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Letter: Lessons from Katrina

Saturday, December 17, 2005

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In the months since hurricane Katrina devastated my hometown, New Orleans, I have learned that adversity is both a stern and effective teacher. In the spirit of giving, I would like to share some of these lessons with you.

First, I have learned gratitude for the outpouring of support from individuals, churches and even entire towns (Wayland adopted Waveland!). The people of MetroWest have shown themselves to be kind and generous, and I humbly thank them.

I have learned that material objects really don't matter anymore. I find I am constantly asking myself, "If Katrina were coming, would I reach for that?" Usually, the answer is "No."

I have also learned to be thankful for everyday blessings -- electricity, clean water, my own bed, my church. Hundreds of thousands of New Orleanians still do not have any of these.

And finally, I have learned that neither tears nor love has any color. New Orleanians, regardless of race, love the city just the same as I do. And with love, the city will be rebuilt -- all of the city for all of her people.

To all my friends in MetroWest, I hope that you never have reason to learn these hard lessons for yourself.

DONNA L. HOWLAND,
Framingham

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