

THE PLOT

by Richard Virgilio

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NJ'S FIRST LADY PRESENTS DONATION TO COASTAL HABITAT & HELPS REBUILD HOME

New Jersey's First Lady, Mary Pat Christie, joined with Brookdale University student volunteers Friday to help repair a home damaged by Superstorm Sandy as well as announce a donation of \$839,000 to Coastal Habitat for Humanity from the Hurricane Sandy New Jersey Relief Fund.

Camp Evans in Wall has specifically been allocated \$125,000 of the donation to fund renovations for the housing of volunteers from around the country coming to assist Coastal Habitat. The remaining \$714,000 will fund 20 home rebuilds by the organization in Neptune Township and City, Belmar and Manasquan. Additionally, the donation will support 100 home repairs in cities including Allenhurst, Asbury Park, Avon, Bradley Beach, Loch Arbour and Ocean Township in the next 12 months. [more below]



NJ First Lady Mary Pat Christie, Renata Bonelli and Maureen Mulligan. Christie chairs the Hurricane Sandy New Jersey Relief Fund which donated \$839,000 to support Coastal Habitat repairs on the Jersey Shore (photo courtesy Natalie Markova Photography)

"I am so proud about what Coastal Habitat for Humanity will be able to accomplish with the help of donations to the Hurricane Sandy New Jersey Relief Fund," said Christie, chairperson of the fund. "There is a lot of hard work ahead and I know this organization is committed to meeting the immediate and long-term challenges associated with repairing Jersey Shore communities."

Christie made the presentation at the home of Renata Bonelli, a small business owner in Manasquan. During the height of the storm, Bonelli said there was five inches of water in the first floor of her home (which is at least two feet off the ground). "There were small waves and an actual current in my living room," said Bonelli, choking back tears with a smile while holding her rescue dog Pete.

"We have been working for six months to get to this point, where we can begin repairing homes on a large-scale," said Maureen Mulligan, executive director, Coastal Habitat for Humanity. "This donation will greatly help our Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative teams repair, restore and rebuild local communities and hopefully lives."

The organization expects most home repairs it has committed to, to cost between \$5,000 and \$100,000 each. [more below]



Mary Pat Christie and daughter Sarah got down to work helping to repair a home in Manasquan, leaving covered in saw dust and with bright smiles. (photo courtesy Natalie Markova Photography)

After her speech, Christie and her daughter Sarah Ann volunteered with Coastal Habitat construction team managers Ollie Lowery and Brantley Savage and students from Brookdale College, tearing out flooring in Bonelli's home. The First Lady laughed as she became covered in sawdust, confirming what she said earlier outside the home – that she

really wanted to work and help with repairs.

“Seeing and working first-hand to repair the damage from the storm motivates me even more to encourage people my age to be more aware and take time to help,” said Sarah Ann Christie, a high school junior.

Mulligan also thanked Celebrating Homes; Robin Hood Foundation, Salesforce Foundation, Pearl Jam and the Vitology Foundation, Novo Nordisk, State Farm, Charles Lafitte Foundation, AARP Foundation, Citi Foundation, Madison Asbury Dry Operations, Jersey Restoring Jersey, Lanmark360, Al Roker, Tony Pallagrosi, UMT PRESENTS, Tim Donnelly and “every performer at the ‘On the Beach’ concert” for their support.

“Every penny from every donation stays local and directly impacts homeowners from Manasquan north to Ocean Township,” said Mulligan. “This organization is run on volunteer energy and the continued financial support of individuals, organizations like the fund the First Lady chairs and corporations like New Jersey Natural Gas. It takes a community to repair a neighborhood and the way people here have pulled together makes me the proudest lady on the planet right now.”

Area homeowners who cannot afford the costs of repairs due to Superstorm Sandy are encouraged to reach out to Coastal Habitat for Humanity by completing the [online application](#) or calling Felix Acevedo at the organization’s office in Spring Lake Heights at 732.974.2422.

To make a financial donation – every dollar stays local – to Coastal Habitat, [click here](#).

Learn more about Hurricane Sandy New Jersey Relief Fund by [clicking here](#) or Camp Evans by [clicking here](#).

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