

Superstorm Sandy and Unitarian Universalist Recovery Efforts



On October 29, 2012, Superstorm Sandy unleashed her fury, wiping out entire coastal communities in New Jersey and New York. Almost two years later, hundreds of families are still displaced, staying with relatives, in cars or on the beaches. Thousands of homes need repair. Many undocumented immigrants remain homeless, ineligible for assistance because of their immigration status or the difficulty finding affordable apartments after Superstorm Sandy. Low income renters have very few options. The elderly and those who need accessible and affordable housing also experience many unmet needs.



Unitarian Universalist congregations have been coming to act in solidarity with the recovery process. Many others have donated to the Central East Regional Group (CERG) UU Sandy Relief Fund. Estimates range from 3-8 years for recovery and rebuilding after the Storm.

The need for volunteers is great! Partnering with other Disaster Response Coordinators from different denominations and other Volunteer work sites, CERG's Disaster Response Coordinator, the Rev. Susan Karlson, is able to coordinate Service and Learning journeys to the various impacted areas and those who suffer most from the impact of Hurricane Sandy. Housing, volunteer work, orientation, social justice issues, worship and processing the experience are all part of a Volunteer Service Trip to aid Sandy Recovery.



Here is an experience of one of the youth volunteers: "The most life-changing event of my trip occurred when we were canvassing... A small Latina woman



confronted us. She was holding a small garden trowel and her hands were smeared with dirt. She proceeded to tell us her story. A few months before the hurricane hit, her husband fell ill. Paralyzed

and on a ventilator, he was bedridden with the final stages of Lou Gehrig's Disease, when the storm arrived. They were trapped in the second story, as the first floor and basement were flooded. The waters scoured away her whole yard, garden, chickens, everything. A month later, it took her husband's life as well. It is now a year and a half after this tragic incident. I am blown away by the gardens she has since planted. Unable to afford a truck to bring in new soil, friends brought her topsoil one bag at a time, bit by bit. And she replanted *everything*. Her house is still damaged, but she has her garden. Meeting her put a face on one of the millions of people affected by Hurricane Sandy. This woman also represents my new favorite quote: "*Those who plant gardens have faith in tomorrow.*"

Contact Rev. Susan Karlson

Sandy Disaster Response Coordinator
For

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(347) 979-6742

cerguua.org/relief-fund/volunteer.html

or contact the Unitarian Universalist College for Social Justice at <http://uucsj.org/journeys/sandy>
For information on trips of four days or longer on Climate Justice: Hurricane Sandy Recovery

Unitarian Universalist Volunteers for Recovery

<http://cerguua.org/relief-fund/volunteer.html>



UU Volunteers for Sandy Recovery



Rev. Susan Karlson is the Central East Regional Group's (CERG) Disaster Response Coordinator. This position is funded by a generous grant from the Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock through June 1, 2015. She is an interfaith Green Fellow, working with the intersection of congregational emergency preparedness, disaster



recovery and resilience in the wake of the effects of Climate Change. She will assist your congregation on its volunteer trip, providing you with meaningful work experiences in some of the areas most in need throughout New York and New Jersey.



You can contact Rev. Karlson at 347-979-6742 or skarlson@uuma.org



Volunteer Opportunities

We have made some dynamic partnerships that Unitarian Universalist congregations can participate in if you are planning a group service trip to the areas impacted by Superstorm Sandy.



Interested in volunteering and learning about recovery after a disaster like Superstorm Sandy? Check out our website (www.cerguua.org/relief-fund/volunteer.html) and Facebook page (www.facebook.com/CergUUSandyRelief).

A request for information form is on the website to help you connect with us. The Disaster Response Coordinator will lead the group in worship and help connect you with volunteer opportunities and housing. She will meet with your group and give an orientation to Sandy Recovery since October 29, 2012 from a Unitarian Universalist perspective and with a lens towards recovery, antiracism, environmental justice, immigration, housing and poverty.



For 4 day or longer trips, the **Unitarian Universalist College for Social Justice** is sponsoring Journeys focused on the intersection of Climate Change and Resiliency with partnerships and speakers from the most vulnerable communities including those who are immigrant and indigenous organizations.

We are connected to volunteer and recovery partners in Brooklyn, Queens, and Staten Island in New York City, Long Island and New Jersey.

CERG UU Disaster Relief Fund

To donate to the CERG UU Disaster Relief Fund:

Checks can be made to CERG with Disaster Relief Fund in the memo line. All contributions are to be sent to:

CERG-UUA
100 W. 10th Street, Suite 1008
Wilmington, DE, 19801

People can also donate on-line using PayPal at the link on the donation page. We ask that you increase your donation to cover the 3% processing fee that we pay for each transaction.

Requesting Assistance

If you wish to apply for financial aid for repairs to a member's home, or for your work in the community for storm relief, please contact your congregation's primary contact or complete the online form you can find here:

