sexual behavior.

## Key Focus Areas

- Civic Engagement
- Arts Promotion
- Social and Emotional Development
- Youth Violence Prevention
- Mental Health Education

And by helping somebody in need, you're really helping yourself because you're lifting your soul.

- President George Bush

## Who We Serve

**We serve communities. We serve America.**

- Elementary students
- Middle school students
- High school students
- College students
- Young professionals
- Organizations focused on youth and young adults



(partial list)

## 2006 Programs *(partial list)*

Speaker at National Black Graduate Student Association Conference, Washington, DC

Homeless Postcard Workshop with Youth Ambassadors Academy, Washington, DC

Sister Speak thru Art Workshop with Girls Inc, Washington, DC

### January 2007

Speaker for Founder's Day for with Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Howard University

Post Katrina: What Would MLK Do? Workshop with City Year, Cardozo High, Washington, DC

Exhibit booth at NBC 4 Health and Fitness Expo, Washington Convention Center, Washington, DC

## Upcoming 2007 Programs *(partial list)*

### February

Opening Speaker and Workshop Facilitator at Stop the Violence Conference, Howard University, Washington, DC

Exhibit booth at the National Women's Heart Day Health Fair, Verizon Center, Washington, DC

### March

Art and Poetry Exhibit at Peace and A Cup Joe for 2nd Annual Women's History Month, Baltimore, MD

Women's Wellness Fair, Shiloh Baptist Church, Washington, DC

Youth Making Campaigns with City Year and DC Vote

### April

Plant Hope in the City on National Youth Service Day and Earth Day, Community gardening and arts day in Shaw/Howard, Washington, DC

### June

Workshop Facilitator at the World Children's Art Festival, International Child Art Foundation, Washington, DC

### August

Anniversary of Hurricane Katrina Art Exhibit, Washington, DC

### November

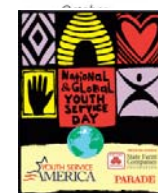
American Public Health Association Annual Meeting



HOWARD  
UNIVERSITY



National Arts and  
Humanities Month



# PfK Reaches Young People with Social Media.



- Blogger
- Youth Noise
- Facebook
- MySpace
- Taking It Global
- Care 2
- You Tube

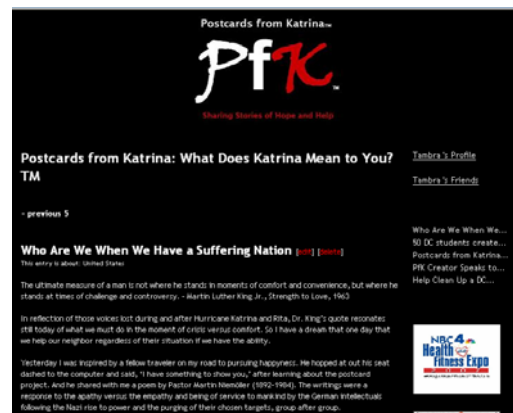
People from around the world visit Pfk on the web.

Pfk has reached over 5,000 online visitors representing over 15 countries in 9 months.



Pfk has an online advisory board and support network.

Pfk reaches all its volunteers through social media.



"If we are to reach real peace in this world... we shall have to begin with children" - Mahatma Gandhi

# Postcards from Katrina™

Sharing Stories of Hope and Help



## Louisiana Legislative Women's Caucus Endorses Postcards from Katrina

**BATON ROUGE, LA**—The Louisiana Legislative Women's Caucus announced its endorsement for the Postcards from Katrina™, a community arts educational project created by Tambra Stevenson, who has family residing in the Gulf region.

"I am very pleased for the postcard project to receive the support of the caucus," said Stevenson, a graduate of Tufts University School of Medicine's health communication program. "When Hurricane Katrina hit, I was deeply concerned about how the youth would cope with the crisis and what impact it would have on their mental and emotional health. The Postcards from Katrina™ project provides youth to express themselves through the arts."

"The Louisiana Legislative Women's Caucus is committed to supporting ventures designed to help the welfare of the citizens of Louisiana. In light of the recent catastrophe of Hurricane Katrina, the LLWC conveys its support of Postcards from Katrina, a sharing of stories of hope and help," said Trin Johnson, LLWC Executive Director.

# PfK Creates Campaigns Focusing on Students and Women.

*Postcards from Katrina™*  
Sharing Stories of Hope and Help

“For us, Katrina meant that my sisterfriends were equally important as a man if not **more.**”



*Postcards from Katrina™*  
Sharing Stories of Hope and Help

“When my husband passed away from the storm, Katrina meant taking control of my finances to support for my momma and my daughter.”



