BROOKLYN RECOVERY FUND: Fueling Community Rebuilding & Resilience

In the immediate aftermath of Superstorm Sandy, Brooklyn Community Foundation launched the Brooklyn Recovery Fund with the Office of the Brooklyn Borough President and the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce to support the recovery work of local nonprofits, foster community-wide coordinated response, and build resiliency through social cohesion and collaboration in the hardest-hit coastal Brooklyn neighborhoods.

Thousands of donors from Brooklyn and across the country contributed to the Brooklyn Recovery Fund, with significant early support from Brooklyn-based Forest City Ratner Companies, Barclays Center, and Brooklyn Nets. Additionally, the American Red Cross has directed $1.25 million to the Fund to advance the Foundation’s long-term recovery efforts.

LOCAL PHILANTHROPY ON THE FRONTLINES OF SUPERSTORM SANDY

The week of the storm, Brooklyn Community Foundation pledged $100,000 to create the Brooklyn Recovery Fund to address its impact across Brooklyn.

A year later, the Fund has raised more than $3.5 million, 100% of which will be directed to local nonprofits by the end of 2013.

DEPLOYING $3.5M THROUGH TWO STRATEGIC FUNDING STREAMS

1: IMMEDIATE NEEDS

November 2012-January 2013: $450,000 in “Fast Track” grants to 35 human services organizations, business support networks, churches, and other locally-based nonprofits to provide:

- 800,000 meals served
- 2 tons of clothing distributed
- Emergency repairs to 70+ homes and apartments, 2 churches, and 2 residential facilities
- 180 small businesses assisted
- 10,000+ volunteers coordinated

2: COMMUNITY COLLABORATIVES

November 2012–ongoing: $3 million+ has supported the rigorous efforts of six coalitions, which have become the nexus for neighborhood-wide convening around all civic and physical infrastructure issues related to recovery and resiliency.

- 70+ participating organizations in Red Hook, Coney Island, Sheepshead Bay, Gerritsen Beach, Canarsie, Brighton Beach
- Promoting local expertise and leadership for long-term recovery and rebuilding
- Tracking of ongoing household and business needs by neighborhood
- Lessons learned for future philanthropic disaster response in Brooklyn and beyond
INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO LONG-TERM RECOVERY

The Brooklyn Recovery Fund’s Community Collaboratives have become a recognized model of successful community organizing and collaboration in urban disaster recovery.

Collaboratives are working hand-in-hand with local residents, small businesses, volunteers, and government agencies to mount tailored long-term neighborhood plans to address significant challenges in the storm’s aftermath including insurance coverage, mold removal, rebuilding strategies, new housing, job development, displaced residents, mental health, and more.

The Foundation’s Brooklyn Recovery Team has helped each group navigate complex challenges of the changing recovery landscape, identify local stakeholders, and access additional funds through convenings, technical assistance, and one-on-one guidance.

STATE OF IMPACT

Community Collaboratives have made significant steps toward building back, stronger and better prepared for the future. Grants have directly supported:

**RED HOOK**
- A Red Hook Summit, which brought community members together to inform the vision for long-term community recovery
- $80,000 to 60 small businesses
- $25,000 to support the work of Red Hook Volunteers in coordinating thousands of volunteers, who have provided mold remediation and rebuilding in over 150 homes
- Repairs and mold remediation in 31 affordable housing units for 106 residents

**SHEEPSHEAD BAY**
- The first post-storm housing assessment to gather data and determine unmet needs
- A coordinator to develop an inclusive recovery plan to serve needs of multi-ethnic community
- 10 homeowner loans totaling $210,000 and 40 loans to small businesses
- Counseling for 55 homeowners and 80 small businesses
- A new community communications network via local blog Sheepshead Bites

**CONY ISLAND**
- #ConeyRecovers: full-time coordinator, hotline, website, and coalition headquarters
- Coney Corps: an employment initiative to provide job training and placement resources
- $100,000 in emergency cash assistance to over 60 individuals
- $50,000 in microgrants to businesses on Mermaid Avenue
- $150,000 in re-grants to neighborhood nonprofits and religious institutions

**GERRITSEN BEACH**
- A new permanent coalition storefront and full-time recovery manager
- The creation of a needs assessment database tracking 765 households
- Rebuilding of 175 homes and construction materials for additional 130
- Mold remediation for 216 homes
- Ongoing mental health and counseling services for community members
1. Civic institutions, like Brooklyn Community Foundation, can play a key role as intermediaries between government, relief agencies, and community groups. In addition to financial support, Brooklyn Recovery Fund has provided dedicated staff to facilitate partnerships and convenings, and promote access to up-to-date information and resources.

2. Local coalitions are critical agents in long-term recovery and resiliency. Communities with a strong social infrastructure recovered more swiftly and successfully than communities with few or no established networks.

3. Large-scale relief agencies should partner with local groups for expertise in their communities. Agencies can provide a strong foundation of support for community-led efforts, which result in effective, inclusive, coordinated, and highly tailored recovery plans.

4. Local residents and their neighborhood economy are intertwined. Recovery must be addressed holistically, so that the needs of homeowners, renters, immigrants, and local merchants are all considered.

5. Long-term recovery plans provide an opportunity to repair flawed community systems. Infrastructure challenges exacerbated by Superstorm Sandy—from housing to food access to information—should be addressed now, for stronger, more resilient communities into the future.

"During Gerritsen Beach's most desperate time of need, the Brooklyn Community Foundation and the Brooklyn Recovery Fund were there. We sincerely thank you and will never forget your generosity and the impact that it has had on hundreds of families in our community. You provided Gerritsen Beach with hope and the platform from which we were able to begin recovery.

GERRITSEN BEACH LONG-TERM RECOVERY PROJECT"

"The residents of Brooklyn are indebted to the efforts of the Brooklyn Community Foundation for strengthening the commitment to our coastal communities and ensuring that we build back strong from Superstorm Sandy...As devastating as this storm was, it pales in comparison to the resilience and fortitude of everyday Brooklynites.

BROOKLYN BOROUGH PRESIDENT MARTY MARKOWITZ"

A REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY, OCTOBER 2013
No donations to the Brooklyn Recovery Fund were used in the production of this report.

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