

Where do We Go From Here?

The Friends and Residents of Greater Gowanus (FROGG) are playing a leading role in the Community Advisory Group of the Superfund cleanup of the Gowanus Canal. The CAG itself is actively debating the land use policies of the Gowanus area and what is going to be appropriate in a post-SANDY world. Some of their members are contributing to my Facebook SANDY journal. I hope you'll take a look.

And there are other local residents working on environmental policy. Elizabeth Yeampierre is the Executive Director of UPROSE, a Sunset Park based environmental and social justice organization. (Her entire interview is available on my Facebook page.)

Elizabeth Yeampierre: (excerpt)

“For three years we’ve been working on climate adaptation and resilience, and getting recommendations from the community about what is needed for this to be a resilient community. We knew that a storm was coming, we had been told that there was a chance that in the next 10 years—that was 3 years ago—that there was a 90% chance that there would be a storm surge in New York City.

“And so, on a local level we were working on it, on a national level we were talking to the EPA about looking at the impact of storm surge in an industrial waterfront community. In an urban industrial waterfront community.

“So we’re looking at this issue on a number of levels. How do you organize on the ground, how do communities come to be resilient on a grass roots level, with the understanding that government might not always be there for you, that resources might not be there for you, how do we adapt? How does rebuilding look now? How do we make sure that our industries and our businesses get the resources that they need so that they thrive despite the changing climate?

“It’s a big lift, but I’m confident it’s possible, and I believe that this particular storm is a wake-up call to people, letting them know that climate change is not something out on the horizon, it’s here. We’ve (New York City) already had 3 tornadoes, we’ve had a microburst, we’ve had this huge thing (SANDY) that wasn’t even a category 1, and look at the devastation that we’ve had. If that’s not enough for people to realize that they need to start thinking about their lives differently, I don’t know what is.”

REMINDER—Welcome to the NEW 25th Senate District!

Effective January 1, 2013 most of the current 18th Senate district will become the NEW 25th Senate district.

If you live in Bed-Stuy, Clinton Hill, Ft. Greene, Boerum Hill, Downtown Brooklyn, Red Hook, OR parts of Ocean Hill-Brownsville, Crown Heights, Prospect Heights, Park Slope, Carroll Gardens and Sunset Park...welcome to the NEW 25th Senate District!

Take a closer look at the new district at www.latfor.state.ny.us/maps/2012s/fs25.pdf.

RESOURCES

APPLY FOR FEMA
www.DisasterAssistance.gov. Call **800-621-FEMA (3362)** or **TTY at 800-462-7585**. Those who use 711 or Video Relay Service (VRS) may call **800-621-3362**.

DISASTER RECOVERY CENTER Information about FEMA & other assistance programs
• IKEA, 1 Beard Street, 2nd Floor Brooklyn, NY 11231
• COFFEY PARK 85 Richards Street, Brooklyn, NY 11691

NYC RESTORATION CENTER For help accessing important recovery info & services for those most effected by SANDY.
• COFFEY PARK 85 Richards Street, Brooklyn, NY 11691

U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
9 Bond Street, 5th Floor, Brooklyn, NY 11201
www.sba.gov

NYS SMALL BUSINESS DVT CENTER
• IKEA, 1 Beard Street, 2nd Floor Brooklyn, NY 11231
www.nyssbdc.org/disaster.html

New York City, including Small Business Services (SBS) & NYC Economic Development Corp. (NYCEDC) offers services to assist small businesses in recovery from SANDY.
• Call 311 and ask for NYC Business Emergency Loan.

GOV. CUOMO, NY BANKERS ASSOC. & NY BUSINESS DVT CORP. \$10 million small biz emergency loan fund for SANDY related losses. Up to \$25K immediately.
• www.esd.ny.gov
• 1-855-NYS SANDY

FREE TEMPORARY SPACE, SUPPLIES, & SERVICES
Full list available at
www.nycedc.com/backtobusiness#sandydonations

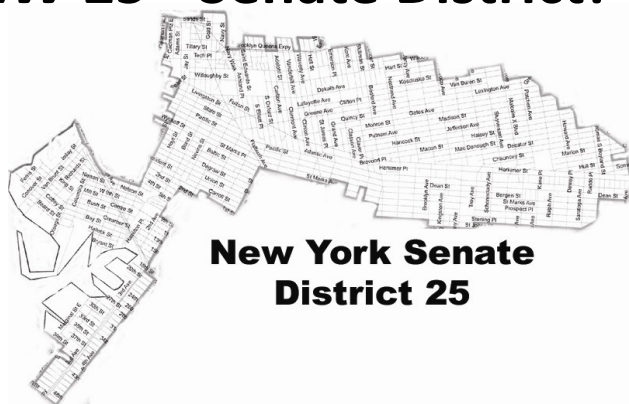
GRANTS FOR NON-PROFITS
The New York Council for the Humanities is offering grants of up to \$1000 to defray salary and overtime costs for staff members working on storm related clean up.
www.nyhumanities.org/grants/recovery12.php