*Postcards from Katrina™*  
Sharing Stories of Hope and Help

“After Katrina, my sister was heartbroken when she lost her high school sweetheart. So I had to be kind, sensitive and just be there for her, because I would want the same.”



 Tell your story with a homemade postcard!

Sisters Sharing Stories of Hope™  
[www.PostcardsFromKatrina.com](http://www.PostcardsFromKatrina.com)

*Postcards from Katrina™*  
Sharing Stories of Hope and Help

“For us, Katrina meant having hope and faith when it didn't seem possible.

Because of Katrina, my faith in God grew stronger. He will provide.”



Sisters Sharing Stories of Hope™  
[www.PostcardsFromKatrina.com](http://www.PostcardsFromKatrina.com)

*Postcards from Katrina™*  
Sharing Stories of Hope and Help



“As a teacher, I know that self-expression through the arts can be a powerful teaching and healing tool to help our students to cope with crisis like **Katrina.**”

Sisters Sharing Stories of Hope™  
[www.PostcardsFromKatrina.com](http://www.PostcardsFromKatrina.com)

 Tell your story with a homemade postcard!

*Postcards from Katrina™*  
Sharing Stories of Hope and Help

As a self-admitted workaholic, Katrina meant for me to find balance, live a full life and get the love that I deserve, which I did. Now we are **sending in a postcard about our engagement!**



 Tell your story with a homemade postcard!

Sisters Sharing Stories of Hope™  
[www.PostcardsFromKatrina.com](http://www.PostcardsFromKatrina.com)



## The Mental Health Crisis Post-Katrina

January 2007 | Commentary by Tambra Stevenson

In USA Today this week, an article was written about the mental health crisis in New Orleans. In reality the United States in general suffers from a fractured mental health system with lack of funds, leadership, and services. Currently groups like Families USA have created a Children's Health Care Campaign advocating to for health care for all children by reauthorizing the Medicaid bill to fund the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). One Congressman mentioned the need to improve children's mental health services.

This issue of mental health is real when you hear the stories of attempted suicides by teenagers who fill no hope anymore especially after dealing with the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and the many negative messages repeated after the storm such as no one cares from them.

**What do you say to a child when all he or she feels is being buried in the weeds? We must begin planting seeds of hope in the community and in our children.**

- Tambra Stevenson, Creator of *Postcards from Katrina* TM

It starts by what we say and what we do. We should speak words of love and act in the name of love for ourselves and for a better life. To achieve you must believe you can.

The USA Today article captures what happens when we don't plant hope in the community: increase homicide, suicide, verbal abuse, domestic violence, chronic disease, stress-related disorders like fibromyalgia, and the like. I know from experience and from living through the Oklahoma City bombing. Children need love, hope and faith. And we are the ones they have been waiting for.

Check out the USA Today article at

[http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2007-01-15-katrina-mentalhealth\\_x.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2007-01-15-katrina-mentalhealth_x.htm)

"I created the project out of my own need to revive my dying creative soul and self-express what Katrina meant to me, but ultimately I knew this project wasn't about me, but about the people. So it's the people's project; and I am simply the conductor leading the way to a beacon of hope."

- Tambra Stevenson

# Mr. President Comes to Sign Postcards of Hope

January 15, 2007



WASHINGTON, DC—Postcards from Katrina (PfK) received an unexpected supporter, President George W. Bush to create postcards of hope for Katrina survivors. In honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., PfK held a workshop on teaching nonviolence through the arts in partnership with City Year’s Young Heroes Program at Cardozo High School in Washington, DC.

During the workshop, President Bush came to sign postcards, share a few words, and thank the organizer, volunteers and children. In capturing the spirit of the day, President Bush noted that “one of the things that Mrs. King wanted was for MLK Day to be a day of service. It is not a day off, but it's a day on. And so I'm here at Cardozo High School to thank the hundreds of people who have showed up to serve the country by volunteering.”

He went on to say that “and right here in the library were with a group of folks who are sending post cards to folks who have been affected by Katrina, cards of hope, an opportunity for a citizen here to say to somebody in the New Orleans area, we care about you, people are thinking about you – and all in the hopes of lifting somebody's spirit.”

