Celebs offer time and money for Katrina aid

Television fund-raisers and benefit concerts organized while several A-listers donate their own funds

CELEBRITIES INCLUDING
Ellen DeGeneres, Jay Leno, Master P and Dave Matthews are contributing star power to relief efforts for victims of Hurricane Katrina.

DeGeneres, a New Orleans native whose 82-year-old aunt, cousins and friends had their Gulf Coast homes destroyed, has taped an episode of “The Ellen DeGeneres Show” dedicated to discussion of the devastation. It aired yesterday, the start of the syndicated talk show’s third season.

“We have a different show planned for you today because things have changed and we cannot pretend they haven’t,” DeGeneres told the audience.

NBC aired a heartfelt live benefit Friday night featuring 18 celebrities, including Wynonna Marsalis, Lindsay Lohan, Leonardo DiCaprio, Harry Connick Jr., Tim McGraw, Mike Myers, Hilary Swank, Claire Danes, John Goodman and Aaron Neville. It took an unexpected turn when the outspoken rapper Kanye West launched into a tirade about the government’s response to the disaster, claiming “George Bush doesn’t care about black people.”

Beginning tonight, Jay Leno will ask his “Tonight Show” guests to sign a Harley-Davidson motorcycle that will be put up for bid later this month on eBay.

Master P, whose house in New Orleans was destroyed, has formed a foundation called Team Rescue to “save the neighborhood and rebuild our communities.”

The Dave Matthews Band announced a Sept. 12 benefit concert in Denver.

El Networks announced that it would produce a public service announcement to support the American Red Cross featuring several top musicians and actors.

Chris Rock, Stevie Wonder, Jay-Z, Diddy, Russell Simmons, Marsalis and Master P will participate in a telethon on Sept. 9 on BET.

The Rolling Stones, Neil Young, Green Day, Paul McCartney, Brian Wilson, Sheryl Crow, Lordecris, Gretchen Wilson, Usher, Alicia Keys and Bob Thomas are among those set to appear on a Sept. 20 special that will air on MTV, VH1 and CMT.

Personal donations
Nicolas Cage, who has a home in New Orleans, pledged $1 million.

Hilary Duff said she will give $200,000 to the Red Cross and $50,000 to USA Harvest, which is supplying food to shelters.

Sean “Diddy” Combs and Jay-Z jointly pledged $4 million. The rappers said they felt responsible to give because many of those most affected are black.

“When you hear black people say ‘brothers’ and ‘sisters,’ it’s really true. These are all people that I know I’m related to somehow, some way — the human race family,” Diddy said.

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