SERVICE:

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of Communications

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 24, 2013

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The Champions of Change program was created as an opportunity for the White house to feature groups of Americans – individuals, businesses and organizations – who are doing extraordinary things to empower and inspire members of their communities.

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**Justin Auciello, Jersey Shore Hurricane News**

**Somerset, NJ**

Justin Auciello is an urban planner and digital journalist. Understanding the power of social media during a crisis, he created Jersey Shore Hurricane News, a Facebook- and Twitter-based news platform, in advance of Hurricane Irene in 2011. A native of South Seaside Park, New Jersey, Justin knew that residents needed an outlet to both receive and contribute crucial information before, during, and after a storm. Though Hurricane Irene did not inflict widespread damage in the state, Superstorm Sandy caused catastrophic damage, especially in New Jersey's shore areas. The outlet was widely utilized by New Jersey residents for accurate news reports, crowdsourced information about food, water, gas, and shelter, and deliveries of supplies and assistance to people in need. Most importantly, the platform was used by the New Jersey Office of Emergency Management to communicate with people requesting rescue from the storm surge, as 911 was overloaded.

**Amanda “Mandy” Bickerstaff, UWSLoves**

**New York, NY**

Mandy Bickerstaff is a Program Director for Do Your Part, a nonprofit organization that supports disaster relief and long-term recovery. After Hurricane Sandy hit New York City, Mandy volunteered with the Red Cross and saw how important good food made with love was in times of disaster. She co-founded UWSLoves, which prepared over 1500 hot meals and more than 3000 sandwiches for those in need on the Lower East Side, Rockaway, Coney Island, and Red Hook. During this time, Mandy also compiled a cookbook of recipes and stories from the relief effort to support continued fundraising. She continues to work with relief organizations around the New York and New Jersey areas, coordinating fundraisers, large donations, and volunteers. Her beloved grandparents are her inspiration, instilling in her the importance of public service and dedication to those in need.

**Steve Birnbaum, FEMA Innovation Team**

**Arlington, VA**

Steven Birnbaum strongly believes that resilient communications can help people to help themselves.  As Chair of the Global VSAT Forum’s Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Response Programs, and an inaugural member of the FEMA Innovation Team, he deployed with the Team into the areas most devastated by Superstorm Sandy. Dedicated to FEMA’s Whole of Community approach to disaster response, where robust communication networks catalyze optimal response and recovery, he immediately put this principle into practice. On the ground, Steve and the Team rallied local community leaders, NGOs, government, volunteers and commercial technology providers to deploy temporary disaster networks in the Rockaways, Redhook, and Staten Island.  This just-in-time telecommunications then empowered communities to coordinate their own volunteers, aid, and donations.  Their accomplishments soon facilitated the spawning of new, grass-roots community outreach initiatives, such as a cadre of FEMA Corps volunteers who went door-to-door with newly-networked tablet computers to register survivors for assistance at their doorstep.  When not responding to disasters, Steve works as an independent consultant and serves as a volunteer firefighter / urban search & rescue tech in Rockville, Maryland.

**Debra Boudreaux, Tzu Chi** **Buddhist Disaster Relief**

**Arcadia, CA**

Dharma Master Cheng Yen, a Buddhist nun from Taiwan, founded the Tzu Chi Foundation in 1966. The foundation is an international humanitarian nonprofit organization that aspires to help the needy with love and inspire compassion in the wealthy. Tzu Chi, which means "compassion and relief" in Chinese Mandarin, has over 10 million supporters worldwide, and carries out its work through the four major missions of charity, medicine, education, and humanistic culture, and related fields such as community volunteerism, environmental protection, and international disaster relief. Tzu Chi responded to Hurricane Sandy in late 2012, rapidly providing material aid such as hot food, blankets, and emergency financial assistance totaling almost $10 million. The organization served almost 60,000 people in over 25 of the most severe disaster areas in New York and New Jersey. Most recently, Tzu Chi responded by providing emergency cash debit cards to those affected by the Waco fertilizer plant explosion and by showing love and concern to the courageous runners and their families at the Boston Marathon.

