An open letter to the patrons and supporters of Emerson Theater Collaborative's production of *"Harriet²"*

March 2009

Hello. My name is Robert James. I am the youth director here at Union Baptist Church.

This summer, July 29th-August 11th, 2009 (4 years after Hurricane Katrina ravaged the Gulf Coast), the Union Baptist Church of Mystic, Connecticut is sponsoring a mission trip to continue the relief effort in New Orleans, Louisiana.

About fifty youth, adults, children and seniors will be making this 3,600 mile round trip journey.

After four years—the cameras have stopped rolling, the reporters have long gone and with them many volunteers and relief organizations. Yet the need in New Orleans, especially in the impoverished 9th Ward area where we will be working, still exists for many as if the rain had just stopped yesterday. Four years and there are still people without running water, without homes and without hope. Families of six are still living in FEMA trailers barely fifteen footsteps from front to back.

We go not only as representatives of this church but of everyone in this community who refuses to sit and allow this tragedy to continue. By attending this performance, you are not only supporting the efforts of the Emerson Theatre Collaborative, but also the efforts of the people attending this Mission Trip. Five Dollars from your ticket is being donated to this cause.

With humility, I thank you. Know that every family that we help, every home that we repair, every ounce of hope that we bring — is only possible because of you.

Again, thank you, and enjoy the show.

Robert James
Youth Director
Union Baptist Church