



ITEMS



COMMISSION ON VOLUNTARY SERVICE & ACTION

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Spring 2013

CVSA Establishes Ongoing Disaster Relief Volunteer Information & Referral Service

In the wake of Superstorm Sandy, from which tens of thousands of families in working class neighborhoods in the New York metropolitan area are still struggling to recover, Commission on Voluntary Service & Action (CVSA) volunteers spearheaded the formation of a Disaster Relief Volunteer Information & Referral Service to coordinate the urgent work of connecting volunteers with participating organizations involved in disaster relief work. CVSA is conducting ongoing outreach and community education about the continued need for volunteers and is sharing information between organizations struggling with this work. CVSA also provides consultations and training on methodology and strategy for those organizations requesting this assistance.

“Since Superstorm Sandy hit New York in late October, CVSA has promoted and involved volunteers to invest themselves with community-based non-government organizations

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Photo: Tremaine Wright

CVSA Executive Director, Susan Angus (far left), Gus Karakatsanis, CVSA Administrative Assistant (far right) and Jenny Pearlman, (second from right), along with Chong Kou and Xiaonan Guo (fourth and fifth from right), brief a team of LaGuardia Community College student volunteers before they embark on a day of disaster relief in the Rockaways.

Health Care Volunteers Needed for First Free Indigenous-run Hospital in Honduras



Photo: Teofilio Colon, Jr.

Dr. Luther Castillo, founder of the First Popular Garífuna Hospital in Honduras, speaking at Columbia University School of Social Work.

Dr. Luther Castillo, founder of the First Popular Garífuna Hospital in Ciriboya, Colón, on the northern coast of Honduras, was hosted by CVSA and the New York Support Committee for the First Popular Garífuna Hospital, for a week of speaking engagements in New York City in September 2012 in order to build awareness and support for the hospital which he led the indigenous Garífuna community in building in 2006. The hospital, operating on the basis that health care is a human right, is open seven days a week,

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CAAAY/Organizing Asian Communities New York, NY
First Garífuna Popular Hospital, Ciriboya, Honduras
Garífuna Health and Education Support Institute, NY, NY
GRACE Communications, New York, NY
GoodPlanet Foundation, Paris, France
Hour Children, Queens, NY
Smallwater, Queens, NY
United for Action, New York, NY



ITEMS



COMMISSION ON VOLUNTARY SERVICE & ACTION

ITEMS is published quarterly by **Commission on Voluntary Service & Action (CVSA)**, the consultative and coordinating body of more than 200 non-government, voluntary service organizations based in North America that support or place volunteers with projects and programs serving people in the U.S. and internationally. **CVSA** seeks to interpret, extend, promote and support the world of voluntary service and involvement programs, and maintain and expand the ability and right of individuals to donate their time and services to persons, groupings and communities of people in need, free of government restraint.

ITEMS is **CVSA's** newsletter information service for organizational members represented in **INVEST YOURSELF — The Catalogue of Volunteer Opportunities**. **ITEMS** reports and provides analysis of news related to the voluntary service field on a national and international level, as well as political and economic developments relevant to the independent voluntary service sector.

Many volunteers and volunteer organizations learn the hard way: through their own experiences, using trial and error. We find that wasteful and contrary to the basic principle of organization: that an organization is stronger than an individual. Collective experience is therefore also more powerful than that of a single individual, or, for that matter, a single organization.

Your submissions to **ITEMS** of information, news, advice, photographs and graphics depicting your work or simply your comments and concerns are instrumental to the process of growth and advancement of voluntary service as a whole. We always look forward to receiving them.

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Disaster Relief Volunteer Information & Referral

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doing disaster relief work in the hardest hit areas: working class and low-income areas of Staten Island, the Rockaways, Coney Island, parts of Canarsie, Red Hook and low-income areas of Chinatown in downtown Manhattan,” said CVSA Executive Director Susan Angus.

In the first six weeks following the storm, thousands of volunteers showed up in these neighborhoods on a daily basis from all around the city and from across the country. Many community-based organizations began doing disaster relief and some new organizations formed to address the massive need for assistance. These organizations, and the thousands of volunteers who joined them, were also “first responders.” By Christmas week, the ranks of volunteers on the streets began to dwindle. The media coverage of the devastation and the immense bureaucratic and political obstacles to rebuilding and recovering these communities were and are still facing disappeared.

“Three months later, tens of thousands of people are living with mold in their homes or apartments, which they cannot afford to eradicate. This has created a huge public health problem, endangering lives, yet it is rarely discussed in the media, or seriously tackled by any city agency,” Gus Karakatsanis, CVSA Administrative Assistant, told a group of volunteers who signed up for disaster relief volunteer work. “This is why people need organization. No individual can have a significant impact on this massive problem alone.

“We also learned from the organizers of Smallwater, a local nonprofit organization in the Rockaways, that 7,000 people in Rockaway neighborhoods still did not have heat in mid-February because they could not afford to replace the electrical systems that had been destroyed by salt water. This, in turn, prevented them from installing new furnaces. The FEMA aid that was both needed and expected for these repairs had not yet come through. Many have used what savings they had, or gone further into debt, to make these urgently needed repairs themselves,” Karakatsanis explained. “While Wall Street and the casinos of Atlantic City had the funds or access to funds that allowed them to get up and running within days after the storm, low-income working class communities remain devastated with no promise of relief from official sources for months yet to come, if ever.”



Photo: CVSA

CVSA volunteer Jenny Pearlman, center, and two friends on one of their several weekends spent with Occupy Sandy-sponsored efforts to assist families who were getting no assistance from the government.

Six months after the storm, organizations committed to staying in the affected communities, working to bring in resources that people need to restore their lives and continuing the fight for the promised aid, are reporting that volunteers are still needed: for demolition and repair/rebuild work, to advocate to help people with legal problems, health problems, problems with insurance companies, and to appeal denials of assistance from FEMA. Many families and small businesses need help with bogus bills from utility companies for electrical power they did not receive and other bureaucratic nightmares.

Why an Information & Referral Service is Needed

CVSA volunteer Jenny Pearlman reported at a CVSA staff meeting on the development of CVSA's Disaster Relief Volunteer Information and Referral Service. She said that it was mainly a way to tell people where they were needed most. "We received reports from volunteers who had gone out to a Red Cross Aid Station to offer their time and been told to go home, there was nothing for them to do. This was

in the Rockaways, two weeks after the storm, where all around them were people and organizations in desperate need of help! But these volunteers went home, because they didn't know where else to go," Pearlman explained.

Through her volunteer participation with Occupy Sandy, in addition to CVSA, Pearlman assisted in finding out which organizations doing on-the-ground relief work needed volunteers and helped with outreach to refer volunteers to those groups.

"By all accounts, the volunteer-based community groups that are still out there in the low-income and working class communities, after the Red Cross and others left, have done far more than any of the official disaster relief agencies. This is a problem, because they don't have the resources needed to solve the problems, but their presence does empower people to get organized. These groups are the ones who knock on doors, collect and deliver needed supplies in hard-to-reach areas; not the Red Cross and not FEMA. Now the groups who are still there, committed to the long-term fight for recovery, are trying to do advocacy for people on their FEMA claims; advocacy for federal disaster money coming into the state and the city. They are trying to get them things like their furnaces replaced and to address all kinds of other issues preventing recovery — not the least of which is health problems exacerbated by rampant mold in homes and apartments, which no government agency is addressing in any sane, timely or effective manner," said Pearlman.

