



Madison, 2, plays with blocks at a child care center in New Jersey. We are using support from our donors to help the center restore an essential program to children and families. Photo: Susan Warner for Save the Children

## **HURRICANE SANDY: Your Support Serving Children, Families and Communities Six-month Progress Report – April 2013**



**Save the Children®**

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## Save the Children's Hurricane Sandy Response: A Note of Gratitude

Dear Friends:

Last October, Hurricane Sandy inflicted an estimated \$71 billion in damage in New Jersey, New York and Connecticut. Six months later, a visit to any coastal community from Atlantic City to Atlantic Beach demonstrates how far the region has come, yet how much remains to be done.

Thanks to your generosity, Save the Children is right where we should be—in some of the hardest-hit places and where children are most in need, just as we were in the very first hours after the storm.

When children in evacuation centers needed comfort and protection, you made sure we could deliver food, hygiene supplies, blankets, winter clothes and toys. When children did not have safe places to play and begin to recover from stress and uncertainty, you helped us deploy disaster-tested *Child-Friendly Spaces* throughout the region.

Your support is now behind our daily work as communities and families recover. We're partnering with local child care providers as they restore services on which working families depend. We're helping children rebound through workshops that strengthen their coping skills. We're training child care providers, schools and emergency management leaders in emergencies so they're prepared when the next crisis occurs. And we're advocating for states and communities to adopt basic regulations in preparedness, response, and recovery to ensure the safeguarding of children.

Hurricane Sandy was a reminder that any disaster has the greatest impact on families living in poverty and those with the fewest resources to help them recover. Despite progress in prioritizing U.S. children's needs in emergency preparedness, there is still a long way to go at the local, state and national levels in incorporating children into emergency plans. This lack of planning led us to purchase food for children when we found food shortages in shelters and to arrange for school buses to pick up children at shelters when families remained there for weeks.

Over the next six months of our Hurricane Sandy response—and in all of our domestic disaster work that takes place in high-risk communities—we will be reaching children, building local resiliency and increasing the focus on children's needs before and after an emergency. I thank you again and look forward to updating you later this year on our Hurricane Sandy response.

Warmly,



Carolyn Miles  
President & CEO



Photo: Susan Warner for Save the Children

## Hurricane Sandy: The Superstorm that Stunned a Region



In April 2013, the World Meteorological Organization retired “Sandy” as a name for storms, given the hurricane’s impact in places like this Queens, New York neighborhood. Photo: Susan Warner for Save the Children

Hurricane Sandy was one of the most destructive storms the northeastern United States has ever seen. Its landfall along the New Jersey, New York and Connecticut coastlines on October 28-30, 2012, impacted communities and major urban areas from Atlantic City north to Long Island, New York and into Connecticut. Damage estimates are over *\$71 billion*—second only to Hurricane Katrina. Sandy destroyed thousands of homes and caused 159 deaths in eight states. This makes Sandy the deadliest hurricane to hit the United States mainland since Katrina and the deadliest hurricane to strike the U.S. East Coast since Hurricane Agnes in 1972.

The impact on children and families and in hardest-hit neighborhoods will reverberate for years to come.

As the six-month anniversary approaches, the streets of battered Breezy Point, New York, are a window into life in these communities. Empty lots are dotted with bits of rubble. A home toppled off its foundation by the storm waits for the wrecker’s hydraulic claw. Bicycles lie untouched in the sand in a front yard. Yet several doors away, a home that was relatively unscathed is being wrapped in new siding. A new porch on another home is ready for use. Contractors’ trucks clog the narrow streets.

Children and families are returning here and elsewhere. But for others, life after Hurricane Sandy has been slow and difficult, and the recovery is just beginning in neighborhoods where homes, businesses and social services were ravaged. The hard edges of stress and uncertainty are only now being softened by hope.

## Our Hurricane Sandy Response: Distributing Aid in the Immediate Aftermath



Volunteer Debby Keehn prepares hygiene kits for distribution to families in Staten Island, New York on November 10, 2012. Photo: Hallie Boyce for Save the Children

As Hurricane Sandy approached the East Coast on October 27 and 28, evacuation shelters opened in New Jersey and New York. At the peak, an estimated 158,000 people were in shelters. Many arrived with only a few possessions after being rescued from floodwaters.

Our teams arrived within hours of the storm's landfall. They quickly assessed needs and organized deliveries of essential materials for families as they waited anxiously to return home—or to learn of their home's fate. With your financial and in-kind support, we worked throughout November and into December, distributing supplies in partnership with the Red Cross, the Salvation Army, the Federal Emergency Response Agency (FEMA), shelter managers, and local and state officials. We continue to provide schools and child care providers with donated educational materials.

Almost 40,000 children and adults have benefited from our distributions in Monmouth and Union Counties in New Jersey, in Hempstead, New York, and in the Rockaways and Coney Island in New York City.

- We provided supplemental food to 15,545 children and their families in shelters who were consuming fewer than 900 calories a day because of food shortages in the first days after the storm.
- Distributions of 150,000 disposable diapers and other infant hygiene supplies helped families who had quickly exhausted supplies that they had brought to shelters.
- Distribution of clothing and blankets for children ages 6 months to 4 years benefited 5,237 children.
- We provided older children with toys, warm fleece blankets and winter clothing.

## Our Hurricane Sandy Response: Protecting and Supporting Children

The thousands of children in evacuation centers were surrounded by strangers, in unfamiliar and sometimes unsafe environments. Children in these situations often experience great stress not only from the conditions, but from watching their parents deal with loss and uncertainty. In the weeks after Sandy, children's sense of isolation was exacerbated as shelters closed and families were moved from one shelter to another, often displacing children from schools and child care.

Using our pre-positioned *Child-Friendly Spaces* kits and working with shelter officials, the Red Cross and adult volunteers we had previously trained, Save the Children provided safe spaces in shelters that supported children's protection and well-being. By the time our last *Child-Friendly Space* closed in December, the spaces had provided protection to 1,485 children. Activities also built on children's natural resiliency to help reduce the distressing effects of the storm.

- *Child-Friendly Spaces* were opened at 16 shelters in New York and New Jersey, including the mega-shelters at Nassau Community College in New York and at the Atlantic City Convention Center in New Jersey.
- Our staff reached out to parents in shelters to help them support their children and help them manage their stress.
- We worked with shelter managers to arrange for private areas to support breastfeeding mothers.
- Child mental health workers from North Shore Child & Family Guidance Shelter on Long Island joined our team to staff the *Child-Friendly Space* at Nassau Community College.



Brothers Kenny and Kevin play at our *Child-Friendly Space* in a shelter in Atlantic City, New Jersey. Photo: Susan Warner for Save the Children

## Our Hurricane Sandy Response: Restoring Children's Access to Quality Child Care

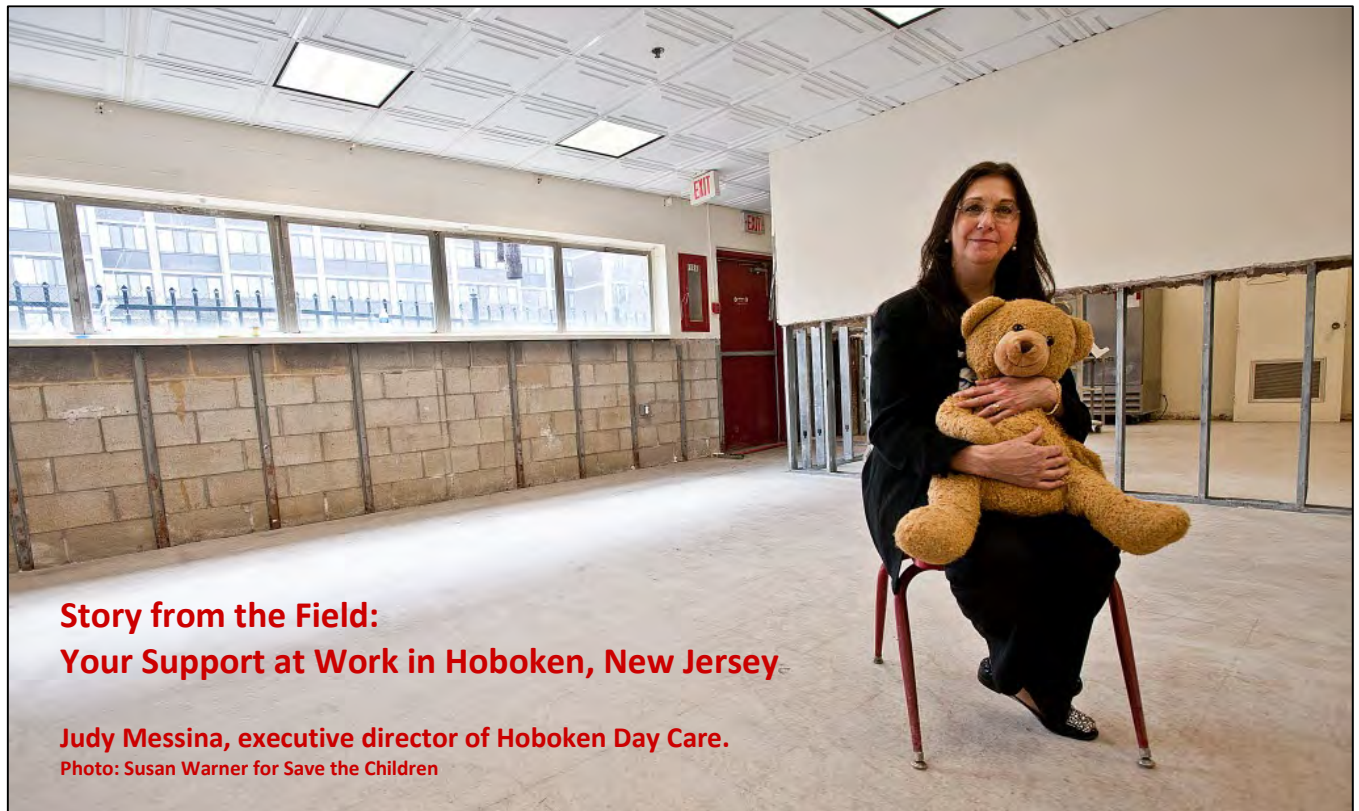


Davida, 3, makes a meal with toy vegetables at the Blanche Community Progress Day Care Center in Far Rockaway, New York. Photo: Susan Warner for Save the Children

Hundreds of child care facilities were damaged. Many working parents who depend on these centers are still without child care and, in some cases, remain unable to work. Children are losing out on important developmental opportunities that are critical for a strong start in school. Child care programs that have reopened are struggling to replace damaged or destroyed material and equipment.

Save the Children has made child care recovery a focus of our domestic disaster response since Hurricane Katrina, as it impacts young children's well-being, parents' ability to rebuild lives and even local economic recovery as jobs are restored. We are now partnering with the Child Care Resource and Referral Networks in New Jersey and New York to identify child care providers who need significant support to restore programs for the low-income families they serve. We have already identified more than 140 providers that need recovery assistance, and we anticipate that the number will increase to more than 250 during the recovery process.

- We assess damage to child care programs that serve children in communities of greatest need, based on destruction and poverty levels (see stories Pages 7 and 8).
- We are helping to replace damaged or destroyed materials, indoor and outdoor play equipment and other essential items. We are buying in bulk to leverage our resources.
- Grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$50,000 are being awarded to child care providers to help restore programs for children and families.
- We have helped nearly 30 centers to resume programming, impacting 3,274 children and their families.
- Providers who receive our support will also take part in emergency preparedness training so that they are better able to safeguard children when a disaster strikes.



**Story from the Field:  
Your Support at Work in Hoboken, New Jersey**

**Judy Messina, executive director of Hoboken Day Care.**  
Photo: Susan Warner for Save the Children

***With your support, we are partnering with Hoboken Day Care. We provided an initial grant to help the center re-open in a temporary space, and in April awarded a larger grant, which the organization will use to replace program and learning materials.***

