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Submitted November 26, 2012

care2 home take action

99

Girl Power! 10 Inspiring
Young Girls Doing Amazing
Things

35

Solar for the 75%

31

In the Aftermath of Sandy,
Food Banks' Disaster Relief
Efforts Are Put to the Test

49

What to Expect When You're
Expecting Clean Energy

In the Aftermath of Sandy, Food Banks' Disaster Relief Efforts Are Put to the Test

by [Care2 Causes Editors](#) | November 24, 2012 | 2:30 pm

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This post is courtesy our friends at Feeding America.

When Hurricane Sandy hit New Jersey, New York and other areas along the Northeast in the end of October, it wasn't just family homes and businesses that faced flood waters and damage that the hurricane brought.

Even the relief organizations that typically play a vital role in recovery efforts from disasters like Sandy didn't escape completely unscathed.

Feeding America, a network of U.S. food banks with numerous locations throughout the Northeast, had prepared well in advance of Sandy to help with relief efforts after the storm hit. But, while many of the food banks in the area were able to operate throughout the storm and aftermath, many others sustained damage to their facilities and are dealing with staffing issues.

At City Harvest in New York City, for example, the storm caused about \$100,000 of damage to some of their trucks. The Community Food Bank of New Jersey in Hillside is sheltering employees and their families whose homes have been damaged or who have no power.

Member food banks continue to provide food and other supplies to those effected by Hurricane Sandy and are now preparing for more displacement that could come as the result of the nor'easter storm that is threatening the region.

"Food banks are on the front lines before, during and after a natural disaster making sure that we can get food to those who are in need," said Matt Knott, interim president and CEO of Feeding America. "Our member food banks and their staffs in the northeast have endured their own hardships but they continue to provide an essential service in their community and will continue to do so long after the storm leaves."

Food banks in the area have been crucial in providing much needed food and supplies to those displaced because of the storms. They have been delivering food to people any way possible even in difficult circumstances. At Island Harvest in Mineola, N.Y., for example, the staff was able to deliver 10,000 sandwiches to people in need with help of a police escort.

A World Without
CoffeeCan The UN Pass
Basic Human Rights
for Trans People?

26

1

2

31



1 of 3

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To date, more than 3.7 million pounds of donated food and supplies has been moved into the hardest hit areas, including the coast along New Jersey, Long Island, and Staten Island. That is in addition to the thousands of pounds of supplies that were already stationed near the anticipated disaster zone.

An additional 1.2 million pounds of supplies have come from other food banks across the country.

This isn't the first time food banks like Feeding America have stepped up to the plate in the face of a natural disaster, either. Often, when a huge storm like Sandy hits, food banks are on the front lines of the work to keep those hardest hit fed and help families and communities back on their feet after a storm.

Feeding America (then named America's Second Harvest) provided more than 83 million pounds of supplies to Louisiana and other Gulf States during the months-long recovery efforts in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

In the face of disasters like Katrina and Sandy, there is often an outpouring of support from around the country.

"One of the lessons that we learned in Katrina, and all the relief organizations learned, is there are many people of goodwill who want to donate food and coats and other things to people impacted by the storm," says Ross Fraser of Feeding America in a recent interview with National Public Radio.

But without a solid relief infrastructure like those that seasoned organizations and food banks provide, these donations can be more a hindrance than a help. "They have to make sure all the food that's donated is safe [and] the packages haven't been compromised. It has to be cleaned and sorted," Fraser says.

Food banks and other relief organizations, on the other hand, are able to take generous donations from supporters and use them in the most efficient, effective way possible to aid disaster relief.

Ultimately, even when facing the effects of a disaster themselves, relief organizations and food banks like Feeding America are well prepared to get to work and help people back on their feet after a hurricane like Sandy.

Want to help? Read more about Feeding America's efforts in the wake of Sandy, and see how you can make a difference.

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Photo: *The National Guard*

31

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Hopefully we can come up with an alternate manner of growing the blessed bean. The only consolation...



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Cynthia S.

Cynthia Samuels, currently Managing Editor of Care2, Causes, has been working with blogs and...
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Campus

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31 comments



Alexandra R.

The point made that monetary donations are more effective than donations of food and clothing is worth taking on board.

12:41am PST on Nov 26, 2012



Shelly P.

Wonderful!

10:40pm PST on Nov 25, 2012

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