Disaster Relief Compounded by Lack of Government Response and Language Difficulties

Vivian Truong, organizer for CAAAV/Organizing Asian Communities, a non-profit organization based in Chinatown, explained to students on December 5 at CVSA's International Volunteer Day event at LaGuardia Community College, "The day after the hurricane we did a needs assessment, going up

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Disaster Relief Volunteer Information & Referral

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into the tenement buildings in Chinatown where people had no electricity. What we found was that people did not know what was going on. They don't speak English; could not make or receive phone calls; and had no TV or radio access. In buildings higher than four floors with elevators, the elevators weren't running, so people on the upper floors didn't leave their apartments because it was too dark. We did not see Red Cross or local government officials in the neighborhood for over a week. We put out a call for volunteers and there was an outpouring of volunteers biking over the bridge every day, paying out of their own pockets for things the hurricane victims' families needed.

"We canvassed and found many older folks with no resources, needing food, water and flashlights. We asked our local city council representative to get a stock of flashlights to the neighborhood, but that never came through. We had 500 volunteers every day, but it was frustrating to see the lack of response, or negative response, from City agencies. On the first day of our relief effort, the NYPD tried to shut us down even though they had posted a sign telling people to get help from us."

Troung also reported that they did not see the Red Cross in the neighborhood until the power came on, and when they finally showed up they announced they were "here to coordinate the response." She explained, "They brought food packages that had complicated directions about how to open them — printed in English. So when elderly Chinese people, who could not read English, opened them incorrectly,

the packages started smoking and people threw them out. The Red Cross people saw this problem but did not change what they were doing."

"We have to be out there and be our own 'first responders,'" Troung explained, "but it is the government agencies that have all the money and get all the publicity. We started a legal clinic for people who lost wages or got fired because they couldn't get to work, or because the businesses they worked for were hit by the storm. One of our biggest needs now is for translators to help with these legal advice clinics, and volunteers who will do advocacy work."

Income and Aid Disparities

According to an article in *The New York Times* in September 2012, the median income of the poorest one-fifth of New York City residents in the prior year was \$8,844, while median income of the richest one-fifth was \$223,285. These figures rival the levels of income inequality in the developing countries of the global south.

When Hurricane Sandy swept through the waterfront areas of New York City on October 29, 2012, its destruction was indiscriminate (even Wall Street was without power after Hurricane Sandy struck), but the long-term impact has been disproportionately felt by those with the least resources. "A storm doesn't discriminate where it hits based on race or class," Albert Huang, senior attorney in the Natural Resources Defense Council's (NRDC) urban program said in a February 18, 2013 interview with International Press Service (IPS). "Where we see the disparity usually is in the response to a disaster. Communities with lots of political power and influence are going to get resources."

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Lessons from the Rockaways After Superstorm Sandy

By Daniel Colon (on behalf of the Honors Student Advisory Committee of LaGuardia Community College, Long Island City, New York)

On January 19, 2013 nine of us from the Honors Student Advisory Committee (HSAC), along with Dr. Karlyn Koh, Honors Program Director, and Michele Spencer, our English professor, teamed up with Commission on Voluntary Service & Action (CVSA) to spend a day working with Smallwater in the Rockaways to help them assess the current living conditions of Hurricane Sandy victims so that Smallwater could organize the specific assistance needed by those residents. We went door-to-door, canvassing to find out what the residents still need.

Smallwater is a grassroots group in the Rockaways formed in the wake of Hurricane Sandy. We first learned about them at CVSA's International Volunteer Day event held on our campus on December 5, 2012. When we got to Smallwater's base of operations, a house on 96th Street right in the middle of the disaster area, we received introductions and a brief rundown of the current situation by Matt Calendar, one of the co-founders of Smallwater. We then formed teams and went to different parts of the neighborhood to speak to victims trying to recover.

We were assigned to canvass a neighborhood of the Rockaways (in Queens, New York) that is populated predominantly by working class people of color. What we learned from talking to the people was shocking.



Photo: LaGuardia Community College Honor Students Assoc.

CVSA organizers and LaGuardia Community College students get briefing from Matt Calendar (center, blue cap) of Smallwater on the devastation in the Rockaways, before going on a door-to-door canvass to take requests for help.

Since the storm hit last October, many families are still without proper heating in their homes. Others are still homeless, living from day to day on the couch of a family member or friend, or have been put up in a hotel room by FEMA, where they have no cooking facilities and have to spend money for take-out food that they need to be spending on home repair. The downturn in mainstream media attention to these issues has created a false notion that conditions have improved and life has progressed back to normal for Sandy victims. In reality, this could not be further from the truth.

The Rockaways looked more like a movie set for a new war film than an actual neighborhood. Where a small business once stood, someone's investment and future was

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Lessons from the Rockaways

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a pile of rubble, garbage and a sign of what once was. The live wires of an unstable telephone pole looked like they could fall on an unsuspecting dog-walker with the next strong breeze. Garbage and junk covered the sidewalk between the burnt-down business and that rust-colored telephone pole. And all of this was on one block. Yet, on this same block, not too far from the burnt-down stores, a Social Security building was receiving a generous makeover, with the work being done by a few immigrant workers. This was just the beginning of the ugly truths we would uncover in the Rockaways, close to three months after the storm.

As our door-to-door canvassing progressed, we learned about such common problems as entire basements being turned into swimming pools, and water making its way into living rooms on the first floor and damaging insulation systems and flooring along the way. Many residents spoke of having problems with insurance companies that did not want to cover private property loss. One victim spoke about the unwillingness of her insurance company to pay for the damages to her garage because they claimed that it was a "second home!" In general, the lack of timely government support and assistance has left these residents with no option but to tap into whatever personal savings they or family members can lay their hands on, or to try to borrow to get their lives back on track.

The one complaint that seemed to be echoed by all the families was having to wait for two months after Sandy before electricity and heat became available again. There are numerous homes that had yet to see heat restored. We spoke with a man who lives in a tent in his backyard because his home is uninhabitable. One elderly couple wears masks every day because of severe mold in their home; another woman suffers from breathing problems because of this widespread problem. In addition to mold, many residents are only just discovering that their homes are sitting on top of dangerous sinkholes.

As a result of our involvement that day, our Honors Student Association decided to hold an event on campus to raise awareness and recruit more volunteers. We do not want the Rockaway residents to be left alone in their long journey to overcome the post-Hurricane nightmare. This can happen to any of us, and we need to work together whenever such tragedy strikes.



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CVSA Inspires Annual Celebration of International Volunteer Day

2012 marked CVSA's first annual celebration of International Volunteer Day. "At CVSA, every day is International Volunteer Day, but this year we kicked off what will be an annual event to highlight and strengthen the work of non-governmental volunteer organizations throughout the U.S. and the rest of the world who are striving to reverse the trends of poverty, marginalization and systemic injustice," explained Susan Angus, Executive Director of CVSA. Held at LaGuardia Community College in Long Island City, New York, the event was hosted by the Student Government Association with the theme: "Think Globally, Act Locally." Student Government Vice President Dan Campbell took time from her very busy schedule of classes, work and applying for scholarships to do the legwork on campus, while CVSA brought community-based organizations in need of volunteers to participate in the event.

International Volunteer Day (IVD) has been celebrated around the world on December 5th since 1985 when the commemorative day was established by the United Nations for the purpose of giving recognition to, and promoting the efforts of, volunteers internationally. IVD especially recognizes volunteer efforts with non-government organizations involved in development work in poor countries.

