



Jewish Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster



November 14, 2012

To: Jewish Community Professionals

From: JVOAD – Jewish Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster

RE: Update on Hurricane Sandy Recovery Efforts

*Following are updates on the situation following Superstorm Sandy. This information includes that which has been submitted primarily by JVOAD agencies and may not be comprehensive. It is intended to provide an overview of the situation to Jewish community professionals around the country. For those engaged in recovery work, additional information is available from JFNA and specific JVOAD agencies. **This information is in addition to information distributed previously and for the most part does not repeat activity reports.***

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

JFNA has distributed close to \$650,000 to Federations in the form of grants for immediate humanitarian assistance, filtered primarily through the *Jewish Family Service* network. Of those funds, 90% have been distributed to those in need.

It remains to be seen what kind of business losses will be incurred. The Federations and JFNA will continue monitoring the situation in the longer term.

JFNA is reaching out to *Hebrew Free Loan Associations* to discuss the possibility of assistance.

This is in addition to funds being raised and distributed by individual Federations and other organizations, some of which is described below.

ABOUT DONATIONS

Please **DO NOT** collect items for donation. There is simply no place to store these items and distribute them. As we have been saying consistently, **financial contributions are the quickest, most effective way to help.**

JVOAD MEMBERS

Association of Jewish Family and Children's Agencies • Chabad Lubavitch • Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life • Greater Miami Jewish Federation • International Association of Jewish Vocational Services • JCC Association • Jewish Community Relations Council of New York • Jewish Council for Public Affairs • Jewish Family and Career Services of Atlanta • Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta • Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles • Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans • Jewish Federation of Greater Washington • Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago • The Jewish Federations of North America • Jewish Healthcare International (JHI) • JFNA Rabbinic Cabinet • National Association of Jewish Chaplains (NAJC) • Nechama • New York Board of Rabbis • The Rabbinical Assembly • Repair the World • Schusterman Foundation • Secure Community Network (SCN) • UJA-Federation of New York • UJA Federation of Northern New Jersey • Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America (OU) • Union for Reform Judaism (URJ) • United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism (USCJ) • Washington DC JCC

ABOUT VOLUNTEERING

Please do not organize groups of volunteers to come to the area. Needs are constantly changing, making it difficult to manage volunteers. As with Hurricane Katrina, there will be plenty of long-term need for volunteer groups.

Nechama is the primary coordinator of volunteers for the Jewish community. Financial support has come from the *Union for Reform Judaism* and *United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism*. Individuals interested in volunteering should visit the *Nechama* website, www.nechama.org. A team of staff and volunteers are feverishly working to increase capacity to meet direct service needs on the ground in New York and New Jersey. *Nechama* is engaged daily in clean up of flood damaged buildings and homes in Hoboken, Brooklyn and Long Island. Long-term (more than a week) volunteers are providing continuity for local volunteers able to contribute a half or full day of their time. A major clean up effort is being made at Temple Beth El in Manhattan Beach, which received up to 12 feet of water and is still in dire straits. Work on the Baldwin Jewish Center on Long Island began on Thursday.

Nechama is exploring further expansion into Monmouth County and other shore communities in New Jersey as well as the Rockaways in New York. As funding allows, *Nechama* will purchase additional tools, purchase/rent more vehicles and hire temporary staff to manage efforts in other affected locations. *Nechama* is working with national, state and local voluntary organizations to streamline coordination of volunteers in New York.

Repair the World is collecting volunteer opportunities and keeping its website, www.werepair.org, updated. Inquiries continue to come in, and *Repair* is determining the best resources to enable people to help.

UJA-Federation has been flooded with requests for volunteer projects from all over and is working to best manage them.

SITUATION AND RESPONSE UPDATE

The needs of the affected communities remain enormous. It is a significant challenge to coordinate response and recovery efforts. Rabbis whose homes and synagogues have been destroyed are overwhelmed trying to meet the needs of their synagogues, congregations, and themselves. The devastation and the needs can be compared to Katrina.

The Jewish Federation of Northern New Jersey is teaming with Bergen County VOAD to transition from emergency response to intermediate- and long-term recovery. Funds have been raised by the Federation have been used to provide food for elderly Jews through Jewish Family Service. Volunteers are being coordinated with *Nechama* to do clean-up work in Bergen and Hudson Counties, specifically Hoboken. A local food drive was held to meet emergency basic needs of Jewish and general community food pantries. With the *Jewish Federation of MetroWest* and *JFNA*, assistance is being provided in Hoboken and Jersey City.

UJA-Federation of New York is allocating funds to its network of agencies and synagogues. Contributions are being made to rabbis' discretionary funds and scholarships for day school students are being provided. *UJA-Federation* is taking calls from community members; training professionals to work with FEMA; working with the Israel Trauma Coalition, which is helping to train social workers to work with those who have been traumatized. Trained legal advisors are being offered to New Jersey communities as well. Four network agencies have been tapped by the government to serve as disaster restoration centers and two as crisis counseling centers.

Twenty-three Jewish agencies have sustained severe damage, including four large human service agencies with at least three sites. About 20 synagogues have severe damage. There are 40 synagogues in the affected area of New York, and while some may not have sustained damage to their buildings, their congregations have been affected. Most agencies damaged in the storm will be eligible for some FEMA dollars; the status of synagogues is less clear.

A correction from the previous update. *Middlesex County*. Many people living in Middlesex County WORK in Monmouth County, which suffered significant damage. Many will now find themselves unemployed. Counseling needs, especially for older adults, are a great concern as many endured a week or more without power and had to relocate to senior centers, sleeping on cots. Super Sunday has been postponed in favor of a community response day to help community members.

Chabad-Lubavitch is partnering with UJA-Federation and Federations in New Jersey as well as doing its own fundraising. *Chabad's* 25 shalichim, who are being challenged personally and professionally, met together last Friday. A command center has been set up in Crown Heights, and a website set up, www.sandyhelp.org. In Long Beach, the Chabad center is providing space for a JCC preschool and accommodating its needs. This Shabbat *Chabad* is sponsoring "Sandy Relief Shabbos" in the US. Hurricane Sandy relief was also highlight at *Chabad's* recent conference dinner.

The *Union for Reform Judaism* met Thursday to discuss allocating funds. Over \$415,000 has been raised, and prior to the meeting, \$32,500 had been distributed, including \$25,000 to *Nechama*. Two *URJ* congregations suffered significant damage. Congregation Beth Elohim in Brooklyn is serving as a central staging area, serving 1200 meals per day; 1300 volunteers have come through.

United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism is working with congregations to sponsor community dinners, paid for by *USCJ*, to bring people together and to provide assistance. *USCJ* also allocated \$10,000 to *Nechama* last week. Two synagogues, one in Hoboken and one in Manhattan Beach have suffered damage. *USCJ* will be distributing funds for congregational support and is beginning to develop an effort to provide Channukah gifts to those who have been affected. Synagogues are also being paired to offer assistance.