



News Release

PRESS OFFICE

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SBA Honors Indiana Volunteer Amanda Baltensberger For Outstanding Disaster Recovery Efforts

ATLANTA – Last September heavy rains caused Indiana’s Little Calumet River to overflow in Munster, damaging 1,200 homes, many with eight feet of sewage water filling entire basements. Once the floodwaters receded, Amanda Baltensberger—a mother of four, college student and co-owner of a printing business—borrowed a golf cart, grabbed her best friend and prepared meals to deliver to the dazed disaster survivors.

In the days that followed, Baltensberger recruited 70 volunteers and set up relief centers using borrowed tents and picnic tables. The centers became clearinghouses for recovery information, meals, cleaning supplies and moral support. Weeks later, she threw a block party—complete with live music, food and games for the kids—to uplift town’s spirits.

Baltensberger also created an “adopt-a-family” program, where local volunteers checked up on and supported those still struggling to recover after the disaster.

For her altruistic and far-reaching commitment to the recovery of Munster, Amanda Baltensberger will receive the ***2009 Phoenix Award for Outstanding Contributions to Disaster Recovery by a Volunteer.***

“The Phoenix Award is an acknowledgement of an individual’s heroic effort and a recognition of the contributions they make to the recovery of their communities,” said SBA Administrator Karen G. Mills. “Amanda Baltensberger displayed tremendous courage and resourcefulness in the aftermath of the flood, and she exemplifies the spirit one must have to rebuild after a disaster like this.”

The Phoenix Award will be presented on May 19, 2009, during the U.S. Small Business Administration’s National Small Business Week celebration, May 17-23 at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel in Washington, D.C. Events can be viewed virtually through SBA’s free, live webcasting, which will be accessible at <http://www.nationalsmallbusinessweek.com/>. The site also includes additional information on National Small Business Week, including a detailed schedule and registration information.

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Since 1998, the SBA has given Phoenix Awards to business owners, public officials and volunteers who displayed selflessness, ingenuity and tenacity in the aftermath of a disaster, while contributing to the rebuilding of their communities.

The SBA makes low-interest, taxpayer-backed disaster loans to homeowners, renters, businesses and non-profit organizations of all sizes. More information about the disaster assistance program is available at www.sba.gov/disasterassistance.

For more information about National Small Business Week, visit www.sba.gov/sbw.

The U.S. Small Business Administration thanks the cosponsors of National Small Business Week and related events: SCORE, Sam's Club, Symantec Corporation, Ford, Raytheon, Administaff, Visa, Sage, Trend Micro, Lockheed Martin, Moran Media Group, Dun & Bradstreet, the Small Business Entrepreneurship Council (SBEC), the National Association of Development Companies (NADCO), the National Association of the Self Employed (NASE), and the Association of Small Business Development Centers (ASBDC).

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