CVSA's IVD program opened with a panel of three speakers from local New York-based organizations that have



Photo: Charles Olson

Ling Tsou of United for Action (right), with Michele Cortez of Smallwater (left), speaking on International Volunteer Day.

been responding to urgent disaster relief and recovery needs in low-income communities devastated by Superstorm Sandy or have been organizing to fight policies that have created dangerous global warming conditions. Vivian Truong of CAAAV/Organizing Asian Communities; Michele Cortez, co-founder of Smallwater; and Ling Tsou of United for Action each spoke passionately about the work of their organizations and their need for more volunteers.

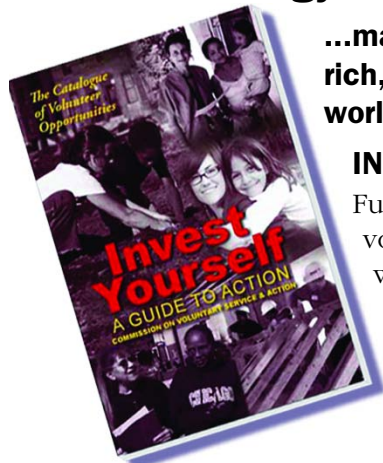
CVSA Executive Director Susan Angus presented *A Thirsty World*, a film by world-renowned aerial photographer and environmentalist, Yann Arthus-Bertrand, in a pre-U.S. release showing by special arrangement with the filmmaker. The film portrays how some non-government organizations (NGOs) around the world have taken the initiative to address the systemic problem of lack of access to clean drinking water. Kai Olso-Sawyer from the Water and Energy Programs of GRACE Communications Foundation joined Angus for a question & answer session after the film, highlighting for the students how the global water crisis relates to their lives in New York.

Several of CVSA's member organizations staffed volunteer information tables during the event: All Stars Project, CAAAV/Organizing Asian Communities, Hour Children, Smallwater, United for Action and Volunteer Crew participated in this volunteer fair.

Over 70 students attended various portions of the event throughout the afternoon. Moved by what she heard from the panel presentations, Freda Raitelu, a LaGuardia Community College honors student, volunteered to organize a brigade of

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CVSA's International Volunteer Day

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LaGuardia students for disaster relief work in the Rockaways, one of the most devastated communities. They asked CVSA to coordinate the trip for them with the Smallwater organization, which was formed the day after Hurricane Sandy and has been mobilizing volunteer crews continuously ever since from a house right in the middle of one of the devastated communities. (See story on page 5.)

Hour Children was represented at the event by their volunteer coordinators, Stephanie Quito and Jessica Truman. Hour Children serves 100 to 145 women and their children each year — mothers who are incarcerated or just coming out of incarceration — by providing care for the children, advocacy for the family, transitional housing and family reunion counseling, among other services. “We feel that events like this spread the much-needed awareness of vital issues occurring in our society,” Truman told CVSA. “I could see that this International Volunteer Day was beneficial to everyone who attended. We certainly gained more volunteers for the Hour Children programs. As a result of attending this event, although Hour Children is not directly involved in Sandy Disaster Relief work because most of the women and families we work with are not in the areas that were hit by the storm, we have decided to establish a relationship with the Smallwater organization in the Rockaways who had several representatives there. We are organizing a service day to bring volunteers on a weekend to help with their relief efforts there. We really appreciated the opportunity to attend this event, meet the other organizations and see this spectacular film,” Truman further explained.

Why International Volunteer Day?

CVSA participated in NGO conferences and briefings at the UN in 2001 for International Year of Volunteers (IYV2001). The purpose of IYV2001 was to complement the UN's launch, in 2000, of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) — a set of time-bound targets to combat poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation and discrimination against women — by boosting awareness of the important role of volunteers and volunteer organizations in developing ways and means for achieving sustainable development while accomplishing the MDGs.

The UN Volunteer Programme (UNVP) has been bringing attention to the role of volunteers in development every



Photo: CVSA

CVSA Administrative Assistant Gus Karakatsanis (center) explaining CVSA's organizer training program to a LaGuardia College student signing up to volunteer as Ming Li, CVSA intern (right) listens.

year through International Volunteer Day commemorations. This year UNVP gave IVD 2012 the theme of “Celebrate our commitment and hope for a better world,” with a primary focus on educating people about the impact of volunteering on peace and sustainable development.

“CVSA decided it was most appropriate for us to put the focus of our International Volunteer Day event on the impact of the thousands of concerned volunteers who had been giving their time and labor on a daily basis to urgently needed disaster relief work with local community-based organizations here in New York since the October 29 hurricane disaster,” said Gus Karakatsanis, CVSA Administrative Assistant. “We felt this theme was especially relevant in light of the lack of responsible action by all levels of government and official aid agencies. It was volunteers organized by independent community groups who came to help those without heat, electricity, water and food for weeks, not the official agencies responsible for their safety and well-being,” Karakatsanis explained.

“We knew that we had to put the focus of our International Volunteer Day event on getting more people involved with the independently organized efforts that were doing the most work toward saving lives and rebuilding communities. In addition, the growing number and frequency of superstorms and natural disasters around the world due to the global problem of climate change — Hurricane Sandy being



another such example — makes the theme ‘Think Globally, Act Locally’ even more appropriate.”

Think Globally, Act Locally

Students gained a global perspective on the serious problem of lack of access to clean water, a condition faced by millions of people around the world, through the showing of *A Thirsty World*. As the film makes clear, this problem is being exacerbated by the effects of global warming which is caused by the high level of carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere from the volume of fossil fuels, such as oil and coal, that industrial countries of the northern hemisphere have burned over the last 50 years.

“The policies of the U.S. government with respect to energy, food production and water allow U.S. corporate interests to pollute water supplies at home and abroad. This has a direct effect on the lives — and deaths — of millions of people in many countries on every continent, because the resources needed for life are shared by everyone on this planet. The problem is, a minority is using or abusing the majority of those resources,” explained Angus in the discussion after the film, “and that is something we have to change.”

The UN Development Programme stated in the forward to the 126-page “State of the World’s Volunteerism Report” issued in 2011 on the Tenth Anniversary of IYV2001, “Volunteer action by which people unite in shared endeavors toward a common purpose is a feature of most societies. As such, it touches the lives of vast numbers of people all over the

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CVSA brings *A Thirsty World* to New York for International Volunteer Day

CVSA was proud to present a special preview of Yann Arthus-Bertrand’s film *A Thirsty World* at the LaGuardia Community College campus on December 5,

2012 for International Volunteer Day. Many students, faculty and community organizers are now looking forward to its availability in the U.S. to be able to show it to others. Yann Arthus-Bertrand, famous for his aerial photography, journalism, environmentalism and founding of the GoodPlanet Foundation, gave CVSA special permission to preview this film, not yet released in the U.S. CVSA has previously promoted and shown Arthus-Bertrand’s film *HOME*, about climate change and global warming.

The new film, first screened in March 2012, in Marseilles, France at the World Water Forum, was produced with support from the French Development Agency, the International Forum Committee and the group France Televisions, and was directed by Thierry Piantanida and Baptiste Rouget-Luchaire. The documentary explores the issues of access to clean water in areas of the world deprived of it.

Some 6,000 children die every day from diseases associated with unsafe water and poor sanitation and hygiene — the equivalent of 20 jumbo jets full of children crashing every day. The film is dedicated to the goal of making that figure a fact of the past. The film is built upon interviews with those who struggle with lack of safe drinking water and showcases locations where people are changing the ways that they manage water. We learn from the film that 85% of all wastewater around the world is not treated, and that approximately 2,900 gallons of water are used to produce one pair of blue jeans. We also meet a Cambodian fisherman who drinks polluted water because he has no other option.

