



For Immediate Release

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NBA Referee and Hurricane Katrina Victim, Derrick Collins, and the National Basketball Referees Association Make Contribution to American Red Cross

Washington, D.C., October 10, 2005 – The last week of August 2005 was a nightmare for NBA referee Derrick Collins. He and his wife evacuated their Slidell, Louisiana home on August 27 because Hurricane Katrina loomed off the Louisiana coast. They fled to Houston, Texas to wait out the hurricane, which would later be called by Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff, as one of “the worst disasters in American history.”

The hurricane was a tremendous setback for the Collins family, as their Slidell home was severely damaged during the storm. Although the house is still standing, the 150 mile-an-hour winds tore gaping holes in the roof that allowed water to get into the house, causing significant interior damage. Fortunately, there was no significant structural damage to the home. They were lucky.

Mr. Collins’ parents-in-law lost their home. It was destroyed by six feet of toxic flood water, sludge, and mud and will need to be torn down and rebuilt.

If the damage from Hurricane Katrina was not bad enough, Hurricane Rita threatened the Texas coast three weeks later. Before it hit, the Collinses left Houston for Austin, Texas – normally, a two-hour car ride. Mr. Collins said the evacuation from Houston was extremely frustrating for him and his eight-month-pregnant wife. They sat in traffic for nearly 14 hours along with thousands of other Houston refugees.

Thankfully, all of their family members are safe. He believes that God is blessing them with a better life. He is grateful for having enough clothing and housing for the past month, and is particularly grateful to those who have helped his family through the difficult time.

Those who helped out the Collins family include Mr. Collins’ co-workers, the NBA referees. Once they heard of his family’s situation they immediately offered his family financial assistance and much-needed hope.

After considering the overwhelming need for assistance in the Gulf Coast region, the National Basketball Referees Association (NBRA) decided to donate \$5,000 to the American Red Cross in support of its general recovery efforts. The Red Cross provides millions of meals a day, lodging, and medical attention to those affected by natural disasters. It is estimated that their costs for Hurricanes Katrina and Rita will exceed \$2 billion.

The NBRA considers it a privilege to do what it can to help. Joe DeRosa, a member of the NBRA Executive Board, Sean Corbin, the NBRA Treasurer, Mr. Collins, and several other referees presented Susan Goodenow, an officer of the Corporate Partnerships and Cause Marketing division at the American Red Cross National Headquarters, and Tim Wahlers, a Major Gifts Officer with the National Capital Area Chapter of the Red Cross, the donation on October 10 at 2:00 PM at the offices of Perennial Strategy Group in Washington, D.C.

Mr. Collins tries in any way he can to assist in the relief effort. He, along with New Orleans native Bennie Adams, volunteered to officiate a hurricane relief charitable fund-raising exhibition game held in Houston and organized by NBA players. The game raised over \$1 million.

He and his wife are now settling in and starting over in Houston. Mr. Collins thinks the birth of their first child (a little girl) will be a new start for them and their parents – she will be his wife’s parents’ first grandchild. She will represent a new beginning. And, no, they are not naming her Katrina or Rita.

About the NBRA

The National Basketball Referees Association represents 63 active and 16 retired referees who officiate all of the games for the National Basketball Association.