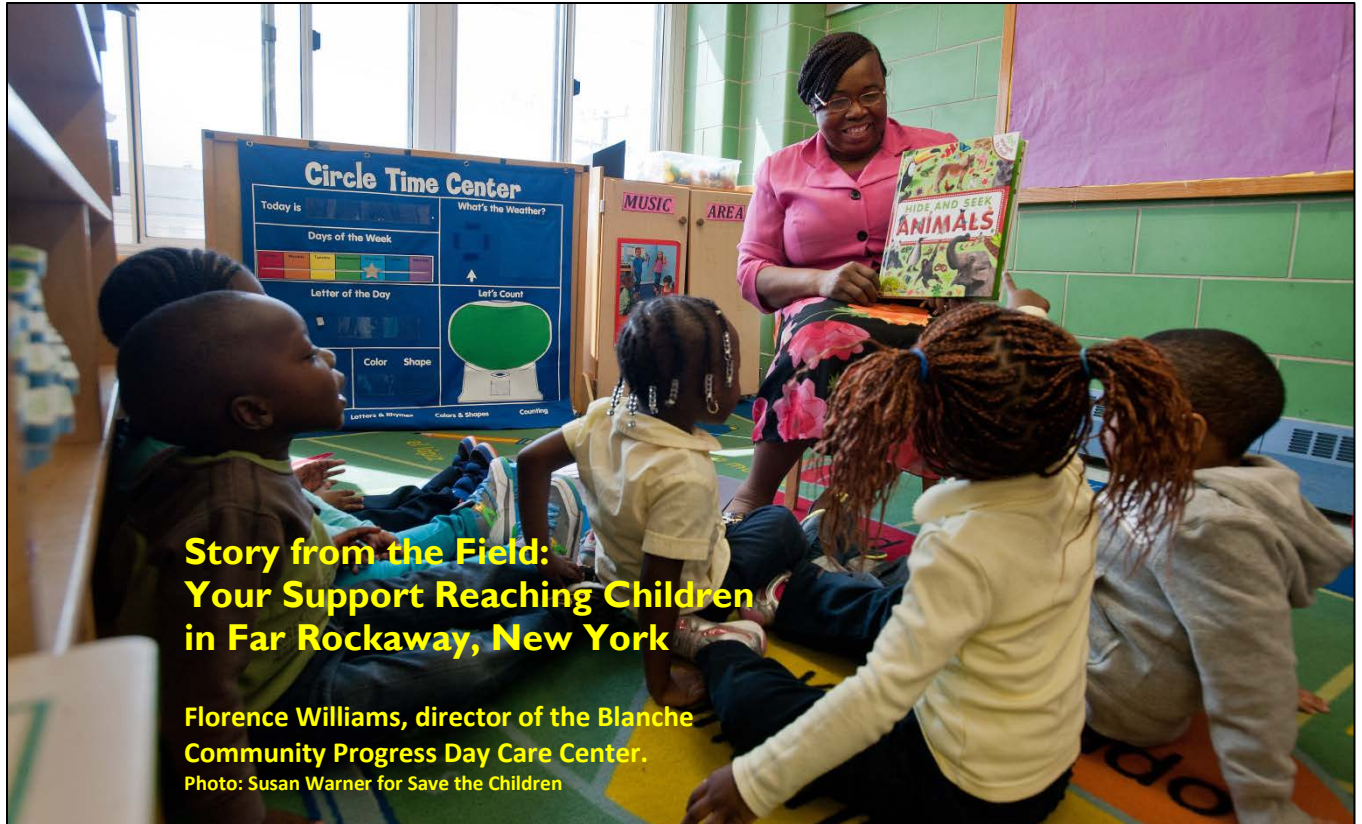
Judy Messina, executive director of Hoboken Day Care, wears a dust mask when she enters the city-owned building that houses the center. The mask helps protect her from the dust, but not the memories. Each time she returns to the barren rooms, she remembers the profound sadness of the day she returned after Hurricane Sandy—to find equipment and furnishings ruined by a flood of saltwater, sewage and oil.

A forgotten notice pinned to the bulletin board in what was once the center's kitchen still advises staff of children's food allergies. Books are propped open on a window ledge, their pages dried and stiff.

After saving for five years, the center had just completed a renovation. "The price tags were still on some of the items," Judy lamented. The city is now arranging repairs, and Hoboken Day Care has relocated temporarily to two portable classrooms at an elementary school. But many low-income

families have been unable to re-enroll their children because they have no cars or transportation to that site. And the temporary center can only accommodate 60 of the 98 children who once attended—meaning many children are missing out on important developmental activities that can help get them off to a strong start in school.

"I honestly was not confident about Hoboken Day Care's future before I learned of Save the Children's help," Judy said. "There have been times when I did not think this organization was going to survive, but then someone would come forward, as Save the Children has done twice already. Once in December, Save the Children helped us purchase equipment to get started in our temporary site, and now again. Non-profit organizations like Hoboken Day Care touch the lives of many children and we would not be able to continue our work without the support from organizations like Save the Children."



**Story from the Field:  
Your Support Reaching Children  
in Far Rockaway, New York**

**Florence Williams, director of the Blanche  
Community Progress Day Care Center.  
Photo: Susan Warner for Save the Children**

***In February, we began working with the Blanche Community Progress Day Care Center in Far Rockaway, New York, which suffered significant water damage. It recently reopened to serve a small number of children. Thanks to your support, we provided a grant and “My Time” kits of books and activities for children and parenting tips on child development.***

At the corner of Beach 44<sup>th</sup> Street and Rev. Joseph H. May Drive in Far Rockaway, Queens, the water was waist-high as Hurricane Sandy pounded the Rockaways. Inside the Blanche Community Progress Day Care Center on that same corner, the high water mark inside a glass display case is over the heads of the children who’ve just returned after nearly five months away.

“My first thought when I saw it was ‘the center is done,’” said Director Florence Williams. “Toys and furniture were still floating in the water when I got here. It was an ugly sight to see.”

It wasn’t until March 25<sup>th</sup> that children were able to set foot inside the center again—this time, to access classrooms on the building’s second floor, where

center staff have restarted programs for children whose families need the important community service they provide. Even with an alternative site still being used at a nearby school, the center is far below its capacity of 145 children—first-floor classrooms in the city-owned building are gutted and there are urgent needs for furniture, equipment and all the trappings that can turn bare walls into colorful learning environments.