Filmed in 20 countries, the directors fused their reporting with Arthus-Bertrand’s stunning aerial images. The film has not yet been released in the U.S. However, you can host a public screening by contacting www.GoodPlanet.org and they will send a copy for the screening. The GoodPlanet Foundation was created by Yann Arthus-Bertrand in Paris, France to bring ecology to the forefront of awareness and encourage people to take action.



Photo from “A Thirsty World”



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CVSA's International Volunteer Day

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world. Volunteers are motivated by values like those of justice, equality and freedom as expressed in the United Nations Charter. A society that supports and encourages different forms of volunteering is likely to be a society that also promotes the well-being of its citizens. A society which fails to recognize and facilitate the contributions of volunteers deprives itself of contributions to public well-being which could be made."

On International Volunteer Day 2012, CVSA put the spotlight on the volunteer efforts here in New York City towards reversing the situation of utter devastation and distress faced by tens of thousands of poor and working families, many of them immigrants from all over the world, due not only to the hurricane, but also from the poverty and unemployment conditions that existed before the hurricane. CVSA calls on people to volunteer with and support CVSA throughout the year to strengthen the movement of volunteer service and action at home and abroad. For CVSA, every day is an international volunteer day, dedicated to organizing our volunteer power to build a better world. Please join us. 

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Disaster Relief Volunteer Information & Referral

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According to Huang, those who suffered the most during the aftermath of Sandy lived in low-income neighborhoods primarily comprised of minorities, immigrants and the elderly, many of whom live in public housing developments in places like Red Hook, the Rockaways and Coney Island. These public housing developments are run by the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) and shelter five percent of the city's population.

Widespread Mold Major Health Concern

Huang coordinates the environmental justice work of the NRDC, a non-profit organization with 1.3 million members which considers itself the largest environmental action group in the country. He explained that climate change and storm surges exacerbate pre-existing mold and moisture problems in public housing. According to a June 2011 report by the National Academy of Sciences, the build-up of mold and moisture in indoor environments contributes to health-related issues.

In NYCHA buildings, mold and moisture damage from the storm are worsened by the existing problems of broken pipes and leaking roofs. In January 2013, New York Mayor Bloomberg and NYCHA Chairman John Rhea announced a plan to address all 420,000 backlogged open repair work orders by the end of 2013.

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CVSA Disaster Relief Volunteer Information & Referral Service

Since Superstorm Sandy, there have been over a dozen extreme weather disasters in other parts of the country. Science tells us that the lack of succinct and timely action to reverse energy policies that have accelerated global warming, means we can now expect more such storms and disaster conditions.

CVSA will continue to collect information about volunteer needs from organizations in the effected communities, and facilitate the sharing of information and practical experiences between these organizations.

Here in New York, over six months after the storm, grass-roots organizations state their greatest need is for volunteers during weekday, business hours, to make calls and advocate with them on behalf of the people who have still not received their lawfully due insurance compensation or government aid; as well as volunteers to help with physical repair, reconstruction and mold removal. Sandy victims still need help dealing with FEMA, utility companies, insurance companies and city agencies that are not coming through with the services and aid they are responsible to provide. The organizations listed below are dedicated to winning for Hurricane Sandy victims and need your volunteer assistance to do it.

Contact any of these organizations who have joined CVSA's Disaster Relief Volunteer Information & Referral Service, or call CVSA for information about additional organizations not listed here. Disaster relief organizations that want to join with CVSA for the collective benefit of reaching more volunteers, sharing experiences and methods for growth should call Gus at (718) 482-8724.

Occupy Sandy

<http://interoccupy.net/occupysandy/> (347) 770-4520
Main distribution center: Ascension Parish Hall at
122 Java St., Greenpoint, Brooklyn, NY
Help with demolition and rebuilding, medical services,
legal services, sorting donations at drop-off points and
office support. On-the-job training is provided.

Respond & Rebuild

74-16 Beach Channel Dr., Queens, NY 11692
(631) 495-7321
Committed to environmentally sustainable,

community-controlled rebuilding of the Rockaways.
Focus is currently on mold remediation.

Smallwater

183 Beach 96th St., Rockaway Beach, NY 11693
(718) 974-5834
A grass-roots disaster-relief initiative based in
the Rockaways, formed out of necessity in the
immediate aftermath of Sandy by residents invested
in rebuilding a sustainable Rockaway community.
Volunteers canvass, help with distributions and
deliveries, light demolition, advocacy and more.

INVEST
YOURSELF

How long are you going to wait and hope for change?

Work with others now to reverse devastating and unjust conditions facing people in the U.S. and the rest of the world, starting with the fundamentals of access to food, health care, shelter, water, literacy and jobs at living wages, as well as disaster relief, care for the aged and disabled, rights of prisoners, environmental protection, sustainable development and more. **INVEST YOURSELF** in building the change and solutions needed!

**Join us! Call Commission on Voluntary Service & Action
at (718) 482-8724 about how to volunteer.
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www.cvsainvestyourself.org



CVSA's International Volunteer Day

**LaGuardia Community College
Long Island City, NY December 5, 2012**

*sponsored by
LaGuardia Community College
Student Government Association*

Every day is International Volunteer Day at CVSA, but 2012 marked the first annual CVSA celebration of this United Nations-designated day with students, faculty and others at LaGuardia Community College.

Participants learned first hand from community-based organizations how they can take action around local and international problems and needs.

A panel discussion highlighted the need for disaster relief volunteers in low-income New York City communities hit by Hurricane Sandy, and the screening of *A Thirsty World* by Yann Arthus-Bertrand tied the issues being addressed into the global context.



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(1) Susan Angus, Commission on Voluntary Service & Action Executive Director, speaking of "A Thirsty World" with Kai Olson-Sawyer, Senior Research and Communications (2) Piedad Calle, CVSA volunteer, signing up (3) Dan Campbell, Vice President of LaGuardia Community College Student Government, explaining why she feels it is so important for students to get involved (4) Kai Olson-Sawyer a question after the film (5) Allen Scribner, Office Manager of LaGuardia Community College, urging students to "ask not what your country can do for you" (6) Participants networking and signing up (7) Michele Cortez, co-founder of Smallwater in the Rockaways speaking about the disaster relief and recovery (8) The panel presentation that opened the event and making plans (9) Shirley Zhong Zong Xu, CVSA volunteer, signing up (10) Truong, Program Coordinator for CAAAV/Organizing Asian Communities in Chinatown (11) Jessica Turman and Stephanie Quito, Volunteer Coordinators (12) Kai Olson-Sawyer, GRACE Communications, and Susan Angus, CVSA



Think Globally — Act Locally!



Photography by Charles Olson



Director, leading the Q & A discussion session post screen-
policy Analyst for the Water and Energy Programs of GRACE
a LaGuardia Community College student to volunteer
Student Government Association, who sponsored the event on
involved (4) Ling Tsou, organizer of United for Action asking
Manager of the Student Government Association, LaGuardia
do for you, but what you can do for your country,” and invit-
ning up to volunteer (7) Student asking a question after the
aking about the urgent need for more volunteers to help with
the event (10) Organizers and students exchanging informa-
g students in and giving each a conference packet (12) Vivian
ities explaining the disaster relief work they are doing in
ators for Hour Children, at their volunteer information table
SA, answering specific questions from students.





Disaster Relief Volunteer Information & Referral

Continued from page 10

But Huang points out that that even if NYCHA does address all 420,000 work orders, it won't be enough. "They show up with bleach and sponges and they wash off all the mold from the walls, but until you eliminate the moisture problems inside the walls, you'll continue to have mold problems," he said.

LaGuardia Community College Students Volunteer in the Rockaways

On January 19, 2013 a group of honor association students from LaGuardia Community College went with CVSA to work with Smallwater, a small, community based, all-volunteer disaster relief organization on 96th Street in Rockaway Beach. Smallwater was formed within days of the storm by local residents who owned or worked in small restaurants there, and has been aiding hundreds of people and families in sections of the Rockaways that are primarily low-income communities of home-owning working and

retired people, many originally from the Caribbean as well as other countries around the world.

Immediately after the hurricane, Smallwater set up a tent and took over an empty house to be able to respond to basic survival needs within the community. They received collections of cleaning and food supplies, and did almost daily deliveries of these materials, as well as serving hot prepared food to residents. Now they are trying to organize more resources to be able to provide legal advice to help residents deal with FEMA, insurance companies, city agencies and other advocacy needs. They have transitioned from being an immediate needs distribution center and now focus their attention on more long-term efforts like canvassing the neighborhood to find out what residents still need, so they can work to fill those requests, which may include assistance with demolition, mold abatement, clearing debris that still remains, or providing advocacy with FEMA and insurance companies. Their current goal is to develop the operation into an ongoing community center to help revitalize the life of the area.

After a day of leading a team of volunteers from LaGuardia Community College to the Rockaways to work

Global Warming, Superstorms and the Fight Against 'Fracking'

At CVSA's International Volunteer Day event on December 5, 2012, Ling Tsou, an organizer with United for Action, explained how the gases released into the atmosphere during the process of hydraulic fracturing operations, known as "fracking," contribute to the rapidly rising temperatures of the earth's atmosphere and oceans, which are primary factors creating mega-storms like Sandy.

"Hurricane Sandy was approximately twice the size of the average hurricane that frequents the United States. According to scientists, if we continue on the path we are headed, burning fossil fuels and increasing CO₂ emissions at unprecedented rates, this kind of extreme weather will be the new normal. According to Kevin Ternberth, senior scientist at the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder, Colorado, "All weather events are affected by climate change because the environment in which they occur is warmer and moister than it used to be." This is going to continue happening unless we drastically reduce our carbon footprint in the country as a whole.

"Scientists have linked fracking for natural gas or methane gas, to global warming and climate change. The

gas industry's own data has shown that 6% of cement well casings fail immediately in the first year. Methane gas migrates and leaks in 6.2% to 7.2% of newly installed wells. In a lecture given at New School University in November 2012, Mark Jacobson, Ph.D., Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering and Director, Atmosphere/Energy Program at Stanford University, said methane gas or natural gas is a powerful greenhouse gas causing global warming far worse than carbon dioxide. In a 20-year time-frame, methane gas is 85 times to 105 times more powerful than carbon dioxide as a cause for global warming. Methane gas causes more global warming than coal. This has been corroborated by Professors Robert Howarth, Renee Santoro and Anthony Ingraffea of Cornell University's Agriculture, Energy & the Environment Program (AEEP), in studies published in April 2011.

"Hurricanes are driven by warmer ocean temperatures. The average ocean temperature has risen 10 times higher and faster in recent years. At this rate, the arctic sea ice will disappear in 10 to 20 years. If we continue increased use of fossil fuels and do not stop fracking for methane gas, we will see more extreme storms than Sandy occurring more



with Smallwater, Pearlman, reported, “It seems that many residents are now hiring private contractors to fix their homes that they may not be able to afford because, months later, they still have no response from federal agencies and programs like FEMA and Rapid Repairs. Of the residents that did receive federal money, it was clearly not enough to fix what had been destroyed. While we were out canvassing, we met one older gentleman whose entire basement and first floor had been flooded and FEMA offered him \$1600 to gut and rebuild. You can’t even lay a floor for that amount.”

FEMA Aid Process Sows Division in Communities

In early February, Angus and Karakatsanis met with Smallwater’s co-founders, Matt Calendar and Michele Cortez to offer them training and assistance with how to make better use of their volunteers. Calendar enumerated the difficulties

and the injustices that they are trying to organize to defeat. He explained: “FEMA is giving loans, not grants. These people cannot afford loans! Even at 1% or 3%, they can’t afford it and don’t want it. What is worse is that the process of applying and getting the loans, and how those who do get grants get them, pits people against each other, at a time when we need people working together.”

Calendar explained what they have learned from talking to hundreds of people in the area. “The FEMA process is this: Many people did get small initial grants for renting temporary apartments for two or three months, or making immediate urgent repairs — but those grants were \$3,100 at tops, no one got more than that, which does not go far toward renting an apartment in New York while you are trying to repair your house. Few have gotten what they needed in the meantime to make the repairs. Some people are living in tents now, or in their unheated homes.”

Calendar continued, “Beyond that, everyone applying for larger grants for the repairs needed and losses incurred have been told they must first apply for small business loans

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frequently, flooding coastal areas where most people live. People will be displaced and agricultural land will be lost. There will be more droughts and fires in the west than we have seen this year.

“Hydraulic fracturing is going on in 34 states in the U.S. to extract natural gas or methane gas trapped deep down in the shale rocks. For each well, first the gas company clears 5 acres of land (about 2-3 football fields) cutting down about 3500 trees, to build a wellpad, plus miles of access roads and pipe routes.

“Then they drill vertically down 3,000 to 8,000 feet, drilling past aquifers which supply our drinking water, until the well hits the shale rocks, followed by horizontal drilling for up to a mile. For each “frack”, 3 to 8 million gallons of fresh water mixed with sand and up to 400 tons of chemicals acting as lubricants, is pushed down the well under such intense pressure that it causes a small earthquake which fractures the shale rock and releases the gas, together with some really nasty stuff (naturally occurring volatile organic compounds such as barium, uranium, radium, radon and radioactive elements). Fracking is akin to exploding a dirty bomb under extreme pressure deep in our shale rocks.

“Those 3 to 8 million gallons of fresh water coming from our streams, rivers and lakes are lost forever. About 60% of the fracking fluid (polluted permanently) stays

underground and migrates through fissures in the shale rocks into our aquifers and contaminates our drinking water. The other 40% of the waste water comes up with the release of the gas and is dumped into huge open air flowback pits or mud pits, some with plastic lining and some without. Part of this seeps back underground, further contaminating our water supply, and part of this evaporates into the air, polluting our air.

“Gather people in your home, your school, your church or any groups you belong to and organize a meeting to show the documentary film *Gasland* or just to have a discussion about the issues. If you need help and a speaker, please contact us at United for Action and we’ll be happy to help. Organize the students in your school to demand your school’s board of trustees divest its investments in fossil fuels and invest in renewable energies. This is how students helped stop Apartheid in South Africa.

“Fracking and global warming are among the most critical issues of our lifetime, affecting our future and that of our children and their children. If we don’t do anything, we’re sure to face catastrophe soon. A voice can change a room, a room can change a city, a city can change a state, a state can change a country and we can change the world. Together we can stop this and we must. United for Action can be contacted at (917) 513-6291 or www.unitedforaction.org.”





Internationalist Call for Garífuna Hospital Volunteers and Support

Continued from page 1

and provides all services free of charge in an area never previously serviced for health care.

Dr. Castillo's CVSA-sponsored tour included presentations at Weill Cornell Medical School with first year Global Health students on September 6th; New School University on September 7th; Columbia University School of Social Work on September 9th sponsored by the Latina/o Caucus and culminated with an event CVSA held at Trinity Church on Wall Street in the Parish Hall on September 12th titled "An Exposition on an Alternative Model for Healthcare Delivery in Honduras" in which Dr. Castillo presented the healthcare approach they use, based on community, prevention and cultural pertinence, as a model for use in all developing countries. Another talk was added that night, before his return to Honduras, with students at the New York University Center



Dr. Luther Castillo speaking at New School University.

Photo: Teófilo Colón, Jr.

for Global Affairs. In between the university presentations, Dr. Castillo took a day to visit with a local non-governmental, community-based all-volunteer organization of medical professionals and low-paid working people, the Coalition of Concerned Medical Professionals, where he exchanged experiences with volunteer doctors and organizers about their respective fights for comprehensive and preventive health care as a right.

The New York City speaking tour in September gave many students and church leaders the opportunity to learn for the first time about the Garífuna people as well as the achievements of the First Popular Garífuna Hospital. Dr. Castillo explained the social, economic and political situation in Honduras, where a strong resistance movement has developed since the June 2009 coup d'état that illegally removed the popularly-elected President, Manuel Zelaya, as the context surrounding the hospital's struggle to develop its community health care program.

"The summer of 2013 will mark an important turning point not only for the Garífuna Hospital and the Garífuna community in Honduras, but for the majority of Hondurans who are hoping for change and working for an electoral victory this fall to put a new party, Libertad y Refundación (LIBRE), in government. The LIBRE presidential candidate is Xiomara Castro de Zelaya, wife of Manuel Zelaya, who has over 70% of the peoples' support," explains Celso Castro, head of the New York Support Committee for the First Popular Garífuna Hospital.



Photo: Teófilo Colón, Jr.

Students and people from the community at New School University listening to Dr. Castillo's presentation.



Photo: Teofilo Colon, Jr.



Photo: Teofilo Colon, Jr.

Susan Angus, CVSA Executive Director, joins Dr. Luther Castillo for the question and answer period after his presentation at New School University.

Celso Castro, head of the NY Support Committee for the First Popular Gar funa Hospital.

CVSA is continuing to work with the New York Support Committee which has now expanded its mission and recently changed its name to the Garífuna Health and Education Support Institute, reaching out for more members and volunteers to help build needed support for the hospital's physical expansion and region-wide health care program. The Institute seeks to build relationships with more medical schools and exchange programs for health care personnel to come to Honduras, and to organize donations of needed equipment and supplies to mitigate the dire lack of resources available in Honduras.

"Increased international awareness this summer, and support for the peoples' struggle in Honduras is extremely important, especially with the blackout of truthful in-depth coverage on the situation in mainstream media in the U.S.," explained Castro. "Honduras, once again, has become a dangerous place to organize for justice and for people's rights because of how it is being cut off from the awareness of people in the U.S. who care and would not stand for this."

The local peoples' anger against the current Honduran government is aimed at the policies it is carrying out: rapid and large-scale privatization, placing control of land owned by indigenous communities, services, natural resources and utilities, such as water, in the hands of foreign private corporate interests; as well as the increase of "death squad" murders of activists, journalists and union organizers and the withdrawal of resources for basic necessities, including health care, from the majority of the population.

Although the June 2009 removal by force of President Manuel Zelaya was recognized by the majority of the countries

Isidra Sabio, (left), New York Support Committee member, with Nina Woolley, (middle) Weill Cornell Global Health Teaching Associate who organized the Global Health Seminar for Dr. Castillo at the medical school, and Susan Angus, (right) CVSA Executive Director.



Photo: Celso Castro

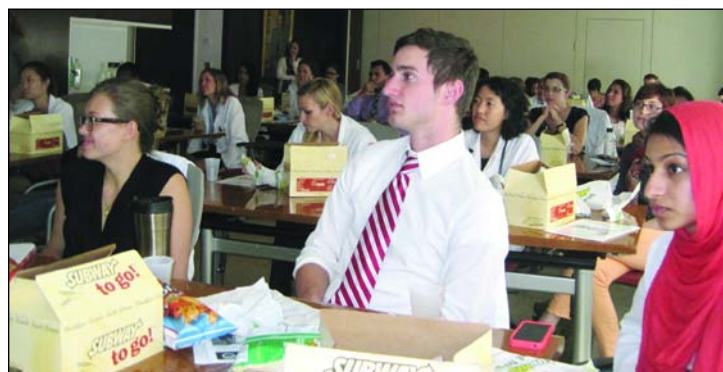


Photo: Celso Castro

Medical students at Weill Cornell Medical School listening to Dr. Castillo.



Photo: Celso Castro

Weill Cornell Medical School student talking with Dr. Castillo after the presentation.

of the world as an illegal coup d'etat, the United States government would not use that term and maintained its military aid to the coup government of Honduras without interruption. The U.S. then endorsed elections that excluded the illegally ousted President's party. Because of this anti-democratic U.S. action, and despite the demands of the majority of nations in the world for the re-instatement of the lawfully elected President, the new elections proceeded and produced current President Porfirio Lobo.

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Garifuna Hospital

Continued from page 17

A Jesuit Central American University survey released in January 2013 reported that the majority of the citizens of Honduras are extremely leery and distrustful of the current government, including the Congress, President Porfirio (Pepe) Lobo and his entire cabinet.

Manuel Zelaya's government had supported the new Garífuna Hospital in 2007 and provided much needed stipends for its doctors. That support was cancelled after the coup, and never reinstated. Since the coup, the medical staff, including all of the Honduran doctors and doctors from abroad — primarily from Cuba — work pro-bono, with a meager stipend to cover basic living necessities.

What is at Stake?

Honduras is the second poorest country in the western hemisphere, second to Haiti. It has long been a country whose wealth is exported to the North, with a few powerful industry- and land-owning Honduran elite families and two U.S. corporations — Dole and Chiquita — enriched while the majority of the people remain extremely poor. The Garífuna people, descendants of the Carib and Arawak Indians and African slaves who were brought to the Caribbean by the Spanish colonialists in the 1600s, have a proud heritage of fighting for their freedom. When two Spanish slave ships were shipwrecked in the West Indies in 1635, the slaves escaped and swam to the shore of St. Vincent



Photo: CVSA

(Left to right) Susan Angus, CVSA Executive Director; Jenny Pearlman, CVSA volunteer; Gus Karakatsanis, CVSA Administrative Assistant; Celso Castro, NY Support Committee for the First Popular Garífuna Hospital; Henrik Miti, CVSA volunteer; Dr. Luther Castillo; Stefanny Andujar, (in red sweater) head of Columbia University School of Social Work (CUSSW) Latino Caucus; and other CUSSW students.

where they were welcomed by the Carib Indians. They intermarried and formed a distinct language and culture and became known as the Black Caribs. In the late 1700s the English planned to commence large-scale sugar plantations on St. Vincent and tried to re-enslave them or get them off the island. The Black Caribs plotted to get the English off the island, but in 1795 war broke out between the Garífuna, led by the legendary Chief Chatoyer (or "Satuye"), and the British. The Black Caribs, or Garífuna, fought for two years, losing half their population, finally escaped the island and landed on an island off the Honduran coast. They soon moved to the mainland and there they survived and prospered. Garífuna communities became established in the coastal northern regions of Honduras, Nicaragua, Guatemala and Belize. The Garífuna make up 12% of the Honduran population, with their language, customs and culture intact.



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Photo: First Popular Garifuna Hospital

Even before the health center was complete, the community used the unfinished building space for consultations with the volunteer doctors.



Photo: First Popular Garifuna Hospital

Mothers eagerly wait with their children to see a doctor.

Luther Castillo Harry is native to this area of Honduras. There were no doctors there as he grew up, and certainly no Garífuna doctors. When someone was seriously ill, it took many hours and a team of people to carry the person down the road to get to a small boat, to travel many more hours to get to a bus, to then get to the city where there was a hospital.

Dr. Castillo was among six other young Hondurans who jumped at the opportunity in 1999 to receive a medical education and become a doctor when the Latin American School of Medicine (ELAM) opened its doors in Havana, Cuba offering scholarships to young committed people from Central American and Caribbean countries who pledged to return to their underserved areas and bring medical care to their people. Among the doctors of the ELAM's first graduating class in 2005 was Luther Castillo. Each summer during the six years of medical school, he and fellow Honduran students volunteered their summer vacations to do medical brigade work in their home villages. During that time Castillo established a foundation to begin organizing the

resources that would be needed for a health center, and called it "For the Health of Our People" (Luagu Hatuadi Waduhenu in Miskito language). When he returned with his degree in 2006, he moved ahead with his dream of building a health facility where there had never been one before, and providing health care services for the Garífuna people by doctors who speak the language and share their culture.

Castillo organized the community to participate by first donating the land, clearing the land, and once cinder blocks were donated, laying the blocks. The hospital was built and officially inaugurated by the community in December of 2007, having received donations of basic supplies and equipment such as hospital beds from a non-profit organization in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania called Global Links. After that, Dr. Castillo, together with the Cuban Medical Mission in the area undertook a second phase in which the Cubans donated x-ray equipment, ultrasound and other laboratory machines, as well as Cuban personnel to run the machines, to make it a more comprehensive diagnostic center.

In his presentations, Dr. Castillo showed films and photos of how the entire Garífuna community participated in building the hospital and how the presence of the hospital has uplifted the entire community.

The Garífuna Hospital not only saves hundreds of individual lives each year, but also improves the overall health of the whole community in which it operates as they engage in research to advance the knowledge and treatment of certain health conditions among Garífuna communities. They have completed a study on breast cancer in the area, and now are in the process of preparing studies on sickle-cell anemia, cervical cancer and chronic kidney disease. As of January 2013 the hospital has provided over 800,000 consultations and treatments and carried out many special projects to address the root causes of illnesses and health problems that are common in the community.

Dr. Castillo explained how, in just 5 years, the hospital has lowered the infant mortality rate from 30.8 per 1,000 births to 10.1 per 1,000 births, with the maternal mortality rate dropping from 48.1 per 10,000 births to 22.4 per 10,000 births. It has inspired successful programs to improve water quality, a program for the control and prevention of hypertension, and a diabetes program, through the integration of Garífuna traditions and culture with the health care program, and through treating health care as a right, delivering it free of charge.

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Garifuna Hospital

Continued from page 19

Each of Dr. Castillo's presentations concluded with his vision of the next phase, a new wing of the hospital, which would turn it into a much-needed regional hospital.

Their accomplishments and approach have inspired a number of global health departments of U.S. medical schools, such as Cornell University (Ithaca), as well as the Weill Cornell Medical School program in New York, to include the hospital in their list of available placements for students to study and practice abroad. However, the current political turmoil in Honduras has caused them to hesitate to send medical students to do internships there.

Dr. Castillo's work at this time continues to include travel and speaking all over the world about the example this hospital provides for alternative, sustainable, health care delivery in poor, developing countries, treating health care as a right and delivering it free of charge. All funds raised from his presentations go directly to the hospital.

Castillo's 'In Defense of The Health of Our People' Campaign

Just before coming to New York in September, Dr. Castillo succeeded in convincing President Lobo to sign into law a Healthcare Model Agreement between the Ministry of Health and the First Popular Garifuna Hospital. The document, officially published as "Law Decree 252012," designates the Garifuna Hospital as the model for what Hondurans should have access to in all 298 municipalities of the country, and assigns responsibilities to the university system, the Health Department, the mayors of each municipality and the Planning and External Cooperation office (SEPLAN) to work with the Garifuna Hospital in planning and installing an



A busload of Honduran ELAM medical students arrive at the hospital to volunteer their summer as a Medical Brigade on home territory.



Teams of Honduran ELAM medical students form Medical Brigades each summer to provide medical care to people in their native tongue, with full knowledge and understanding of the culture.



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integrated health care system of this nature throughout the country. This is a great victory on paper, however the decree commits no funds for the implementation of this declaration, nor any enforcement mechanism or timeframe. No steps have been taken to implement this law. “And so in order to fight for health care for our people, we must not only be doctors, we must be organizers. We must defend the human rights of our people,” Dr. Castillo explains, “and we will continue to organize and fight for this law to be put into effect.”

Join the Support Committee

Dr. Luther Castillo is calling for people in the United States who are in solidarity with the social movements of the poor and the indigenous people of Honduras to help organize resources needed for the hospital, and to volunteer during the summer of 2013 with their community campaigns in defense of the health of the people and in the building of a new wing for the hospital. While volunteer doctors, medical students, nurses and other medical professionals are needed the most, people with non-medical skills who are willing to make a commitment of at least six weeks, are welcome to contact Celso Castro for more information about work they can do as volunteers with the hospital.

In the New York City area there are over 100,000 Garífuna who have migrated over the past several decades from Honduras and Belize, looking to build a better life, working and sending resources back home. But you don't need to be Garífuna to join the support committee and volunteer with the Garífuna Health and Education Support Institute. For more information about how you help, contact Celso Castro at (718) 841-3643. 

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Disaster Relief Volunteer Information & Referral

Continued from page 15

through FEMA, including residents. Most people who made those applications have been denied on the basis they did not have good credit. Once you are denied for the loan, then and only then are you eligible to apply for grant assistance. Those who get grant assistance after being deemed a bad credit risk for the loan assistance are getting grants varying in size from a few thousand dollars to \$30,000.

People Need Organization and Solidarity, Not Charity

“What we found is people getting angry because if they had good credit, the only assistance they could get was loans, which they cannot afford and do not want. The people who are denied loans because they have bad credit can then apply for grants. Most people aren't getting anything, but when a neighbor gets \$30,000 and you got nothing, people wonder why a neighbor got so much more than you did. We started seeing all kinds of negative relations developing in the community. Unless we build community solidarity and some unity towards the common goal of rebuilding the area for all those who live here — together — people will become more separated from each other than ever because of this bureaucratic process.”

Community based groups like Smallwater that help residents fight for their needs are crucial in the recovery process, and they need more volunteers now. See the list on page 11 of additional New York organizations that need volunteers. Volunteers are especially needed to assist with advocacy for residents who are being taken advantage of by electric companies, employers, landlords, insurance companies and others who see this time of vulnerability as a profitable business venture to exploit. 



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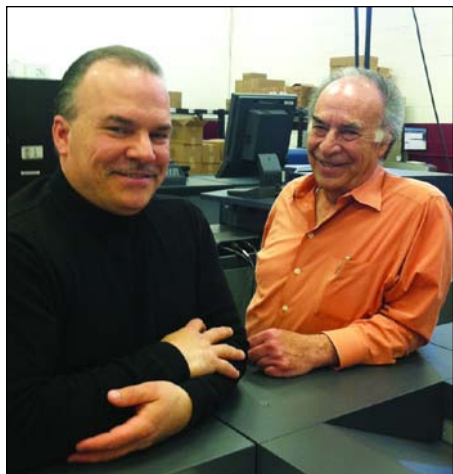


Photo: Julie McGee

Charles Basile and Al Basile, Sr.

