

Far Rockaway Students Show They Care



Church of God Christian Academy students and 101 Precinct Explorers gave a hand during the NY Cares Day Spring event at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge on Saturday, April 12. Adult volunteers; Asha Jean-Baptiste, Charles and Denean Ferguson, Beatrice White, Cliff Pitter, and PO Ian Moonsamie are shown with Lea Giddins and Lauren Glattly of NYCARES.

Official Point of View

An Indecent Proposal

By State Senator
James Sanders Jr.



The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) proposal to divert at least \$1 billion from a \$60 billion Superstorm Sandy federal emergency aid package to a special fund for a national resiliency competition is both reprehensible and insulting.

In the 18 plus months since Sandy ravaged the Rockaways, the damage to our families' and neighbors' homes and businesses largely has yet to be repaired, our prized boardwalk remains gutted, and will remain so for the next three years; the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) announced only a month ago it would pay NYCHA (New York City Housing Authority) \$100 million to replace flood damaged boilers. Far too many of our brothers and sisters have yet to even receive the disaster relief promised them last year, which they so desperately need now to pick themselves up off the canvas, and begin the arduous task of rebuilding. Considering these facts, HUD's audacity to put forth such an ill-advised idea demonstrates a disturbing indifference to the plight of our community.

I recently wrote a letter to HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan to express my utter disgust at the prospect of having other states affected by federal disasters thrust into a competition for money Congress passed last year explicitly for the purpose of helping individuals and families whose lives and livelihoods were horribly altered by Superstorm Sandy get back on their feet. Moreover, it is unconscionable to let the fate of any disaster survivor be decided by a game of chance.

Make no mistake; New York City will be hit again by a hurricane. It will not require one of Sandy's magnitude to cause severe damage to the Rockaways because, as many of us painfully learned during that storm, the peninsula is extremely vulnerable to flooding. This prospect alone should behoove HUD to release every last penny due to help us pick-up-the-pieces and plan for future storms and not bilk our community out of the aid we were promised last year. Once again, I am calling on Secretary Donovan to scuttle this wretched proposal, and follow through on HUD's commitment to fully resource the Rockaways' recovery.

James Sanders Jr. is a New York State Senator representing District 10 which includes parts of Rockaway Beach, Arverne, Edgemere and Far Rockaway.

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