Along with making postcards, students shared personal stories of violence with their peers while team leaders from neighboring universities such as Howard, Georgetown, and American provided nonviolent solutions to the youth handling mostly violence in their schools. "Wonderful program. I feel very much reinvigorated that day," said Amber Wiley, a Yale graduate and current doctorate student at George Washington University.

The 50-plus elementary and middle school students developed over 50 postcards of hope to send a special message to the survivors of Hurricane Katrina. For the elementary kids we had story time with “Kara Finds Sunshine on a Rainy Day” by children’s book author Caroline Brewer to learn how to handle crisis.

“On Dr. King's birthday, we came together to spread hope to the children and help them find ways to gain peace within through the healing power of the arts,” said Tambra Stevenson, artist and creator of the PfK project. "After the program unexpectedly one male student came up to hung me so I know we planted hope that day."

PfK’s new pilot initiative Plant Hope will address youth violence in our communities given the high rise in crime and mental health crisis in New Orleans and other parts of the U.S. as in our nation’s capital. The initiative will include an arts/writing contest, a community garden day and healing arts workshops. The project will be developing partnerships with media, public and private sectors.

Created by the Oklahoma native who is now residing in Washington, DC, Tambra shares her own personal experience of using creative arts healing after coming back from rebuilding homes in the Gulf in January 2006 with her alma mater, Tufts University in Gulfport, MS. There she had family affected by the powerful winds of Hurricane Katrina. “From that moment, I knew that my purpose was to increase awareness of hope and help especially among youth experiencing the post-traumatic responses to the natural disaster and by man,” said Stevenson, a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority.

Accompanying the President, Attorney General Gonzalez of the Department of Justice came to the event and senior officials from City Year, Corporation for National and Community Service, CASE Foundation and Serve DC. The day's activities captured national and location media attention on CNN, CSPAN, FOX TV networks, the White House website, and The Hill, a DC-based congressional newspaper.

# Tambra Stevenson

## *Creator of Postcards from Katrina*



Dedicated to helping youth reach their dreams, Tambra speaks with youth on personal and professional development for success and wellness. She develops programs on health, nutrition, wellness, communication, and leadership for youth and minorities.

From her own healing with the arts, she has used her creative talents to develop a community arts education program, Postcards from Katrina, to heal, find hope and keep faith for a better life after crisis and trauma.

Growing up in working class family in a military town as the first child, Tambra suffered from depression as a teenager. She used arts and writing to express what was happening in her world. Concerned for her family who worked in downtown Oklahoma City, she wondered what could she do as a middle school student. At that time her father, an Oklahoma City firefighter, worked that memorable day. Finding a way to express herself, she focused on arts and writing which she used to bring awareness of social issues at a young age. She won poster/slogan contests like 'Don't Lay That Trash on Oklahoma and HIV/AIDS poster/slogan contest by the Oklahoma Child Advocacy Institute. From those experiences, she knows the power of arts to make a difference.

Her devotion to community service has been recognized. She was a National Service Scholar selected by President Clinton. While at the U.S. Department of Human Services in Washington, DC, she received the Leadership award signed by the HHS Secretary for her leadership and management of the Combined Federal Campaign, an annual giving campaign to raise funds for local and international charities. By giving back through volunteering and mentoring, she feels the many blessings in return.

In 2006 she volunteered in the Gulf region where she has family. It was a life reaffirming and changing experience. From there she began creating arts from photography and creative stories and developed Postcards from Katrina as a way for the community to tell and share their stories through the power of arts to engage, to encourage people, to express themselves, and to inspire hope while making a difference in their communities. By giving and receiving hope, she believes we can become the change agents that we wish to see and to make a difference in our communities for the better. She invites people to make homemade postcards, poetry, music, and art to send stories of hope and help, because she remembers what its like to have hope, faith and love.

In summer 2006, she traveled to New Orleans to help get out the vote and take photography to create additional NOLA-inspired paintings for the project. While in New Orleans, the NBC affiliate (WSDU-TV) featured the project. She also revisited Gulfport and Biloxi to gather more stories. And in fall 2006, she traveled to New Orleans again to speak to schools about the project and partnered with a children's book author who donated inspiring books to the children.

Matching her visionary leadership and strategic thinking, she brings strong skills and experience in partnership and program development, marketing and communication skills. She has worked with nonprofit, government, educational, and private organizations such as Harvard Magazine, CBS HealthWatch, Hill Holiday, Kelley Chunn PR, Boston Black Women's Health Institute, and Tufts University School of Medicine to name a few.