Florence and her staff are determined to restore the center to its place as an educational beacon for the Far Rockaway community—nurturing children and serving as a resource for families as it has done for over 30 years. Repairs are to begin soon, with the goal of having all children return to the center by June.



## Our Hurricane Sandy Response: Building Resilience and Emergency Preparedness

A catastrophe like Hurricane Sandy tests children's ability to cope with an evacuation, life in a shelter and, too often, the loss of homes, favorite toys, routines and watching their parents put lives back together. It also reinforces the need for children's caregivers, communities and emergency preparedness leaders at the local and state levels to improve their readiness to respond to children's needs in the event of a crisis.

As we have done in every major U.S. disaster response since 2005, we are not only helping communities recover, but helping to build local resiliency and put preparedness on the agenda of Hurricane Sandy-affected communities and states.

We are providing tested programs such as *Journey of Hope's* grade-specific workshops that help children process and express the fears and stresses they experience during a disaster and build their coping mechanisms. *Journey of Hope Care for the Caregivers* helps teachers, administrators, parents and child care providers understand their own reactions to stress and enhance their coping skills.

We are also taking the lead in helping local child care providers improve their emergency planning so that they will know what to do when another emergency happens and how to develop business continuity plans so that they can quickly resume services.

Save the Children is also working with emergency management officials in New Jersey and New York to help them improve and strengthen their child-focused response capacities to ensure children's safety and well-being.

- We launched *Journey of Hope* in schools in New York in February. Our goal is to reach 1,000 children in grades pre-K to grade 8.
- Through the New Jersey Department of Children and Families, we provided the *Journey of Hope Care for the Caregivers* workshop to 24 mental health professionals. They will cascade this training to others.
- All child care providers who receive our support will also take part in our emergency preparedness training so that they can better safeguard children when a disaster strikes.
- We trained members of the Staten Island Mental Health Society, the Partnership with Children, and Counseling in Schools—three mental health agencies that work directly within the school system.



Two-year-old Madison builds a tower at the Hoboken Day Care Center in Hoboken, New Jersey. Photo: Susan Warner for Save the Children

## Save the Children and Domestic Emergencies: Our Commitment to U.S. Children and Families in 2013 and Beyond

Our donors responded with compassion in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy. We are deeply grateful to you for your support, which continues to underpin our post-storm recovery work in hard-hit communities. Over the next six months, your gifts will enable us to:

- Continue to help restore low-income and working families' access to quality child care. We will be supporting local child care facilities in New Jersey and New York as they resume operations. Grants and materials will be provided so that this vital community service is restored. Our goal is to assist more than 250 providers.
- Train child care staff at these centers, and other children's caregivers, in emergency preparedness and business continuity. Our goal is to train 1,250 providers.
- Partner with schools to provide our signature *Journey of Hope* program to children. Our target for 2013 is to reach 1,000 children in communities in New York.
- Conduct *Resilient and Ready* children's workshop for more than 2,000 children in communities affected by Hurricane Sandy. Children who take part receive a backpack with items that can provide comfort should their families be forced from their homes again.
- Continue a range of state advocacy efforts, in partnership with the Department of Children and Families in New Jersey and state licensing authorities, to improve child care emergency preparedness regulations and practices, to better protect children when disasters strike.

Save the Children also depends on your support to sustain and strengthen our domestic emergency response capacity. Our ability to prepare U.S. children, their caregivers, and communities in advance of a crisis; to respond in the immediate aftermath; and to deploy proven programs that restore hope and build local resiliency has never been more crucial:

- Disasters are affecting more people in the United States. The number of reported disasters here has tripled over the last 20 years.
- On any given day in the U.S., 67 million children are in school or child care. Parents place their trust in these services to ensure their children's safety, not knowing whether those facilities are able to reunite families and protect children in an emergency.
- Only 17 of 50 states meet these four basic disaster preparedness and safety standards for children in child care and at schools:
  - Child care centers have an evacuation/relocation plan;
  - Child care centers have a family-child reunification plan;
  - Child care centers have a plan for children with special needs; and
  - All K-12 schools have plans for dealing with multiple kinds of hazards.

Six months after Hurricane Sandy, its effects linger, hindering the lives and livelihoods of children and their families. Based on our nearly 80 years of emergency experience, we know that it can take many months, if not years, to address the long-term impacts of a disaster such as this. We are committed to continuing our work and to use your support efficiently and effectively for our neighbors in need. When you stand by us, we can stand by the children. Thank you.

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