

Mailman School of Public Health, Dr. Redlener has started CHF spinoff Operation Assist, a disaster



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Paul Simon to the rescue

LAST WEEK'S fund-raiser concert for Hurricane Katrina victims, Big Apple to the Big Easy, was a sellout at Madison Square Garden. But a group of exhausted health workers got a free preview in Biloxi, Miss. **Paul Simon**, a longtime benefactor of Children's Health Fund and friend of founder Dr. **Irwin Redlener**, recently flew to the disaster zone to help with relief efforts.

"I asked for Paul's help, and he said, 'Absolutely,'" Dr. Redlener says. Working with Columbia's

relief charity. The new venture has already sent five medical teams in big blue RVs—including one staffed with New York City doctors—into the afflicted areas.

At the end of one long, hot day, the legendary songwriter took out his acoustic guitar and held an impromptu concert for the medical workers. "He played 'Bridge Over Troubled Water,'" Dr. Redlener says. "It couldn't have been more moving."

As of last Friday, the volunteers were waiting for word on how to respond to Hurricane Rita, the latest threat to the Gulf coast. ■