



## Practice karmic giving

*“Every act done, no matter how small, will eventually return to the doer.”*

We in the counseling community of New Orleans are delighted to welcome you to our city if you will be attending this month’s 2011 American Counseling Association Conference & Exposition. The location of the conference, and its partial focus on disaster mental health, may evoke memories of Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath. Although my own memories of the event certainly include the suffering, loss and desperation that I witnessed, I also recall countless small acts of kindness. I’d like to take the liberty of sharing one such memory.

One day in November 2006, three months after Katrina, I was sitting on my front porch watching a Bobcat tractor work its way down my street. It was picking up the mountains of soggy carpeting, drywall and furniture that had accumulated at curbside and depositing them into a trailing dump truck. As the Bobcat arrived in front of my house, it stopped so its operator could take his morning break. I got to talking with the operator and learned he was from Minnesota. He had answered an ad asking for Bobcat drivers to come to New Orleans. The ad had promised good pay and that housing would be provided. He had been in the city for seven weeks, had yet to be paid and was sleeping on the floor of a church. He wasn’t complaining though. He told me he was glad to be here helping in some small way. I don’t think he took me seriously when I told him he had entered into the karmic loop and that good things would come to him, but I trust that his good acts have indeed returned to him.

Many, many others entered the karmic loop in the aftermath of Katrina. A number of these were

Gulf Coast counselors who were the beneficiaries of projects sponsored by the ACA Foundation. Awards from the Foundation’s Counselors Care Fund helped these counselors get back on their feet after losing their workplaces in the natural disaster. Others were school counselors who used funding from the ACA Foundation’s Growing Happy and Confident Kids program to replace books that had been destroyed. Still others were graduate students who received scholarships from the ACA Foundation that helped them return to school and complete their graduate education. Reentering the loop, these counselors used the help they received from the ACA Foundation to in turn help others.

We hope there will never be another Katrina, but it is inevitable that another type of disaster, in another place, at another time, will happen. Only through your support will the ACA Foundation be able to be there to extend a helping hand. As Howard Smith noted in his column in February, the ACA Foundation serves as a repository of the contributions that members give over time, which makes it possible to assist others in their time of need.

I urge you to make a donation — even a small amount — to the ACA Foundation and to do it today. Enter the karmic loop. I can’t promise that you’ll win the lottery, but I do believe this:

*Whatever karma you create, that you shall inherit. ♦*

Barbara Herlihy is the chair-elect of the ACA Foundation.