

Summary: Post-Sandy Funder Briefing--Series II

Funder Briefing: #8

Date: November 4, 2013

Topic: What Philanthropy Has Learned One Year After Sandy

Speakers: **Nina Stack**, President - Council of New Jersey Grantmakers;

Christopher Daggett, President & CEO - The Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation & Co-leader - New Jersey Recovery Fund;

Kim Frawley, Grants Management Director - Hurricane Sandy New Jersey Relief Fund;

Kathy Durante, Executive Director - OceanFirst Foundation;

Robert Ottenhoff, President and CEO - The Center for Disaster Philanthropy;

Ronna Brown, President - Philanthropy New York

HIGHLIGHTS

- Final call in the 25-part series, which began one week after Hurricane Sandy made landfall.

Chris Daggett - [Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation](#) and [New Jersey Recovery Fund](#)

- In advance of the storm the State, county and local government did a very good job with evacuations
- Good quick response on immediate needs by first responders, nonprofits, government groups
- Much of the philanthropic sector's work is focused on mid-term and long-term recovery
- We have to put some of the long-term needs before short-term needs that will end up costing us billions of dollars
- Learned that many communities are still at risk due to older infrastructures, locations in floodplains, etc. We have a moral obligation to acknowledge that and cross reference and reality check our decisions about rebuilding.
- State needs to take a leadership role in working with inter-jurisdictional land use issues; regional planning is not something we currently have in place but it will be important.
- Transparency needs to happen during the decision making process, not after the fact
 - Specific actions for transparency - foundation community has been good about this, State government has not. It's the decision process that needs transparency and explanation. State decisions were made public - once made - but people couldn't understand why they were denied funds and what the criteria was.
- Rebuild by Design program - international competition for resilient rebuilding. 10 teams designing resiliency projects out of 145 that applied.
- How to balance needs of individuals with those of the state: Seabright Rising, group that started talking about merging with another town for the sake of resources and resiliency.

Still need to:

- Make sure recovery benefits everyone in NJ that was affected: our poorest residents have received a disproportionately small amount of federal and state recovery assistance.

- Press State and Federal officials to pay attention to issues of equity (renters need greater attention paid)
- Need to figure out how to include Cumberland County in Federal assistance. If that is impossible, we have to get the State to step up in a more robust manner.
- Planning and rebuilding in ways that advance the concepts of sustainability and resiliency
 - Invest in green infrastructure, upgrade in-place infrastructure
- Create a Coastal Commission, which means we have to encourage coordination between municipalities.
 - Pinelands, Meadowlands, Great Swamp and Highlands are good examples of regional planning
- Define what a good recovery looks like - government has largely defined this, but need viewpoints from nonprofits and others to reach that
 - Need to define benchmarks - can't just be about reopening the boardwalk - has to include getting people who are still isolated into consideration
- Engage and inform all citizens about the recovery through transparency.
 - Encourage continued reporting like [Jersey Shore Hurricane News](#); with NJ Recovery Fund - trying to encourage storytelling, media and civic engagement to work on transparency issues
 - Follow the money
- Redouble our efforts in mental health services (arts and counselling services)

Kim Frawley - [Hurricane Sandy New Jersey Relief Fund](#)

- \$38 million raised from 30,000 donors, granted out \$25 million to 93 organizations in the last year in three grant cycles - 1st launch funded 6 LTRGs, 2nd and 3rd rounds were a competitive application process.
- Priorities:
 - Housing assistance
 - Social services - mental health
 - Legal & financial counselling
 - Economic development
- Made 84% of our fundraising in the first 90 days. Transparency and collaboration was and is key.
- Needs:
 - housing (lack of rental stock)
 - insurance
 - case management
 - mental health
- Applications from established organizations can make further progress by expanding impact; most grants went to experienced organizations.
- Pop-up charities - scrappy organizations with new leadership that have stepped up:
 - [Church of the Visitation Center](#) (Brick, NJ), which became a nucleus for relief efforts. They took over an abandoned market which became the place for all disaster relief groups set up shop and was a centralized location for aid and volunteers. They have a long term sustainability plan to support their efforts.
 - [Gateway Church of Christ Disaster Response Team](#) (Union Beach, NJ) - small church but large network. They worked hand in hand with the municipality. Did extensive case management in the senior center, where they set up shop.
- Funding partnerships - both sharing info and joint funding projects ([RREM](#) Gap funding initiative through [NJ Community Capital](#), modular home demonstration)
- Faith-based community has played an incredibly important role: Mennonites - expert builders; Methodists - disaster case management and training; Presbyterian - expert volunteer management

Kathy Durante - [OceanFirst Foundation](#)

