

BeenThereClearingHouse.com - Media Giraffe Profile

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Cooper Munroe &
 Emily McKhann - Collaborators



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Emily McKhann, at the MGP2006 summit, June 2006"

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About

When Katrina hit, friends Emily McKhann and Cooper Munroe, who lived 500 miles apart, (Larchmont, N.Y., and Pittsburgh, Pa.) converted their "mom" blog to a "clearinghouse" for those hit by Katrina: www.beenthereclearinghouse.com. "Within a few hours the blogging community (mostly moms) delivered thousands upon thousands of people to our site -- and it continued to grow."

Munroe said the premise of the Clearinghouse was that visitors to their blog would post in-kind donations they have to offer Katrina victims. Munroe and McKhann then went to groups offering housing and other assistance and told them about their site. The groups referred evacuees to them. They put their link on craigslist and NOLA forums. And got named the "Most Inspirational Blog" by the Best of Blog awards.

"With the very simple technology of a basic blog we are, to this day, capable of helping those displaced by the hurricane, one-to-one," says Munroe. "It has been eye opening to say the least . . . If one little mommy blog could help so many, IMAGINE if we had a massive, coordinated relief effort online to help rebuild lives."

Munroe said most donors didn't just want to write a check. But when they tried to donate clothing to established charities they were turned away.

When the duo got relief packages there were prayers in the boxes and letters and sometimes they were so struck by the kindness expressed that they were tearful all day. Then they heard from the evacuees. And they said, in effect, "Somebody cares about me and I'm not forgotten."

"They would write: My government forgot about me and these relief agencies could care less about me but this random person through the Internet found me," Munroe said. "We just heard that time and time and time again."

"Whether there's the floods that are going on right now in Philly or in New Jersey, these networks are going to keep happening," says McKhann. "That people expect this now -- the ability to be involved in a way that is beyond just writing a check. They want to be involved, they want to feel that they can give of themselves in some way that is real."

MORE:

Read the wiki post written by McKhann and Munroe describing their project.

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