CITIZENS COMMITTEE FOR NEW YORK CITY Grants of up to \$5,000 to volunteer-led groups providing relief to areas hit especially hard by Hurricane Sandy. www.citizensnyc.org/programs/grants/hurricane_relief_grants.html

HOUSING ASSISTANCE AND HOME REPAIRS
HPD provides loan assistance to homeowners through a partnership with Neighborhood Housing Services of New York City (NHS). Direct, low-interest home improvement loans to owners of one-to four-family homes in the five boroughs. **Emergency Repair Loans, Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) Core Loans and HIP Options Loans.** Homeowners should call NHS at (212) 519-2500 for information.

NYC Rapid Repairs is a **FREE** program to help residential property owners affected by Hurricane Sandy make emergency repairs. These emergency repairs will allow residents to stay in their homes so that they can complete more permanent repairs and finishes. Visit NYC.gov, call 311, or visit a Restoration Center for more information.

To receive a copy of Senator Montgomery's 20 page Hurricane Sandy Resource Guide, please visit www.nysenate.gov/senator/velmanette-montgomery or call 718-643-6140 to request a copy.





**NEW YORK
STATE SENATE**
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Albany, NY 12247



Senator Montgomery Reports, Fall 2012
HURRICANE SANDY

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NEW YORK SENATE

SANDY Defeated by Bravery and Generosity

Dear Neighbors,

Let me first wish everyone a happy and healthy Holiday Season, mindful of all we have to be grateful for and the importance of our friends and family.

For me the story of Hurricane Sandy isn’t about ferocious winds, record tides, and storm surges. It isn’t about flooding and power outages. It isn’t about closed stock exchanges, or closed schools, or closed subways, or about any of those *things*. For me the story of SANDY is about people who suffered great loss, and found the strength to not only endure but to help their neighbors.

Red Hook was hit very, very hard, with thousands left without lights, heat, or water. There was no ready access to everyday medical services and transportation was extremely difficult. Residents of the Gowanus area also suffered when the storm surge drove the canal out of its channel and into their streets and homes. This was a grave emergency, but miraculously injuries were few and there was only one death in the area! This tremendous achievement is the result of heroic actions by public servants and even more importantly and significantly, by the extraordinary efforts of neighbors coming together to help each other. You did this. We all did this.

There are so many stories of everyday devotion, heroism, and dogged organization throughout the District to tell, from the Red Hook Initiative’s extraordinary service, to “Medical Matt”, to Danny Schneider, the electrician who brought the power back to so many homes, to, those who gave and those who cooked, and served, to those who were there to listen and be strong for those who needed strength. The people of this Community are extraordinary, and I thank you from the very bottom of my heart.

Inside you’ll find only some of the stories that have been shared with me; there are just too many to print! All of the stories in their entirety will be found on my Facebook page (www.Facebook.com/NYStateSenatorVelmanetteMontgomery) If you have a story you wish to share please email it to montgome@nysenate.gov and we’ll post it for you.

Hurricane Sandy taught some hard lessons, and some ideas for where we go from here are discussed on the back page, along with information about where to seek and offer help. We have a long way to go, but I know we can and will work together to get there!

Sincerely,

Senator Velmanette Montgomery



...THEY HAD NEVER EXPERIENCED SUCH DEVASTATION

Faye Moore Reflections from Brooklyn Tech

After 4 days of wall to wall hurricane coverage and a day of doing no work of value at my nearest agency (ACS) office, I reported to Brooklyn Technical High School. I graduated from Tech when Scopello's was a bar called the Valhalla and students went to the subways in pairs. My high school was now serving as the evacuation center for persons with special needs.

The experience was at once shocking and rewarding.

Our evacuees lived in Coney Island and Seagate. They were accompanied by health care workers that appeared indifferent until mealtime when they negotiated and fought to get as much of the limited food as they could for their patients. You could sense the comfort they brought the evacuees by being there and being their protectors. I saw city employees of all levels, so unlike the stereotype of the bored Civil Servant, demonstrate leadership because our evacuees needed order in the chaos. I saw Tech alumni and Tech students jump right in o the work and Principal Ascher making sure everyone had what they needed 6AM Friday morning. Through the whole experience, a steady stream people from Fort Greene and Clinton Hill brought food, clothing, blankets and books.

