

Aum Sri Sai Ram

Hurricane Sandy Relief Effort Update

December 26th, 2012

We, the devotees of the Mid-Atlantic Region offer our heartfelt gratitude to our Beloved Swami for the gift of Christ and allowing us an opportunity to experience the true spirit of giving. This report is submitted to Dr. Narendranath Reddy, Chairman of the Prashanti Council. This report provides an update on the continuing efforts that we are making with servicing the communities in New York and New Jersey since the last update on December 5, 2012.

CURRENT STATUS

Recovery efforts are continuing in the impacted area. We are learning that private insurance companies are not covering most of the damages and FEMA is not providing enough assistance to the victims to get their homes and properties rebuilt. Also, the weather in this area is getting colder. The Sai Organization volunteers are continuing to stay engaged in this effort.

NY UPDATE

The Sri Sathya Sai Baba Centers in New York City have been involved in performing clean-up seva almost on a daily basis since the hurricane hit our Region. We are teaming to join hands with "Habitat for Humanity" to continue our involvement in clean-up/rebuilding effort. Some devotees from the neighboring Region 1 have joined us for the clean-up seva also. Gift cards received from other Regions in the USA for HomeDepot, Lowes, etc. stores have been used to purchase supplies needed for the clean-up/rebuilding activities.

NY City Department of Education has matched us with Knowledge and Power Preparatory Academy VI (KAPPA VI) Middle School. This school is modeled after the Air Force philosophy of leadership training. Students, who are called cadets, wear a formal uniform. Each class, called a squadron, is named after a NASA space mission, such as Apollo, Odyssey and Endeavor. The school's aim is to be an "Ivy League Middle School Academy," with a long-run goal of preparing students for college.

On December 19th, few Sai volunteers visited the KAPPA VI School in Far Rockaway and delivered the following items: Notebooks, Loose Leaf paper packages, packages of printer paper, Notepads, Backpacks, packs of pens, packs of foot rulers, other school supplies, Ladies socks, sweat shirts. The above supplies were purchased from Walmart gift cards that were sent by other Regions in the USA. All of these items are for students whose houses were damaged and who are in need of some of the basic supplies.

There are other service opportunities that are likely to open up based on our meeting with the school officials. This includes, mentoring/tutoring programs for their middle school students, Education in Human Values sessions, serving hot meals in the school on Saturdays, supporting displaced families and cleanup, possible walk for values in the community, etc.

We have also been matched with another school, Public School 172 in Brooklyn, by NY City Department of Education. This school has couple of families and teachers who need help. We will determine their needs once the schools are back in session in January.

Narayana Seva needs are winding down now.

As reported in an email on 12/19/12, the following is a conservative list of distribution in NY area so far –

Meals served - over 1500 in the last 7 weeks
Blankets distributed - over 150
Hygiene kits - over 400
Canned Food distributed to over 200 people
Other items distributed include - diapers, formula, wipes, towels, socks, children's clothing (new and gently used)

NJ UPDATE

In NJ we have distributed all of the supplies received from within the Region as well as from other Regions. As reported in an email on 12/19/12, the following is a conservative list of distribution in NJ shore area so far –

Meals served - over 4000
Blankets distributed - over 1000
Hygiene kits - over 500
Uncooked rice - over 300 lbs
Uncooked pasta and sauce - over 300 lbs
School backpacks - over 300
Several cases of baby diapers, formula, wipes, etc.

A meeting was held with Assistant Executive Director of the Arc of Monmouth Organization in NJ. This organization's mission is to improve the lives of persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. Their services include employment and vocational services, health services, residential services, recreation activities, etc. for the intellectually challenged individuals.

One of their training facilities and employment Center building in Long Branch, NJ was flooded which has resulted in extensive damage to the building and is currently inhabitable. Other than building damages, they lost about 30 computers and a server, desks, file cabinets, binders, chairs, refrigerator, freezer, washer, dryer, toiletry kits, etc.

We are working with them to identify their immediate needs and priority. They would like to re-open the back end of the building to resume some of the essential operations.

CLOSING

We continue to express heartfelt gratitude to Swami for making us His instruments in performing service in His name. We are also grateful to the senior members of the Sai Organization and USA National Council officers for their response and support of our efforts. Our sincere thanks to the other Sai Regions in the United States for organizing timely shipment of relief supplies to NY and NJ.

Thank you.

Sai Ram.