

President Elect's Report

Thomas F. Anders, M.D.



AACAP: A Continuing Family Tradition

What I have always loved best about our Academy is the sense that we are a family. Since I became a member in 1973, I have never lost the feeling

of belonging to a collegial, professional group that can and will reach out and help our constituencies whenever a need arises. I am certain that as your President, I can call on any of you for help, and that you will also feel free to contact me with any concerns as they arise.

What greater proof that our AACAP family tradition is needed than to recall the immediate outpouring of concern and action from our organization and individual members in response to the recent hurricane catastrophes? We reached out to members in the affected regions, and to all of the children and families traumatized by the devastation. On Tuesday, August 30, the AACAP Communications and Development Department contacted all available AACAP members in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama to remind them of our disaster resources, especially the relevant *Facts for Families* fact sheets and *Practice Parameters*, which were made available to all. The next day (Wednesday, August 31) the entire membership was solicited via email on behalf of the Louisiana State Emergency Center. More than 50 child and adolescent psychiatrists responded immediately and the AACAP

National Office facilitated contacts with the Emergency Center and with volunteer coordination agencies.

A rapid revision of our website was another immediate response. Three sections were developed. The first, for families and caregivers, provided our own online knowledge base plus links to other disaster relief sites, in both English and Spanish. The second section, for clinicians and members, offered direct links to pertinent online articles recently published in the *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*. Moreover, Lippincott, Williams and Wilkins (publishers of *JAACAP*) offered free online access for *JAACAP* articles to all hospitals and health care facilities through the end of 2005, and all registration fees for AACAP members from the affected states were waived to both the AACAP/CACAP Joint Annual Meeting Toronto and the associated institute on "Treating Traumatized Children, Adolescents and Families." The final section, "AACAP Roll Call," provided an opportunity for each of us to check on the well-being of our colleagues in the Gulf Coast region and also provided a bulletin board to post stories, exchange plans, and express needs and feelings. Finally, in addition to providing emergency assistance, many of our members and so many of our training programs offered homes and educational experiences to our displaced colleagues.

The challenges for repair, healing, growth, and rejuvenation are pervasive. As a professional group we know what is needed. We can help, we have helped, and we will continue to help. I invite and welcome your ideas. Please contact me by email at tfanders@ucdavis.edu.

