



FEMA

News Release

November 26, 2012
DR-4086-NJ NR-031
FEMA News Desk: 877-434-4084
NJOEM PIO Contact: 609-963-6818

VOLUNTEERS ARE A VITAL RESOURCE IN THE AFTERMATH OF SANDY

TRENTON, N.J. – When a disaster strikes, volunteers are a vital resource. They represent the compassionate face that brings comfort to disaster survivors and provides for their immediate needs.

“Working together as friends and neighbors is spontaneous after a disaster” said FEMA Volunteer Agency Liaison Manager Ken Skalitzky. “This approach is really what makes a community whole again.”

One group of volunteers recently was recognized when Middletown, N.J. Mayor Anthony P. Fiore presented the Key to the City to Dave Karr, whose volunteer staff from the Southern Baptist Convention, Oklahoma Disaster Relief, prepared more than 1.5 million meals for disaster survivors.

“It was a real honor,” Karr said. “I was told they rarely do this. I accepted on behalf of the whole Oklahoma team.”

Karr’s team and the organization they represent are typical of the volunteers working in New Jersey, both locally and from out of state. More than 100 organizations manage thousands of dedicated volunteers. Here are some of the major organizations and their services:

- Adventist Community Services – manages warehouse distribution of supplies for disaster survivors.
- Mennonite Disaster Service – doing clean up, repairs, and rebuilding homes.
- The Salvation Army – provided Thanksgiving dinner or lunch in several locations throughout the state. The Transitional Sheltering Assistance social services programs connect needs with available resources.
- Samaritans Purse – doing muck outs, removing dirt and debris; cleaning up and sanitizing homes to prevent mold.
- Southern Baptist Convention/Oklahoma Disaster Relief – 117 volunteers prepared more than 1.5 million meals to date, and is deploying 41 emergency relief vehicles across New Jersey to continue feeding disaster survivors.

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- The Red Cross – more than 4,000 volunteers assisting with meals, sheltering, essential supplies, and health services.
- United Methodist Committee on Relief – volunteers working on “muck outs.”
- Catholic Charities – 363 volunteers serving at relief sites offered financial and other material assistance to some 3,000 families. The sites are now closed.

Voluntary Agency Liaison staff at FEMA work with the state umbrella organization, New Jersey Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD). FEMA provides information on the extent of damage from the disaster to VOAD. The organization then contacts its local partners who provide direct services to disaster survivors.

Disaster assistance is coordinated over the long term by VOAD to make sure everyone who needs help receives help.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

Video of volunteers in action and of Volunteer Agency Liaison Manager Ken Skalitzky are available for your use at: http://www.fema.gov/medialibrary/media_records/10552.

For still photos of volunteer activities, go to: http://www.fema.gov/photolibrary/photo_search.do.

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