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## NEWS

# Having to rely on kindness of strangers

By BENITA Y. WILLIAMS  
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The Kansas City Star

Desperate didn't begin to describe the plight of Treesa and Matt Gold after floodwaters from Hurricane Katrina and medical bills wiped out their New Orleans home and their savings.

They feared they had lost their opportunity to become parents as well.

On Sunday, the couple left jobs with the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra, boarded up their home near New Orleans' now-ruptured 17th Street Canal levy and went to Memphis to stay with 25-year-old Matt Gold's mother.

Treesa Gold, who has adrenal cancer, had just begun fertility treatments when they were ordered to evacuate. The 24-year-old wanted to harvest her eggs before starting cancer medications that will probably render her infertile.

They had no money, no home and little hope.

Enter Overland Park fertility specialist Rodney Lyles.

At the suggestion of their fertility doctor in New Orleans, the couple contacted Lyles on Thursday and related their plight. Lyles and the Overland Park Regional Medical Center agreed to complete the couple's fertility procedures for free. That's a \$10,000 gift.

"It was kind of a no-brainer to help them," Lyles said.

For now they will stay with Treesa's parents, John and Rita Dowling, in Wellsville, Kan.

"These people have been so good to us," Treesa Gold said. "We are just so grateful. ... They didn't have to do any of this."

The Golds are but one example of how Kansas Citians continue to reach out to help refugees.

In Lee's Summit, where several refugee families arrived this week, school officials on Friday were readying backpacks filled with school supplies for children.

The American Red Cross will open a service center at 8 a.m. today at the Gregg Community Center, 1600 John "Buck" O'Neil Way near 18th and Vine streets.

dence from any area affected by the hurricane.

The Postal Service is encouraging hurricane victims separated from their homes to register a new address. Go to [www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com) or call 1-800-ASK-USPS (1-800-275-8777). Those without phone or Internet access can go to any post office.



SHANE KEYSER/The Kansas City Star

**Far from New Orleans, Matt and Treesa Gold talk about their situation.**

Several caseworkers will help evacuees with food, medicine and other essentials. The community center can also serve as a shelter for hurricane victims if necessary.

Artrell Harris, a YMCA chaplain, said the organization was working on a plan to help provide child care for displaced families.

Swope Health Services announced it would waive co-pays and provide free health services at its five locations to anyone with proof of resi-

Jill Schaefer, who grew up in New Orleans, spent Friday preparing lodging for 25 relatives, including 16 children.

"My parents had time to grab some clothes and old photos," Schaefer said. "Their house was near Lake Pontchartrain. It's gone. They can never go home."

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