



***New York State Community Action Association  
Operation: A Cajun Christmas  
BeeLine Trucking***



**Press Release**

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**New York State Community Action Association and Operation: A Cajun Christmas  
Join Together to provide Relief to Victims of Hurricane Katrina this Holiday Season  
Convoy of Compassion to leave from Warehouse on Friday December 9, 2005**

**Albany, NY.** – On Friday, December 9, 2005 at a press conference at the NYSCAA state headquarters, **The New York State Community Action Association (NYSCAA), Operation: A Cajun Christmas and BeeLine Trucking** have joined together to provide victims of Hurricane Katrina with some much needed assistance this holiday season.

“NYSCAA, working with the New York State Department of State, and our 52 member Community Action Programs, have been coordinating with our sister organizations in Louisiana and Mississippi to try and help them cope with the devastating aftermath of Hurricane Katrina,” stated Ron Deutsch, CEO of the New York State Community Action Association (NYSCAA). “Our members have been helping families cope with crisis situations since the inception of Community Action some 40 years ago, now we are building upon that tradition and providing much needed cash and family oriented items to those in need this holiday season. We are thrilled to work with Operation: A Cajun Christmas and BeeLine Trucking to make sure we can deliver truckloads full of hope this holiday season.”

NYSCAA has accumulated more than \$220,000 in cash and needed family items (diapers, formula, school supplies, bedding, toys etc.) from its member Community Action Programs throughout the state. NYSCAA is shipping a warehouse full of goods to the St. James Parish Department of Human Resources where local Community Action Programs will be able to pick up the items they need to help suffering families. NYSCAA members coordinated Katrina Relief Fund drives at schools, local CAP offices, county agencies, and raised monies through concerts and in working with our volunteer community members that continue to give their time and energy to improve the lives of the less fortunate.

**Operation: A Cajun Christmas** has been collecting toys throughout the state to ship down to Abbeville, Louisiana to give some holiday cheer to boys and girls in foster homes, homeless shelters and for the elderly in nursing homes. This effort was spearheaded by Mark Bertrand (athletic trainer) of Saratoga Springs and renowned Jockey’s Aaron Gryder and Shane Sellers (from the HBO Documentary, Jockey). Operation: Cajun Christmas has collected tens of thousands of dollars worth of toys to ship down to children in need of hope this holiday season.

Aaron Gryder, an award winning Jockey and co-founder of Operation: A Cajun Christmas stated, "I felt that I needed to get involved in this incredible effort. The folks in Belmont and in Saratoga really rallied together to make sure that the kids in Abbeville would have a Christmas to remember. If these kids need anything it is hope. When you look into the face of a child who has lost everything and you hand them some toys and see their faces light up it restores your faith in the human spirit. Our hope is that our efforts will be contagious and that others will give and give generously."

"Immediately after the Hurricane hit the Gulf Coast there seemed to be a huge outpouring of contributions for the families that lost everything. I could not help but feel that after a few months that outpouring might start to wane. That's why we decided to start our efforts to make sure that people would not forget and that the families could have some joy this Christmas," stated Mark Bertrand, founder of Operation: A Cajun Christmas. "How do you tell a kid that the one person who comes no matter what every Christmas (Santa) won't be coming this year after the child has lost a home, toys and in some cases friends and family? We just could not let that happen. By partnering with NYSCAA and BeeLine Trucking we will make sure that does not happen."

**BeeLine Trucking** has graciously agreed to donate two tractor trailers and drivers to lead this Convoy of Compassion down to Louisiana. Bee Line Trucking & Logistics has made exceptional strides in business in the past six years of operation. Some of our deep-rooted beliefs are to do business with local companies, and to respect those you do business with.

Martin McCarthy, Logistics Manager for BeeLine Trucking and Logistics stated that, "Since Hurricane Katrina devastated parts of the Southern U.S., the staff at Bee Line Trucking & Logistics have been looking for various ways to say, We Care. So, along with NYSCAA and Operation: A Cajun Christmas, we are more than happy to offer our transportation services in hopes of showing the rest of the country that in times of need, there are strangers that are willing to lend a helping hand."

"The NYSCAA Board of Directors would like to extend a heartfelt thanks to our partners in this effort including the NYS Department of State, Operation: Cajun Christmas, BeeLine Trucking and our Community Action Members. The incredible efforts of all those involved have given us the ability to ship our Convoy of Compassion down to the areas in New Orleans and Vermilion Parish that have been devastated by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Community Action Programs are used to dealing with individuals and families in crisis but felt that we needed to band together to provide more than needed items and to restore lost hope and to give the children and their parents a holiday they will remember," stated Dennis Wilson, NYSCAA Board Member and Executive Director of Fulmont Community Action Agency.

*NYSCAA is still collecting cash contributions that we will forward to the Louisiana and Mississippi Community Action Associations. These organizations are on the front lines of this tragedy and are working everyday to improve the lives of the people that have lost everything. To make a contribution please go to our website at [www.nyscaaonline.org](http://www.nyscaaonline.org).*

*NYSCAA is an association of the 52 Community Action Agencies serving all 62 counties in New York State. These 52 community Action Programs (CAPs) provide services including Head Start, Affordable Housing Rehab and Construction, WIC, Weatherization Services, Emergency Food Programs, Economic Development and many other programs. The 52 CAPs employ approximately 8500 people across the state. We mobilized 31,000 volunteers across the state to give 1.4 million hours of service in their communities in 2004 alone. We leveraged \$700 million in federal, state, private and local funds in 2004 to assist more than 700,000 families and individuals in need. Our programs have a significant impact on the economic and social fabric of our communities.*

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