



## **YOUR UNION COLLEAGUES STILL NEED YOUR HELP**

Please help your fellow AFT members along the Gulf Coast put their lives back together. Donate now to the AFT Disaster Relief Fund through your local or state affiliate or go online to [www.aft.org/katrina](http://www.aft.org/katrina). This fund provides direct assistance to AFT members; no monies are used for administrative expenses.



GEORGE KUCHLER

If it weren't for her dog, Gwen Ridgley might not be around to tell her Hurricane Katrina story. Like many others, Ridgley remained in New Orleans to ride out the storm, and after Katrina passed through, the United Teachers of New Orleans (UTNO) member thought everything was okay because her house had survived. She had just settled down for a nap when she heard a sound familiar to all dog owners. Her terrier was lapping at some water, but it wasn't the usual toilet bowl drink. In fact, Galaxy was slurping the floodwater that had started rushing into her house. Thanks to Galaxy's early alert, Ridgley and two friends staying with her quickly headed to the attic. Before long, there was nine feet of water in the house.

They spent two days in the attic and on the roof before the water receded enough—down to waist level—for them to get out. A Good Samaritan in a boat took them to higher ground, where Ridgley eventually made her way to her

mother's house.

Weeks later, Ridgley says she still has good days and bad days. She's worried about the junior high school in New Orleans where she taught special education, math and science, as well as her fellow teachers and students. But she isn't ready to give up on her classroom or the school. "Things happen for a reason," she says. "Let's hope something good comes out of all this."

**PLEASE...  
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AFT DISASTER  
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