**Brian Buhman, Team Rubicon: Disaster Response Veterans Service Organization**

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Brian Buhman is a Marine Corps veteran who served two tours of duty in Iraq. His desire to continue his service by helping his community and other veterans led him to join Team Rubicon, a disaster response veterans service organization in 2011. Since March 2012, he has been a State Coordinator for Pennsylvania. During Hurricane Sandy, Brian stayed in Pennsylvania to help the residents in his community affected by the storm. Through his partnership with Volunteers Active in Disasters (VOAD), Brian started tree clean-up operations before the storm had ended and continued leading teams for the next three weeks. Since then, he has helped organize two clean-up weekends with the help of his VOAD partners. While working a full-time job, Brian volunteered over 150 hours for clean-up, assessments, and planning.

**Wendy Kubu Callahan, The Vic Kubu Long Blue Line Scholarship and Disaster Relief Fund (The VIC Fund)**

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The VIC Fund (Victory in Crisis) came to life from the dream of one man with a passion for helping kids. It started in 2002 as the Long Blue Line Scholarship Fund to help kids go to college. The VIC Fund emerged with the same mission in response to the desperate need of our communities as a result of Hurricane Sandy. They are dedicated to the creed of Effort, Teamwork, and Commitment to kids.

**Warren “Drew” Chabot, Restore the Shore**

**Toms River, NJ**

During Hurricane Sandy, Drew Chabot and his parents were displaced due to their houses being flooded. With his friend Scott Zabelski, the owner of a screen printing business called Blue Wave Printing, Drew went to work printing and selling “Restore the Shore” sweatshirts and t-shirts. $10 from every sweatshirt and $5 from every t-shirt went back to the affected people in the community. To date, they have raised and distributed over $500,000 to disaster relief nonprofits in their community. Through his job is with Home Depot, Drew worked to provide donated supplies and labor to help get people back into their homes.

**Ariel Creamer, Survivors Silver Lining**

**Queens, NY**

After evacuating her home during Hurricane Sandy, fourteen-year-old Rockaway resident Ariel Creamer founded the organization Survivors Silver Lining, which matches donors with Hurricane Sandy survivors. The mission of the organization is to help children and families replace items lost in the storm and rebuild their lives. Ariel has worked with other hurricane relief organizations to bring and distribute much needed supplies to the Rockaways. Her hope is to continue her work and to bring awareness that the need in Rockaway is far from over.

**Erin Corcoran Daly, Operation Breezy Gut and Pump**

**Queens, NY**

Erin Daly sprang into action after Hurricane Sandy struck her hometown of Breezy Point, New York. Erin, a Florida state prosecutor, immediately began her relief efforts by collecting donations of generators, sump pumps, tools, food, and water and arrived at the disaster zone with a truckload full of supplies and gasoline. The next day, Erin and off-duty FDNY firefighter Kevin Adams pitched a tent in a field and offered to pump and gut houses for free. Operation Breezy Gut and Pump was born. Kevin recruited fellow FDNY member Phil Pillet, and soon volunteers began showing up by the hundreds. Over the next 36 days, Erin and her crew worked tirelessly day and night, coordinating the integration of federal, state and local resources and matching victims with volunteer groups and relief organizations. Thanks to Operation Gut and Pump’s tremendous efforts, over 600 homes in Breezy Point were pumped, gutted, and cleaned out free of charge.

**Coach Kyle Flood, Rutgers University**

**New Brunswick, NJ**

Kyle Flood was named the 29th head coach at the Birthplace of College Football on January 31, 2012. Flood made an immediate impact on the Rutgers program as he led the school to its first BIG EAST Championship in 2012. Flood ended the season being named the BIG EAST Coach of the Year. Flood’s nine regular season victories were the most by any first-year coach in Rutgers history as eight players garnered All-BIG EAST honors. Khaseem Greene became the second player in league history to be named BIG EAST Defensive Player of the Year for two consecutive seasons. The Rutgers football team helped after Hurricane Sandy in several ways, including selecting 22 kids affected by Hurricane Sandy to play a flag football game in the final five minutes of a football game, asking game attendees to make a $5 donation at a game, and working to remind everyone that there is still a lot to do before the state fully recovers from Hurricane Sandy.

