

## **Austin Chinese-Americans, Thank You for Heroic Support to Hurricane Harvey Recovery**

Chaoxin Qiu, Austin Chinese-American Network

September 10, 2017

Although Hurricane Harvey did not cause severe damages in Austin, news and photo footages of devastation in other parts of Texas gripped the hearts of Austin Chinese-American community. On September 3, 2017, several officers of the Austin Chinese-American Network (ACAN) reached out to various volunteer organizations in Houston and learned that they were overwhelmed by recovery efforts and badly needed tools and protection gear.

The ACAN's board of directors convened an emergency meeting on September 4 and decided to call for local Chinese-American friends to support Houston's disaster recovery. ACAN board members also pledged several thousand dollars of start-up funds during the meeting and sent out a call for their members to chip in for monetary support. A team was formed immediately to contact volunteer organizations in Houston to survey their needs. Another team jumped into their trucks to shop for supplies for immediate delivery. On the same day at 8:00pm, ACAN's Peter Chao and Wei Liu arrived at Sugarland's Sunrise volunteer station with a truck load of urgently needed materials. By the end of the day, the ACAN received more than \$3,000 of donations from local community members.

By September 8, ACAN received more than \$10,000 of donations for its Hurricane Harvey relief efforts. Among the donations was a heartwarming \$600 cash donation consisting of stacks of small bills from members of the Austin Chinese Retiree Association, who do not have a regular income. In these five days, ACAN members delivered five truckloads of urgently needed tools and protection gear to eight different volunteer organizations in the Houston metropolitan area, including Katy, Memorial, and Sugarland. These deliveries included hundreds of high-power fans, drywall saws, pry bars, bleach, heavy-duty gloves, and boxes of protection masks.

"We Chinese Rock!" cried C.J. Zhao, ACAN's Chair of Membership Committee. Indeed, what a heroic act by the local Chinese-American community in the past week! Almost all ACAN members and their friends participated in the disaster relief efforts. Hundreds of individuals and businesses made monetary donations. Dozens of ACAN members worked day and night after their day jobs for procurement, delivery, bookkeeping and logistic details. We want to say a BIG THANK YOU to the following friends:

- 1) Angela Qian who coordinated and arranged delivery logistics with all the Houston volunteer organizations.
- 2) Wendy Wei, Peter Chao, Wei Liu, Yong Zhao, Jason Zhang, and Hugh Li, who spent many hours procuring all the requested items throughout the week.

- 3) Peter Chao, Wei Liu, Yong Zhao, Bin Zhong, Jason Zhang, Chaoxin Qiu, Yun Xiong, and Hugh Li, who made same-day delivery round-trips after work. They usually came home after 2:00am but went back to work the next day anyway.
- 4) Jean Shaw, Lanzi Liu, Anita Luo, Jessica Wong, Hui Park, CJ Zhao, Lucy Yong, Jessy Huang, and Qingfen Li, who gathered after work for several nights in a row to record donation transactions and procurement receipts. They also made sure every individual and business donors were acknowledged.

As a fairly new nonprofit organization, ACAN is deeply encouraged by the community's responses to our Harvey disaster relief efforts. ACAN has received numerous warm thank-you notes from various volunteer organizations in Houston. The project's success would not have been possible without the support of our community members. Despite the destruction Harvey brought, we became stronger as a community. After addressing the urgent needs for our fellow volunteers in Houston, the Austin Chinese-American Network will continue to strive to serve our community, promote solidarity, and protect the interests of Chinese-American. ACAN is completely run by volunteers with zero overhead. Every penny of any monetary contribution will be utilized for serving the local community. Again, the ACAN sincerely welcome local community members to join our organization and support our cause. For more information or to get involved, please email [acan.members@gmail.com](mailto:acan.members@gmail.com).