By and large we didn't endure as many heart wrenching images as we saw in Red Hook, Coney Island and the Rockaways. We witnessed a different tragedy. We met people who found comfort in luke-warm coffee, a newspaper and a little conversation. Aunts, uncles, grandmas and grandpas; all with some sort of illness, all with stories of families told with great pride, but no one coming in saying "Is my aunt, or uncle, or grandma, or grandpa here?" I was proud that my community pushed up their sleeves, opened their arms and embraced our guests.

Jill Eisenhard Red Hook Initiative

Located across the street from the Red Hook Houses, NYS's 2nd largest public housing development, Red Hook Initiative (RHI) quickly transformed from a youth development organization to the epicenter of relief work in Red Hook, providing pro bono legal and medical care, 2 hot meals a day (onsite and delivered to homebound), emergency supplies, mental health support, and assistance with FEMA applications to thousands of residents, 12 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Employing over 60 staff from Red Hook, RHI mobilized rapidly and effectively. RHI also played a coordinating role to ensure that residents and businesses received needed support; to keep the public abreast of the situation; and to maximize and streamline donations and volunteers.

Community organizations, businesses, and residents continue to work together to identify lessons learned and needs identified from this experience, in order to forge stronger community-based collaboration mechanisms that address the neighborhood's longer-term infrastructure needs.

David Meade Southwest Brooklyn Industrial Development Corporation

On the Friday morning after Hurricane Sandy hit, the SBIDC office in Red Hook opened up as the headquarters for volunteers around the City who wanted to help businesses and residents recover from the devastating flood and outages.

Volunteers were instructed to come to the SBIDC office through various online and social media alerts. They were sent out in small groups to canvass houses and businesses to see what they needed. Most residents and business owners needed help to clear out and clean basements and first floors. Donations of cleaning supplies were brought and sorted.

SBIDC staff helped to track work requests, dispatch groups of volunteers, and distribute cleaning supplies. Other SBIDC staff were out meeting with businesses and helping them to negotiate loan programs, and setting up workshops to address other issues. Some groups of volunteers were sent to partner organizations that were distributing hot food, medicine, and other goods.

The volunteer and donation outpouring was incredible- we saw about 400 volunteers each day for Friday through Tuesday.

It was wonderful to see so many Red Hook organizations and volunteers from all over come together to help a community in need. SBIDC continues to work closely with businesses and partner organizations in Red Hook to address both immediate needs and long term recovery. Volunteers can now go to red-hookvolunteers.org or call (718) 306-9149 to find out how to help.

Lillie Marshall, TA President, Red Hook West Houses

SANDY was devastating, but we survived it.

We had so much love and help coming from so many people, companies, and neighbors...it was overwhelming to see such support.

In Red Hook Houses we suffered from lack of electricity, lack of heat, and lack of hot water, which a lot of buildings are still without. Some people did not evacuate which made it hard for them to get the help they needed, especially in the high rise building. There was no light, water, or heat. The building was in total darkness for more than 10 days! Thank god for FEMA!

Sr. Rosario,

Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church,

SANDY's aftermath was incredible.

Starting on Tuesday Red Hook Initiative had set up relief as well as medical emergency coverage but by Wednesday they were overwhelmed. Supplies had started to pour in, but they needed more space to distribute them. Visitation of Blessed Virgin Mary Church was flooded, but when asked to help we opened the doors of the Church. We had no electricity, no heat, but with the generator we were able to put a few lights on.

All kind of supplies started to come, from flash lights, to blankets, to diapers, to food.

Our people of Red Hook started to come. Catholic Charities joined us and aided us with the distribution and helped us to organize the hundreds of volunteers who came to help.

The people were cold, they were startled, in shock, they had never experienced such devastation. They had never experienced losing their cars, their clothes, not having heat, water, light. They waited in line patiently for their supplies and while they waited Fr. Claudio, the pastor, together with the priests and sisters of Koinonia John the Baptist spoke to them, consoled them and talked to them about the church, whose ceiling was built like the Arc of Noah, a place of refuge where they could find safety. We told them that God loved them and that this love was expressed by the outpouring of what they needed. They would cry, they would share their trial and then tell us what they needed, and we gave it to them. This continued for two weeks, and now only on Saturday.

