

Metropolitan Division Responds to Super Storm Sandy

By Lt. Gov. Forbes Irvine
Metropolitan Division

On Oct. 29 as the East Coast braced for Superstorm Sandy Kiwanians knew the best they could hope for was that the children, the adults, the organizations that we support would start Oct. 30 no worse than the day before.

Sadly, this was not to be. Thousands spent the night fleeing for their lives or watched as their homes became one with the Atlantic.

The following morning members of the Metropolitan Division were out searching, bailing, checking on family and friends. Throughout this the constant sound of sirens pierced the air.

South Shore club Kiwanians Steve Argentine and Jack Biondi found themselves at a place that became known as the Guyon rescue center, a 24-hour center providing food and supplies. They put in 18-hour days serving this neighborhood with the help of Foundation Board Member Herb Chan of the Staten Island Kiwanis Club.

Steve and Jack discovered that an area known as Midland Beach was under-served. Member Ben D'Amato, who has a building yards from the beach, allowed it to be used. Despite the fact that the building had taken 15 feet of water, they set up what became known as 626 for the address, 626 Midland Ave.

They started simply: a tent, some supplies and a old bar-beque. A quick Kiwanis meeting and it was decided that the site would be kept open 24 hours a day. We ordered a Kiwanis banner, Herb Chan hung it and this was now our home.

People kept coming; tired, cold, hungry people with nothing but the clothes on their backs. Two weeks after the storm and still no power. South Shore Kiwanian Tom Beyer, owner of Beyers Market, sent endless trays of food. We were feeding around 400 people a day.

Members from every club in the division came down to 626. The members of NY Young Professionals collected and purchased supplies. Chinatown called and asked what was needed. Past Gov. Mike Malark, Foundation President Sal Anelli and Past Foundation President Lindy Marrazzo were in contact making sure we had what we needed. Lt. Gov. Warren Golden sent his ambulances full of supplies to my house with sirens blaring. My neighbors thought I would be coming out on a stretcher.

It was November, cold and often wet. They are serving hundreds of people a day from tents and nobody complained.

Gary Malandro, a member of the Staten Island Club, also

*Editor's Note:
Kiwanians throughout the area affected by Super Storm Sandy responded to aid their neighbors, often with assistance of Kiwanians from around the district and across the Kiwanis world. This report submitted to the Empire State Kiwanian tells about one of those efforts.*



Volunteers preparing food at 626.

is the President of the Staten Island chapter of The St. Vincent dePaul Society. The society has a 40-foot mobile kitchen. Gary made arrangements to have the trailer sent.

As November changed to December it was decided that 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. was more feasible. December was a busy month. Thousands of items were distributed. As the holidays approached over a thousand toys were given away to neighborhood children that had lost everything.

The Kiwanis relief center was a monumental undertaking, including many not named here. Over the course of this project we partnered with some organizations that were instrumental in keeping us stocked. The New York District and Foundation were heroic in their support as was International, International President Tom DeJulio and International Foundation President Peter Mancuso.

More than \$100,000 was donated by Kiwanians. Governor Al Norato Jr. and District Secretary David Booker made sure that commitment to service was paramount.

Reading this you're probably wondering how this ended? Unfortunately not on our terms.

It was decided that on Christmas Eve an early meal would be served and we would remain closed through Christmas Day and reopen on the 26th. On Christmas Eve Past Lt. Gov. Glenn Mancuso and his wife cooked 80 pounds of ham; 450 people ate that day.

Late on Christmas Day thieves broke into 626 and what they didn't take they destroyed. It was decided we would distribute what we had that the vandals hadn't reached. The theft made the local and national news.

Division 5 K-Kids Fundraiser Benefits KPTC

Key Club Lt. Gov. Alexandra Jannello and the Key Clubs of Division 5 supported by the Farmingdale Kiwanis Club raised \$200 for the Kiwanis Pediatric Trauma Center in January at Bollinger's Family Restaurant in Farmingdale. The restaurant donated 15 percent of the day's receipts to KPTC.

The Bowling Green K-Kids arranged to visit Bollingers at 4 p.m. when their

Faculty Advisor and LISC Kiwanis Service Leadership Chair Rich Santer would be there with family and friends. LISC Lt. Gov.-Elect Ann Torcivia arranged for a birthday bake.

The K-Kids were joined by Long Island South Central Division Lt. Gov. Jim Mancuso, Immediate Past Lt. Gov. Steve Perrick, Farmingdale Kiwanis President Georgiana Sena and many other Kiwanians from East Meadow, Farmingdale and Bethpage Central Park. Also in attendance were Key Clubbers and Key Club Advisors from

Division 5.

K-Kids President Kira took the opportunity to discuss building a new K-Kids with Farmingdale Kiwanis Vice President Patrick and his elementary school aged daughters. Building a K-Kids in Farmingdale was enthusiastically received by the Farmingdale Kiwanis Club and the two Farmingdale students. K-kids President Kira and LISC Service Leadership Chair Rich Santer offered to meet with other students and their parents to begin the chartering process.