- \$500,000 in grants awarded
- We've been good about bringing people together
- [NJVOAD](#) and bus tour helped bring us together
- Putting grantees together in a room with [The Robin Hood Foundation](#) in the early days - helped to clear pathways to organizations that had the capacity to get things done
- We didn't have a solid plan about how best to utilize the resources that were flowing into the state; now we have to work with where we are/what we have, but we should try to do more planning for what's left.
- Echoing the value of the faith-based groups
- Great emerging leaders - need to do what we can to harness them and provide them with the training and tools that they need to continue their work.
- MOST of this work is done BY VOLUNTEERS - training and preparing volunteers for the future is very important
- Philanthropies - transparency of grant making process is of enormous importance. I was very surprised by to see how complex some of the requirements were on the grants that I worked on for the [Ocean County LTRG](#). We, as funders, need to streamline our processes, particularly for those who are not experienced grant writers.
- Flexibility is a huge factor in the work being done
- Instinct says to raise money and get it out the door quickly, but one of our biggest challenges is that homeowners are facing problems every day, so we need to rethink what is realistic for awarding dollars to help for the long term
- Seniors - already a vulnerable population, seniors are struggling to navigate the processes that lie before them.
- Keeping spotlight on NJ - How can we keep the needs of all our communities in people's minds?

Ronna Brown - [Philanthropy New York](#)

- Collaborations between CNJG and Philanthropy NY have been hugely beneficial to the members of each organization by sharing information, resources, etc.
- Philanthropists can be flexible and fast and on the ground - that is incredibly important
- Some of the best organizations on the ground don't actually have any disaster training, but they were groups that had capacity - strong leaders, strong community ties. Unions, school groups, faith-based groups, etc. Funders could support those groups.
- We do need to streamline and be flexible
- Urban areas are different. The density of buildings and people means some aid organizations came in without enough supplies, and traffic issues literally meant that they can't get supplies moved quickly enough. Aid organizations will need to think about how to pre-position supplies.
- Having door-to-door contact was critically important
- Preparation was completely inadequate - particularly big communication systems. How do funders, government and people communicate in real time? This is a problem we can help to address.
- We're talking about all coastal communities and still haven't really absorbed the full significance of what that means for the long term recovery in states around the country. This is something that funders can help ensure that people, government, etc. are thinking about.

Bob Ottenhoff - [The Center for Disaster Philanthropy](#)

- Want to capture the experience you've all gone through in the playbook that CNJG and CDP are collaborating on.

- We need to get more focused on planning and preparation and to help funders understand that once immediate relief is over we need to plan accordingly for disbursement of funds that will address the long-term work of recovery
 - Less than 50% of nonprofits had any kind of disaster plan - not sure funders have plans in place for their staff and organizations, either
- Half the money raised is already gone to immediate relief
- Big turnover in local leaders is common, so loss of continuity for the “next time” can be hard
- Include some aspect of disaster planning in the work we, as funders, do on an ongoing basis.
 - Have grants programs focused on including disaster planning and preparation. Are we asking the nonprofit grantees to include planning and preparation in their work? Are they in a position to really serve the communities we want to have served if they do not have those plans?
 - How does private philanthropy keep great collaborations going that have come together under duress, because of the promise they hold for the future?
 - Conduct a survey - who is interested in continuing collaborations, what resources still remain and what are the areas of interest? Survey would give us a blueprint for who to talk to as needs arise?
- Funder on west coast has signed MOUs with about 50 grantees that, in the case of a disaster guarantee a set amount of funding with very little red tape - and now they also convene these grantees to build capacity and training for working together in advance of the next disaster. Philanthropies can do a better job of providing that support.
- Most organizations have provided services well beyond budgets and don't expect reimbursement, but how can we support them?
- Super Bowl - can we take that attention and direct it toward organizations and communities affected by the storm? Kathy Durante received a call from the NFL asking about organizations that might make good partners to bring the spotlight to recovery communities.
- Funders should look at ourselves too about what we did well, what we need to change and do differently

FOLLOW UP

- Some members may reach out to the NFL to put together a conference call or group and see what their plans are for highlighting Sandy communities.

Beginning on the first Monday after Hurricane Sandy struck New Jersey, The Council of New Jersey Grantmakers began hosting weekly conference calls for grantmakers in-state and nationwide, facilitated by CNJG President Nina Stack, to discuss their response to Sandy and strategies facing NJ as a result of the storm. Each conference call briefing offered expert guest speakers who represented government agencies (FEMA, HUD, HHS, etc.), national philanthropic leaders, expert psychologists with experience in PTSD, planners and community redevelopment leaders, and representatives from NJ's Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, among others. The twenty-five audio files and written summaries are available at:

<http://cnjg.org/hurricane-sandy>