The one-time West Point congressional nominee is a graduate of the Master of Science in Health Communication joint program from Tufts University School of Medicine and Emerson College in Boston, MA and received her B.S. in Human Nutritional/premedical sciences and a Spanish minor from Oklahoma State University. She completed MBA coursework at Boston University Graduate School of Management. She has studied abroad at Pontificia Universidad Catolica Madre y Maestra, and she taught community health education in Dominican Republic while on the David L. Boren National Security Education Scholarship.

Also she is a lifetime member of Net Impact and an active member of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. She is a member of the Black Public Relations Society of Washington, DC, American Public Health Association, Washington Association of Black Journalists, Public Relations Society of America, American Marketing Association, and Advertising Club of Metropolitan Washington and a member of Shiloh Baptist Church.

# Postcards from Katrina™ Friends & Supporters

Sharing Stories of Hope and Help



Postcards from Katrina highlighted on NBC 6 News Reporter in New Orleans



PfK received a Postcard from business owner of Loretta's Pralines and support from Rep. Juan LaFonta of New Orleans



PfK will be seen in BET's Jeff Johnson's documentary, "Picking up the Pieces: College Life after Katrina" in New York



PfK hosted art exhibit with Arts for Global Development founder, Nil Navaie for World Environment Day



PfK at the Sisters Sharing Conference with Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority's Xi Omega Chapter President Cheryl Hill



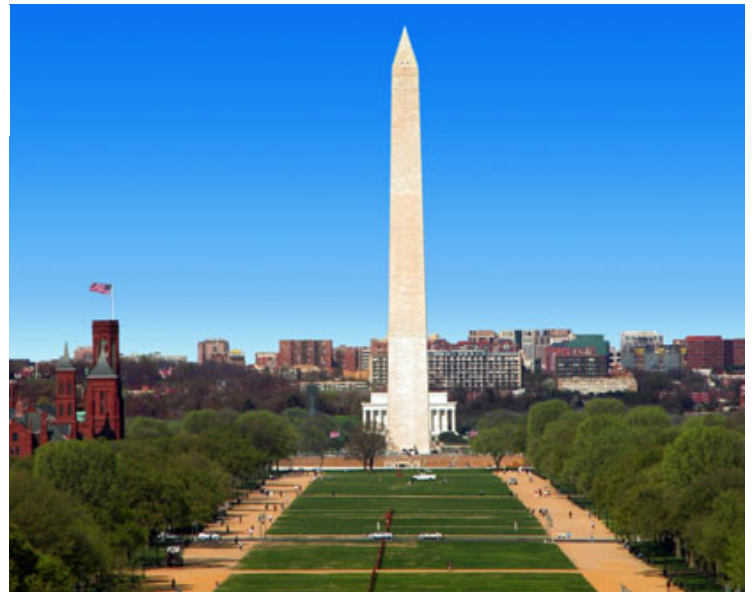
PfK received over 200 signatures and postcards at the NBC 4 Health and Fitness Expo in Washington, DC

# Postcards from Katrina™

Sharing Stories of Hope and Help

## Friends & Supporters





## Like Langston Hughes, I Dream A World....

where hope is planted everywhere  
starting in our homes and  
communities.

Let's plant the National Mall with  
hope in Washington, DC in 2010.

**Issue:** Post Katrina, many children in the Gulf  
and around the nation feel the like they can't  
make a difference in their lives and  
communities. Let's give them hope!

**Meet 2010 Goal:** Collect 2010 postcards by  
year 2010 for the 5th Anniversary of  
Hurricane Katrina.

Let's showcase hope from around the nation  
with a huge arts exhibit in Washington, DC  
and in the Gulf region. Send your postcards  
via email or mail.

### What is the challenge?

Promote healthy minds and creative and  
positive solutions to build healthy and happy  
communities for youth

### Who does it affect?

Everyone, namely children, particularly girls

### What do we want?

Plant hope for our children to have a future.



## Take the Plant Hope Challenge!

**Plant Hope in Our Children.**

**Plant Hope in Our Communities.**

## How are we planting hope?

- National Mall Postcard Project
- Arts/Writing Contest
- Art Exhibit
- Book Project
- Theatre Project
- Plant Hope in the City Community Service/Arts Project

## Contact us to get involved at...

Tambra Stevenson, MS  
(202) 236-0371  
postcardsfromkatrina@gmail.com

## Websites to Know

[www.postcardsfromkatrina.com](http://www.postcardsfromkatrina.com)  
[www.planthope.org](http://www.planthope.org) (Coming soon!)