



Question of the Month: How is our industry responding in helping those hardest hit by Sandy?

November 26, 2012 - Spotlights

Super Storm Sandy has come and gone but left a swath of destruction in its path with homes, businesses and lives lost. Many of our clients, vendors, colleagues, friends and our own families have suffered. The task of rebuilding will take a long time and great effort.

We can all be proud of how our industry is responding by providing cash, commercial space, supplies, and volunteers to charitable organizations such as the American Red Cross in Greater NY (www.NYRedCross.org), Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City (www.nyc.gov/fund), United Way Hurricane Sandy Recovery Fund (www.UnitedWay.org) and numerous local organizations aiding rebuilding efforts.

Literally thousands of volunteers from our industry have donated their time to help with the relief effort in many cases partnering with charitable organizations. For example, nearly the entire staff of Marcus & Millichap's Manhattan, Brooklyn and White Plains offices teamed up with Habitat for Humanity of Westchester (www.HabitatWC.org) to help with volunteer relief efforts in Breezy Point which was hit particularly hard.

At the peak of the storm surge, Breezy Point was under 10 feet of water and suffered one of the worst fires in NYC history with a conflagration that destroyed 111 homes. Due to the heroic efforts of FDNY, local volunteer fire/rescue units and ordinary citizens, not a single person perished in these fires. Now the hard task of rebuilding begins. For many of these residents, these were their only home and largest asset. Many homes will not be covered by insurance. Many of its residents on limited or fixed incomes, particularly seniors, will face substantial hardship.

Volunteers from Marcus & Millichap pitched in to remove water soaked walls, floor boards and furniture of homes and a small church. Jim Killoran, Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity of Westchester, said "it's a race against time before mold has a chance to set in". Tom Dalzell, of Marcus & Millichap's French Retail Team, said "Most of us work all day on the phones and computer screens putting together investment deals. It's nice to be out in the field working with our hands to help make a difference in people's lives."

Many in our industry found creative ways to contribute to the relief effort. Major mall owners such as Westfield, CBL, Pyramid, and Macerich have set aside space at their malls for such purposes as staging areas; a safe, warm place for residents to shelter, eat, obtain needed goods and services; charging stations for their electronic devices; donation stations to drop off food, clothing and cleaning supplies; hosted blood drives; in addition to having made significant financial donations.

Leading retailers such as Ralph Lauren, Coach, Walmart, Lowe's Home Improvement, Home Depot, Kohl's, Gap, Limited Brands, Hanes, Macy's, Bloomingdale, Starbucks, Target, Nordstrom, Best Buy, Belk, Ross Stores, Office Depot, Modell's, Walgreens, CVS, Rite Aid, and Dunkin' Donuts have donated items from their inventories including clothing, cleaning supplies, tools, and other supplies

as well as donating cash.

Smaller retailers have contributed in creative ways. Chloe's Soft Serve Fruit Co. doled out free hot apple cider. Relax on Cloud Nine donated free Internet, tea, phone charging and showers. Otto Pizza of Boston exported 5,000 free slices to NY. NYC Food Truck Assoc dispatched food trucks to serve free food to blacked-out Manhattan.

If you would like to volunteer at Breezy Point, as Marcus & Millichap did, please contact Jim Killoran at 914-636-8335.

Joseph French, Jr., CCIM is senior director, National Retail Group at Marcus & Millichap, White Plains, N.Y.

New York Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540