**Mike “Loco” Hoffman, Boots on the Ground**

**Staten Island, NY**

His community devastated after Hurricane Sandy, Mike “Loco” Hoffman has contributed to disaster relief and recovery every single day since the storm struck. From rescuing stranded and frightened survivors to providing household needs, heaters, and generators to gutting and rebuilding homes, Mike has been a one-man powerhouse of recovery. He even brought Christmas gifts and cheer to residents by dressing as Santa Claus and driving a decorated truck playing Christmas music through the streets of storm-ravaged neighborhoods. A lifelong resident of Staten Island, Mike founded Boots On the Ground Staten Island to put his local knowledge to use and serve as a resource for the thousands of volunteers who arrived to the area. In this way, he is assisting with the formation of an organized at-the-ready volunteer response network as a resource for future disaster victims.

**Adam Marlatt, Global DIRT: Disaster Immediate Response Team**

**New York, NY**

Adam Marlatt is a Marine Reserve Infantry Sergeant and the founder of Global Disaster Immediate Response Team (DIRT). Using the skills he learned on the battlefield, on a District Stability Team with the U.S. State Department, and with his local volunteer fire department, Adam leads his team into the immediate aftermath of disasters to provide technical solutions, medical assistance, and coordination support. Founded after the Haiti earthquake of 2010, Global DIRT has deployed to Haiti, Pakistan, New Zealand, Japan, and the tri-state area after Hurricane Sandy.

**Walter Meyer, Power Rockaway Resilience**

**Brooklyn, NY**

Together with a group of designers, sustainability experts, and solar engineers, Walter Meyer, an urban designer based in Brooklyn, New York, helped form the community-based organization “Power Rockaways Resilience.” Days after Hurricane Sandy, while gas generators sat idle due to a fuel shortage, the group began delivering hand-built, shopping-cart-sized solar generators to the hardest-hit blocks of the Rockaway peninsula, a barrier island off New York City that bore the brunt of a 14-foot tidal surge topped by three-story-high waves. This small-scale initial effort grew, and with the help of a nationwide fundraising campaign, Power Rockaways Resilience oversaw the widespread installation of large-scale solar generators at relief centers and volunteer hubs. The use of solar power to keep lights shining and helping hands working throughout the darkest days of the storm has inspired peninsula-wide interest in alternative energy technologies, and Power Rockaways Resilience is still on the ground connecting solar suppliers and installers with Rockaway businesses and residents seeking to rebuild for a more sustainable, resilient future.

**Wayne Meyer, New Jersey Community Capital**

**New Brunswick, NJ**

Once power returned to the offices at New Jersey Community Capital (NJCC), Wayne Meyer and the rest of his team immediately began working on plans to help victims of SuperStorm Sandy restore their lives, in particular, their livelihoods. Thanks to the generosity and assistance of several NJCC funders, Mr. Meyer and his team managed to launch the REBUILD New Jersey Fund within weeks of the devastating storm. By amassing capital, grant support and other financing, NJCC was able to offer small businesses impacted by the storm quick access to flexible, low-cost loans for building repairs, equipment and inventory purchases, rent or mortgage payments, salary expenses, and utility costs. In his current role as President of NJCC, Mr. Meyer continues to exemplify his more than 20-year passion for community development, bringing thought leadership and innovation to scalable and nationally replicable solutions for local neighborhood and community challenges.

**Carolina Salguero, PortSide NewYork**

**Brooklyn, NY**

PortSide NewYork is a nonprofit in Red Hook, Brooklyn, focused on waterfront issues. Since 2005, the organization has operated from the Mary A. Whalen, an oil tanker on the National Register of Historic Places. After protecting the ship during Hurricane Sandy, they came ashore to help the community of Red Hook. Led by founder Carolina Salguero, PortSide created an aid station that evolved to provide services in response to emerging needs. They provided computer equipment to enable people to apply to FEMA, organized the work of electrician Danny Schneider who donated his services for free, and set up free legal clinics and a small business recovery center. Based on what they learned, they are now planning programs for Red Hook and the New York City government.