We wish to thank all those who helped especially in Red Hook and all the officials who came to be with us, some everyday and fought for us to get all the aid that we needed.

Good Shepherd Services (excerpt)

Good Shepherd Services has been a presence in the Red Hook Community since 1980 and are proud to be a part of the ongoing Hurricane Sandy recovery efforts. As soon as the power was back at our Conover Street location, we opened as a distribution site, facilitated donations of food and supplies from public and private institutions, coordinated volunteer efforts, and organized a community Thanksgiving dinner on November 17th at PS 676. GSS is involved with the NYC Restore initiative--helping to run the Red Hook Restoration Center, which provides case management and linkages to resources to storm victims. In addition, we have secured funding to help Red Hook residents with emergency needs. Lastly, we are in the process of forming a Red Hook Coalition in partnership with Red Hook Initiative, Added Value, ReStore Red Hook, and Southwest Brooklyn Industrial Development Corp to address the immediate needs of the community in the wake of the storm and continue to sustain revitalization and recovery.

Valery Jean, Executive Director FUREE GOWANUS HOUSES (excerpt)

Gowanus Houses, which is located in Zone B, also experienced flooding that knocked out heat, hot water and electricity to five buildings affecting hundreds of families. FUREE learned about this the Friday following SANDY's landfall from Ms. Scott, Gowanus' Tenants Association President. By the next morning, FUREE was on the ground to get residents the relief they needed.

As a member-led organization, we ensured that residents were the ones to lead distribution efforts and other follow up work. We knocked on every single door in buildings as high as 12 floors to assess the needs of families, documenting those who were elderly, sick, homebound or with small children and infants. We ensured that our families received daily visits, refilled prescriptions and delivering it to residents. With our teams of more than 200 volunteers and local organizations such as South Brooklyn Legal Services, the Healthy Families Program and Diaspora Community Services, we coordinated efforts to help residents apply for assistance, get medical and social after-care services and get needed items such as water, hot meals, flashlights and blankets. We also sent residents who were or became extremely ill to local hospitals and ensured they received a follow up visit from health care and social workers, including one resident who we later learned could have died from a blood clot that developed in her leg.

The relief efforts at Gowanus Houses proved to us all that community building is rooted in humanity.

Martha Kamber, Executive Director, YWCA (excerpt)

On Thanksgiving, volunteers again assembled at the YWCA of Brooklyn to prepare meals for those still in need. They spent hours chopping vegetables, carving turkeys and baking. As a result over 200 delicious Thanksgiving meals were distributed to those most in need. The camaraderie amongst volunteers was truly remarkable - the diverse group connected through their shared spirit of true compassion and caring. There were so many volunteers we had to redirect dozens to other relief organizations. And who says New Yorkers are uncaring?!

Henry L. Butler, Chairman, Brooklyn Community Board 3

Even though SANDY temporarily paralyzed our city, its aftermath brought out the very best of New Yorkers, particularly in Bedford-Stuyvesant .. Blessed to have been spared from the most severe impacts of the storm, Bed-Stuy residents and businesses have been working in partnership with local elected officials, Community Board 3, churches, community and civic ,

organizations and the Transit Forward Coalition to collect and distribute relief supplies. Through community-wide cooperation, we have been able to maximize our ability to support our neighbors whose homes and neighborhoods were destroyed. Within a few days after SANDY, we organized a donation drive and worked with TWU Local 100 to recruit MTA buses full of volunteers to do relief work in the Rockaways and Coney Island. If you would like to find out more or get involved, please visit<http://www.transitforward.org/>.

Rev. Gary V. Simpson Concord Baptist Church

Hurricane Sandy forced New York to realize that even the world's First City cannot escape the destructive forces of nature.

Mother Nature has been learning a lesson also. The people of New York have an indomitable spirit. Soon after the hurricane roared through, emergency workers, people of resolve, communities of faith and good neighbors formed formal and informal disaster relief teams to meet the needs of families devastated in the storm's wake.

One of the many blessings was that those of us who were least affected had the opportunity to be the first lines of help for those in need. Church vans caravanned clothes, food and supplies to neighborhoods without electricity or heat.

The days turned to weeks and as we approached Thanksgiving together, we discovered we were only at the beginning of this enduring recovery. What a marvelous time to re-vision gratitude. Thanks IS giving.

At Concord, and with the gracious generosity of the Tzu Chi Foundation, we were blessed to bring 600 families from Canarsie, Red Hook and Coney Island to Bedford Stuyvesant to receive over \$375,000 in direct relief.