The Wall Street Group, Inc., a family-owned and run commercial and financial printing company established in 1966, has been donating the paper and printing for CVSA's membership newsletter, *ITEMS*, since 1998. Since October 29,

2012, however, the

people of Wall Street Group, Inc., have been working around the clock to rebuild and refurbish their shop. That was the day Hurricane Sandy hit the New York Metropolitan area.

Mr. Al Basile Sr., his two sons Al Jr. and Charles, as well as his partner Philip McGee, his daughter Julie McGee and several very dedicated employees spent many hours in the frigid cold darkness piecing their company back together after Superstorm Sandy sent 7-foot waves from New York harbor crashing into their printing plant with a devastating effect.

Five months after the hurricane, Wall Street Group, Inc. is now back up and running and seeking business to help make up for four months of downtime!

For well over the first month they had no power or phone service. They limped through the seemingly never-ending winter with nothing more than a few electric heaters, because it was impossible to find enough generators at that point. They used the handful of heaters to be able to work on clean up and to keep the sprinkler system from freezing solid.

Several hundred feet of sheetrock, as well as entire offices, had to be torn down and removed to avoid mold. Dozens of transformers, electrical pumps, motors, rollers and compressors had to be pulled out and replaced. Many of their 45 employees had to be put on unemployment temporarily. Many high-end digital presses, bindery machines and mail-room machines were damaged beyond repair.

Several 40" Heidelberg 4- and 6-color presses, Muller Martini bindery machines, Buscros inkjet machines and Pitney Bowes mailing machines had to be taken apart, cleaned, oiled and put back together after replacing countless motors, belts and electrical components at a cost of thousands of dollars.

There were too few to do the work of what should have been a small army, removing tons of damaged and soaking wet paper stock — both printed and blank — finding solace in an occasional slice of cold pizza. Washing down and spraying mold inhibitor for an entire building of 32,000 feet, reinstalling sheetrock, spackling and painting walls and



Photo: Julie McGee

The devastated production floor and ruined equipment after the storm.



Photo: Julie McGee

The press floor restored, now up and running.



floors became a daily event, all while attending to any customers who could be contacted via cell phones, and putting things in order bit by frustrating bit, day by day.

Nearly five months later, despite having the maximum flood insurance coverage allowed, Wall Street Group, Inc. has received no payments whatsoever from its insurance companies, and none of the widely-publicized assistance from FEMA or any governmental agencies — local, state or federal. They have received nothing and are still waiting, and still fighting for what is rightfully their due.

Mr. Basile expressed concern for other business people, “Despite the absence of news coverage on this, thousands of businesses are still going through this same struggle. Many, unfortunately, did not have the stamina and ability to fight through what it takes to re-open as we were able to do here at The Wall Street Group, Inc.”

Mr. Basile expressed the strong position that one should not have to contract a lawyer and spend additional funds — funds that are urgently needed now for survival of the company — in order to get what is already your due; especially not when a company, like his, did everything required, keeping all their insurance policies up to date and paid in full.

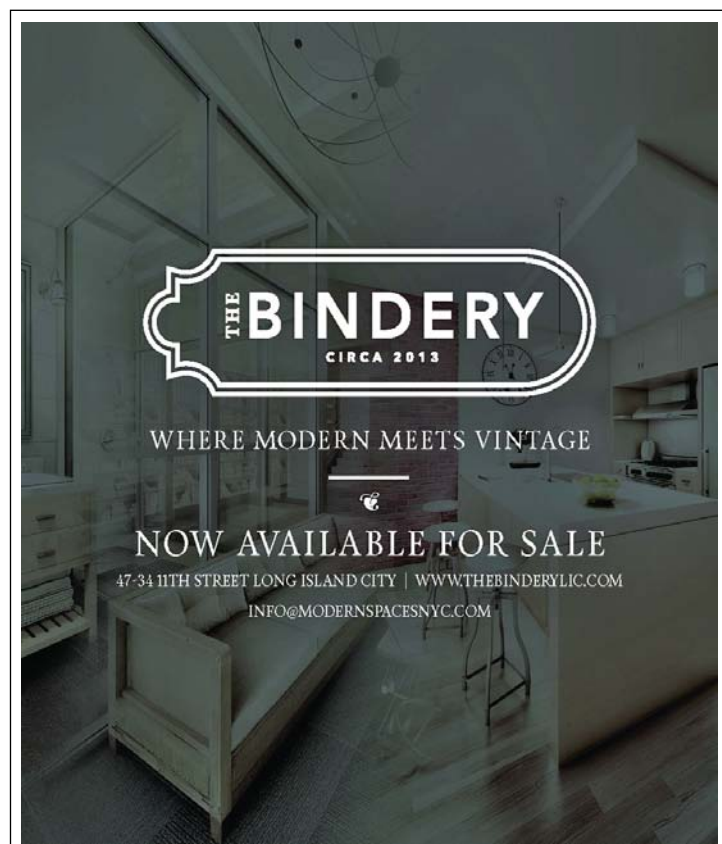


Photo: Julie McGee

The binding and collating floor back in operation.

Thanks to everyone’s hard work, they are operating once again in their Jersey City, New Jersey Liberty State Park location where they have been since 1985, providing jobs to 45 dedicated employees and producing top-quality printing and/or fulfillment services to the tri-state area and beyond.

Wall Street Group, Inc. has always been there for the community. CVSA asks you to support Wall Street Group, Inc. now, by bringing your printing business to them. Contact Charles Basile at charlesb@wallstreetgroup.com.



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RECYCLE by PASSING IT ON!

When you finish reading this issue of *ITEMS*, **don't** toss it in the recycle bin! Recycle this newsletter by sharing it with friends and colleagues. Or bring it to your local library, place of worship, school or college! That's a great way to build the movement while still saving the environment!

If you have received this publication in error, please call (718) 482-8724 and let us know we have the wrong address for the person the publication is addressed to so we may update our records.

Organizing Our Volunteer Power to Build a Better World!

Volunteer with CVSA to strengthen the voluntary service & action movement

CVSA needs volunteers for these areas of work:

Membership Organization Communications, Consultations and Training

Volunteers can participate in our site visits, consultations and training workshops with member organizations of CVSA. Help maintain and build more arenas of communication with member organizations around the country; collect news for the newsletter.

***INVEST YOURSELF* Publications Production**

Every Wednesday night, Saturday afternoon and all day Fridays. On the job training is provided in these work sessions. If you have skills in writing, editing, proofreading, desktop publishing or photoshop — you can help us even more!

Volunteer Outreach Phoning

Ongoing contact with public libraries, colleges, universities, faith-based organizations, schools and professional organizations through phoning, mailings and meetings all year round to keep increasing the distribution and use of *INVEST YOURSELF* catalogue.

***INVEST YOURSELF* Distribution and Circulation**

Phoning to people we've already met about the current volunteer needs and activities of CVSA; a vital part of keeping the movement growing. We do volunteer phone training on Monday and Wednesday evenings, as well as weekdays.

Volunteer Organizer Training & Education

Information tables and speaking engagements throughout the New York metropolitan area. This is CVSA's most valuable means of connecting with people from all walks of life looking for meaningful and productive volunteer opportunities. Volunteers help with these activities and help set them up.

Volunteer Community Outreach Events

All CVSA volunteers and staff of member organizations are welcome to participate in our organizer training program which includes on-the-job practical training as well as classes on history, strategy and methods of organizing, and current world affairs.

Call CVSA at (718) 482-8724 to schedule an orientation or time to volunteer.