**Nicole Schultz, FEMA Corps**

**Olathe, KS**

Nicole Schultz is a recent graduate of Johnson County Community College and a native of Olathe, Kansas. Instilled with a strong sense of civic responsibility at a young age, Nicole sought a creative way to combine her love for travel with community service after college. Upon learning about AmeriCorps NCCC’s new program, FEMA Corps, she applied and was accepted as a corps member. Nicole started her term of service in August 2012 and underwent six weeks of training prior to being sent out to the field as a member of FEMA’s Community Relations team. In October 2012, her team of nine was deployed to New York to aid FEMA with outreach to Sandy-affected communities.

**Marcie Allen Van Mol, Beach 119th Street Angels**

**New York, NY**

Marcie Allen is the president of MAC Presents, a New York City-based sponsorship and fulfillment agency. After Hurricane Sandy, Marcie raised over $100,000 in donations and supplies for families on Beach 119th Street in Rockaway Beach, New York. Allen directed the short documentary film *Beach 119* about the families of one block in Rockaway and their recovery.

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**Ariel Creamer, Survivors Silver Lining**

**Queens, NY**

After evacuating her home during Hurricane Sandy, fourteen-year-old Rockaway resident Ariel Creamer founded the organization Survivors Silver Lining, which matches donors with Hurricane Sandy survivors. The mission of the organization is to help children and families replace items lost in the storm and rebuild their lives. Ariel has worked with other hurricane relief organizations to bring and distribute much needed supplies to the Rockaways. Her hope is to continue her work and to bring awareness that the need in Rockaway is far from over.

**###**

NY IMPACT:

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of Communications

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 24, 2013

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**Erin Corcoran Daly, Operation Breezy Gut and Pump**

**Queens, NY**

Erin Daly sprang into action after Hurricane Sandy struck her hometown of Breezy Point, New York. Erin, a Florida state prosecutor, immediately began her relief efforts by collecting donations of generators, sump pumps, tools, food, and water and arrived at the disaster zone with a truckload full of supplies and gasoline. The next day, Erin and off-duty FDNY firefighter Kevin Adams pitched a tent in a field and offered to pump and gut houses for free. Operation Breezy Gut and Pump was born. Kevin recruited fellow FDNY member Phil Pillet, and soon volunteers began showing up by the hundreds. Over the next 36 days, Erin and her crew worked tirelessly day and night, coordinating the integration of federal, state and local resources and matching victims with volunteer groups and relief organizations. Thanks to Operation Gut and Pump’s tremendous efforts, over 600 homes in Breezy Point were pumped, gutted, and cleaned out free of charge.

**###**

NJ IMPACT:

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April 24, 2013

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**Coach Kyle Flood, Rutgers University**

**New Brunswick, NJ**

Kyle Flood was named the 29th head coach at the Birthplace of College Football on January 31, 2012. Flood made an immediate impact on the Rutgers program as he led the school to its first BIG EAST Championship in 2012. Flood ended the season being named the BIG EAST Coach of the Year. Flood’s nine regular season victories were the most by any first-year coach in Rutgers history as eight players garnered All-BIG EAST honors. Khaseem Greene became the second player in league history to be named BIG EAST Defensive Player of the Year for two consecutive seasons. The Rutgers football team helped after Hurricane Sandy in several ways, including selecting 22 kids affected by Hurricane Sandy to play a flag football game in the final five minutes of a football game, asking game attendees to make a $5 donation at a game, and working to remind everyone that there is still a lot to do before the state fully recovers from Hurricane Sandy.

**###**

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**Mike “Loco” Hoffman, Boots on the Ground**

**Staten Island, NY**

His community devastated after Hurricane Sandy, Mike “Loco” Hoffman has contributed to disaster relief and recovery every single day since the storm struck. From rescuing stranded and frightened survivors to providing household needs, heaters, and generators to gutting and rebuilding homes, Mike has been a one-man powerhouse of recovery. He even brought Christmas gifts and cheer to residents by dressing as Santa Claus and driving a decorated truck playing Christmas music through the streets of storm-ravaged neighborhoods. A lifelong resident of Staten Island, Mike founded Boots On the Ground Staten Island to put his local knowledge to use and serve as a resource for the thousands of volunteers who arrived to the area. In this way, he is assisting with the formation of an organized at-the-ready volunteer response network as a resource for future disaster victims.

