

**NYC ASHRAE Chapter Volunteers with
Habitat for Humanity for Superstorm Sandy Relief**
by Anthony M. Montalto, Jr.



In October 2012, Superstorm Sandy affected the entire Eastern Seaboard, with particularly severe damage in New York and New Jersey. The damage from this disastrous storm has been estimated at about \$68 billion, a total surpassed only by Hurricane Katrina. The recovery from this catastrophic event is ongoing and many coastal residential communities are still in need of help.

The NYC ASHRAE Chapter decided to strengthen a damaged community and support volunteer efforts with Habitat for Humanity NYC. ASHRAE supported the Sandy victims in Staten Island, NY by taking time away from the office to focus on something that really matters to them - volunteering. On October 7, 2013, a group of individuals from all sectors of the ASHRAE community helped rebuild a storm-ravaged home.

The group worked hand-in-hand with two experienced Habitat for Humanity contractors as well as the home's Owner. The devastation from the storm was immediately felt when the owner showed us the watermark, which reached the second story of the home. The entire ground level and part of the second floor were destroyed and needed to be completely rebuilt.

The rebuilding tasks for the day included demolishing damaged walls and prepping the home for new walls and insulation. The volunteer group went to work quickly with efficiency and

determination. By lunch, the Habitat contractors began calling the volunteers the “A Team” because they were surprised at how much work they had gotten done so quickly. The experience of the group, given their backgrounds in the building sector, was critical to its efficiency and work management. By the end of the day, the team had successfully demolished the existing walls, prepped the home for new gypsum board, provided rigid board insulation at the ground level walls, run new electrical for the boiler cutoff and, the most daunting task, moved one hundred 75 lb. sheetrock wall boards from ground level up to the second floor. The original task schedule for the day was surpassed, and the group’s efforts went above and beyond expectations.

By the end of the day a feeling of accomplishment, along with heartfelt sorrow for the Sandy victims, was felt by all. The Owner was so pleased with the work he gave a tearful hug to each volunteer. He was truly thankful to ASHRAE and the volunteers. For the homeowner, it has been a long path to recovery and there’s still plenty of work to do.

This was just one day taken out of a busy workweek for the volunteer group. So please remember your community and its continuing hardship from this monumental storm. You can sign up to volunteer through numerous organizations, Habitat for Humanity NYC being just one.

Many thanks to the following corporations who donated money for the effort to make this Habitat workday possible:

- JB&B Consulting Engineers
- United Air Conditioning
- Gil-Bar Industries
- Dolphin Equipment
- Celtic Sheet Metal
- Orion Mechanical Systems
- Mechanical Heating Supply Inc.

And many thanks to the volunteers. Your kindness and generosity will always be remembered:

- Team leader: Anthony M. Montalto - JB&B Consulting Engineers
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