



Rockaway WISH

Women Inspired to Support and Help

WINTER 2013 NEWSLETTER

Member Spotlight:

"Sandy Crew"

On Monday October 29, 2012, Super Storm Sandy slammed right into our hometown. In the ensuing months, Rockaway and our surrounding neighborhoods faced challenges and obstacles never before seen in our community. A new group of local Women Inspired to Support and Help quickly rose to the occasion, making an immediate impact during the darkest days after Sandy. This is their story:



Kathy, Kathy, Cookie, Meghan, Shannon & Colleen at the "Sandy Recovery Bash"

After assisting in the creation of a relief center at St. Francis de Sales, Nicole Moriarity, Meghan Courtney, and Colleen O'Rourke recognized the need for an additional supply hub in Rockaway. The problem was- the storm had taken out almost every large functioning facility. The one space miraculously standing after Sandy's destruction was the Belle Harbor Yacht Club. When approached the BHYC graciously agreed to open its doors and offer a sense of normalcy to the community; you could stop by for supplies, but also see familiar faces, trade "Sandy stories", catch scores of football games, and have a plate of hot food. As supplies began to pour in, the supply center quickly grew. Kathy McDonagh, Denise DeBoer, and Kathy Henry all stepped up and took on this challenge. In a matter of days, the second floor of the BHYC was transformed into a "mini-Target", complete with: baby section, first aid, personal hygiene, pet needs, bedding, flashlights, batteries, masks, mops, brooms, and more Clorox and Concrobium mold remover you could ever use - except it was all used!

Thanksgiving was sneaking up and Nicole recognized that this holiday would be a pivotal celebration for the neighborhood, "Thanksgiving must go on". She facilitated the donation of 100 Thanksgiving dinners and paired them to local families living in Rockaway without functioning kitchens. Colleen recognized that volunteers from Team Rubicon, tirelessly working on homes, would be spending the holiday away from their families - so she invited them all to have Thanksgiving dinner at the BHYC.

In the midst of fulfilling work orders on damaged homes, organizing volunteers from schools and businesses, soliciting donations, dispersing space heaters, air mattresses, sleeping bags, work boots, etc., December was looming. While still balancing the clean-up effort, the focus shifted to the children...how can we give them a normal Christmas? The plan was two-fold; make sure homes are decorated for the holidays and make sure kids receive gifts...thus was born "Light Up Rockaway" and "Operation Sandy Claus". The "L.U.R." initiative was to provide parents with decorations that were wiped out in the flood waters. Who could afford decades' worth of Christmas crafts when everyone needed a new boiler and electric panel? Companies like Kmart stepped in and donated 100 tree stands, Barry's Bootcamp donated live Christmas trees, distant schools sent classroom's worth of handmade ornaments. A call to action on Facebook led people to donate tree skirts, menorahs, strands of lights, and stockings. In a few weeks, over 200 Christmas "Starter Kits" were compiled. Tiffany Turchi and Shannon O'Rourke spearheaded the massive Operation Sandy Claus campaign. They paired approximately 300 generous "Elves" to local families, often taking time to personally fulfill orders. Tiffany and Shannon's accomplishments and actions can only be compared to the "real" Santa Claus, as they quietly and humbly dipped into people's lives without fanfare or recognition and changed a child's Christmas 300 times over.

This is just a quick description of some of the strides made over the last 120+ days. We look forward to continuing our good work in the community.

SUCCESS CORNER

November 2012:

- **Open supply center at Belle Harbor Yacht Club** - Solicit and distribute mops, bleach, sponges, buckets, masks, work gloves, contractor bags, batteries, flashlights, personal hygiene supplies, first aid supplies, non-perishable food, diapers, formula, baby food, socks, boots, mold remover.
- Facilitate the distribution and delivery of **100+ Thanksgiving meals**. Open doors to BHYC on Thanksgiving to host dinner for local residents, Team Rubicon volunteers, and local NYPD and FDNY employees.
- Facilitate distribution of **300+ air mattresses, pillows, and sleeping bags**.
- Receive donation of **3,000 space heaters** (courtesy of the Mayor's Office) and distribute to residents.
- Fulfill work orders of **100+ homes**, for gutting and debris removal. Neighborhoods include: Broad Channel, Rockaway Park, Belle Harbor, Neponsit, Roxbury, Breezy Point.

December 2012:

- **"Light Up Rockaway"** - Provide neighbors with holiday "starter kits", replacing damaged and destroyed decorations. Items include: ornaments, bulbs, lights, bows, tree toppers, tree skirts, menorahs, candles, tree stands and wreaths. Phase 2: receive donation of 75 live Christmas trees and facilitate drop-off, storage, and distribution. Result: Over 200+ starter kits are created, event day also includes: face painting, DJ, holiday arts & crafts station, Santa display & complimentary family photo with Santa.
- **"Operation Sandy Claus"** - Provide families with Christmas presents for children. Strategy is to utilize two forms "Elf Form" and "Wish List". Over 300+ families (approximately 500 children!) receive gifts as a result of Operation Sandy Claus.
- Footprint Family Foundation event- host & facilitate **a day of rest & relaxation**, plus beauty treatments for locals. Donated treatments include: massages, manicures, hair styles, makeup application & lesson.
- Stress Is Gone - **coordinated stress relief sessions** with company "Stress Is Gone".
- Facilitated **mattress delivery and distribution**, via donation from the Valley Stream Fire Dept. 25 new mattresses & box springs given to families with fire damage and first floor flood damage.
- New Year's Eve **hair styles & blowouts**, in conjunction with local beauty salon Strands. Free hair dos for men & women to ring in the New Year.

January 2013

- Furniture & Baby Items Exchange - **matching donor families with families in need**. Donations have included: bunk beds, couches, dining tables, car seats, cribs, etc.
- **Cabi clothing event** - coordinated event with Carol Anderson clothing company. Event is attended by over 250+ local women, providing each with 5-8 new donated clothing items.
- **My Stuff Bags Foundation** - in conjunction with this non-profit, facilitate distribution of stuffed duffel bags to the following hard-hit schools: Little Tots Red Wagon, West End Temple, St. Camillus, St. Francis de Sales, Dayton West Playgroup, Waterside School.
- **Sandy Recovery Bash** - in conjunction with TV show "The Good Wife" and New York Culinary Institute. A day of fun for local families - live music, DJ, food, balloon artists, etc. Scholarship is awarded in Dylan Smith's name (local Rockaway hero, saved lives during storm, and sadly drowned in Puerto Rico in December). Distribution of \$50 gift cards donated from Metropolitan Lumber Company.

ANNUAL FUNDRAISER

May 31st 2013 at 7:30
Knights of Columbus

Contact a Board member or email
info@rockawaywish.org to purchase
tickets.

Please send \$50 Membership Dues to:

Rockaway WISH
533 Beach 126th Street
Belle Harbor, NY 11694

Our Mission

- To recognize the needs of the community and volunteer our time and talents to assist our neighbors during difficult times.
- To promote participation in charitable events, particularly those that bring attention to and support causes that affect the lives of women and children.
- To encourage a sense of civil obligation and community service in the Rockaways.
- To foster new friendships and support networks amongst women in the Rockaways.
- To raise funds and provide financial assistance to members of the Rockaway community in need and to causes which promote positive development in the Rockaways.
- To inspire the young women of the Rockaways to be compassionate, understanding and active members of the community.

****Please email us at info@rockawaywish.org for questions, comments, concerns, fundraising ideas, anything!**