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**Adam Marlatt, Global DIRT: Disaster Immediate Response Team**

**New York, NY**

Adam Marlatt is a Marine Reserve Infantry Sergeant and the founder of Global Disaster Immediate Response Team (DIRT). Using the skills he learned on the battlefield, on a District Stability Team with the U.S. State Department, and with his local volunteer fire department, Adam leads his team into the immediate aftermath of disasters to provide technical solutions, medical assistance, and coordination support. Founded after the Haiti earthquake of 2010, Global DIRT has deployed to Haiti, Pakistan, New Zealand, Japan, and the tri-state area after Hurricane Sandy.

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**Walter Meyer, Power Rockaway Resilience**

**Brooklyn, NY**

Together with a group of designers, sustainability experts, and solar engineers, Walter Meyer, an urban designer based in Brooklyn, New York, helped form the community-based organization “Power Rockaways Resilience.” Days after Hurricane Sandy, while gas generators sat idle due to a fuel shortage, the group began delivering hand-built, shopping-cart-sized solar generators to the hardest-hit blocks of the Rockaway peninsula, a barrier island off New York City that bore the brunt of a 14-foot tidal surge topped by three-story-high waves. This small-scale initial effort grew, and with the help of a nationwide fundraising campaign, Power Rockaways Resilience oversaw the widespread installation of large-scale solar generators at relief centers and volunteer hubs. The use of solar power to keep lights shining and helping hands working throughout the darkest days of the storm has inspired peninsula-wide interest in alternative energy technologies, and Power Rockaways Resilience is still on the ground connecting solar suppliers and installers with Rockaway businesses and residents seeking to rebuild for a more sustainable, resilient future.

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**Wayne Meyer, New Jersey Community Capital**

**New Brunswick, NJ**

Once power returned to the offices at New Jersey Community Capital (NJCC), Wayne Meyer and the rest of his team immediately began working on plans to help victims of SuperStorm Sandy restore their lives, in particular, their livelihoods. Thanks to the generosity and assistance of several NJCC funders, Mr. Meyer and his team managed to launch the REBUILD New Jersey Fund within weeks of the devastating storm. By amassing capital, grant support and other financing, NJCC was able to offer small businesses impacted by the storm quick access to flexible, low-cost loans for building repairs, equipment and inventory purchases, rent or mortgage payments, salary expenses, and utility costs. In his current role as President of NJCC, Mr. Meyer continues to exemplify his more than 20-year passion for community development, bringing thought leadership and innovation to scalable and nationally replicable solutions for local neighborhood and community challenges.

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**Carolina Salguero, PortSide NewYork**

**Brooklyn, NY**

PortSide NewYork is a nonprofit in Red Hook, Brooklyn, focused on waterfront issues. Since 2005, the organization has operated from the Mary A. Whalen, an oil tanker on the National Register of Historic Places. After protecting the ship during Hurricane Sandy, they came ashore to help the community of Red Hook. Led by founder Carolina Salguero, PortSide created an aid station that evolved to provide services in response to emerging needs. They provided computer equipment to enable people to apply to FEMA, organized the work of electrician Danny Schneider who donated his services for free, and set up free legal clinics and a small business recovery center. Based on what they learned, they are now planning programs for Red Hook and the New York City government.

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KS IMPACT:

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**Nicole Schultz, FEMA Corps**

**Olathe, KS**

Nicole Schultz is a recent graduate of Johnson County Community College and a native of Olathe, Kansas. Instilled with a strong sense of civic responsibility at a young age, Nicole sought a creative way to combine her love for travel with community service after college. Upon learning about AmeriCorps NCCC’s new program, FEMA Corps, she applied and was accepted as a corps member. Nicole started her term of service in August 2012 and underwent six weeks of training prior to being sent out to the field as a member of FEMA’s Community Relations team. In October 2012, her team of nine was deployed to New York to aid FEMA with outreach to Sandy-affected communities.

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**Marcie Allen Van Mol, Beach 119th Street Angels**

**New York, NY**

Marcie Allen is the president of MAC Presents, a New York City-based sponsorship and fulfillment agency. After Hurricane Sandy, Marcie raised over $100,000 in donations and supplies for families on Beach 119th Street in Rockaway Beach, New York. Allen directed the short documentary film *Beach 119* about the families of one block in Rockaway and their recovery.

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