

## Health Is Priority After Hurricane Sandy



When Alex Spears cut his hand while cleaning storm debris left by Hurricane Sandy on Staten Island, N.Y., he found that the nearest community health center was shuttered due to storm flooding.

But Alex quickly received free flu and tetanus vaccines at AmeriCares mobile medical clinic, which was serving as backup for the damaged Beacon Christian Community Health Center.

The Staten Island clinic is just one of 48 hospitals, clinics and health providers able to serve patients in the weeks and months after Hurricane Sandy due to support from AmeriCares. Our aid, totaling \$4.5 million in the first six months, helped tens of thousands of Sandy victims.

“Restoring access to health care is crucial after any disaster, but especially

this one that affected so many people and damaged so many health facilities,” says AmeriCares President and CEO Curt Welling.

After the hurricane, AmeriCares provided health facilities along the East Coast with medicines including vaccines, antibiotics and chronic care medicines such as insulin. AmeriCares mobile medical clinic parked outside damaged clinics in four New York locations, allowing the clinics to serve patients for a total of 95 days until power was restored or repairs made. AmeriCares helped residents in hard-hit areas by subsidizing care for the uninsured, providing transportation to health centers, holding health fairs and funding clinics so they could stay open. We also equipped volunteer groups with supplies to clean homes of dangerous mold.

In the coming months, AmeriCares will continue to help health clinics recover and work to restore access to health care for the most vulnerable communities.

Residents in Far Rockaway, N.Y., took advantage of an AmeriCares-sponsored health fair (top). Michelle and son Jonathan are thrilled with the ramp AmeriCares provided (right). For more information, including video, visit: [americares.org](http://americares.org)

## A Bridge to Home

Even after Michelle and her son, Jonathan, repaired their hurricane-damaged Belmar, N.J., home, Jonathan couldn't get into the house in his wheelchair. “Seeing him crawl on the floor to get in and out of the house was horrible,” says his mother.

That changed when AmeriCares funded new ramps for Jonathan and other families who needed handicapped access restored after Hurricane Sandy.

When volunteers finished the ramp, Jonathan used the railings to pull up to a standing position. “I am a man with no legs giving you a standing ovation for what you have done for me,” he told volunteers. “I will never forget this.”

AmeriCares is partnering with Portlight Strategies, Inc., a nonprofit organization assisting the disabled, on the project. AmeriCares grant also covered delivery of medical equipment to replace wheelchairs and walkers lost or damaged in the floodwaters.

“The quicker we can get people back into their homes, the better their quality of life,” says Paul Timmons, chairman of Portlight's board. More than 100 families will benefit.



# Help Now, Healthy Later



Photo by Donna Porstner/AmeriCares

YMCA counselor Amanda Wexler (above) works with first-graders in Staten Island, N.Y., as part of an AmeriCares-sponsored program for children affected by Sandy. One child colored a storm-hit house red to show how much storms frighten her (below).

No one wants to relive the night of October 29, 2012, but some school-age children have no choice: Every time they walk through their front door they remember the rising water that swamped their home and, in some cases, forced them to swim to safety.

Now is the time to heal those memories. “If we can give kids the tools to cope with a traumatic experience, research has shown we can prevent long-term mental health issues,” says Garrett Ingoglia, AmeriCares vice president of emergency response. To help children, AmeriCares and the YMCA of Greater New York recently launched a counseling program at two public elementary schools in the hard-hit South Beach and Midland Beach neighborhoods. In Brooklyn, N.Y., AmeriCares is working with Maimonides Infants and Children’s Hospital to train pediatricians to identify trauma symptoms in patients. In all, we have awarded more than \$600,000 in funding to meet the mental health and case management needs of New York and New Jersey residents.

Rimma, a mother of two from South Beach, was anxious to give her two sons an outlet to talk about that horrible autumn night. Her 7-year-old was afraid to return home, fearing another wave would wash their condo away; his 8-year-old brother wants the family to move. Now Rimma’s children are among the 80 children enrolled in the 12-week program. “I just want them to know they are safe no matter what,” says Rimma.



Photo by Donna Porstner/AmeriCares

## AmeriCares

AmeriCares is a nonprofit global health and disaster relief organization that delivers medicines, medical supplies and aid to people in crisis around the world and across the United States.

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## Total Storm Relief

In six months, AmeriCares helped more than 400,000 people with 1.4 million relief items, and supported 97 health care organizations and local relief groups with funding, supplies and medicine.

We will continue to help communities recover by:

- Meeting immediate needs
- Restoring health services
- Addressing long-term health needs, including mental health
- Preparing for future emergencies

## Timely, Targeted Response

To meet the immediate needs of Hurricane Sandy survivors and the dozens of neighborhood relief organizations helping them, AmeriCares distributed relief items donated by more than 100 corporations. Beginning the day after the storm, our emergency response teams traveled to the hardest hit areas, ensuring that close to 100 local partners received our guidance as well as crucial relief items.

Our teams directed truckloads of desperately needed consumables such as bottled water to community groups along the coast — 450,000 bottles in all, a three-day supply for 75,000 people. Volunteer doctors and relief workers requested a wide range of items, including tetanus vaccine to protect residents cleaning storm debris and 3,500 sleeping bags for people living without heat.

We also worked with shelters, providing chronic disease medicines and medical equipment for displaced people with special needs. On Long Island, one shelter housed more than 800 people, many of them elderly.



Photo by Naomi Andebrhan/AmeriCares

Relief supply delivery.