

Lutheran
Disaster
Response
of New York

COMFORT & RENEW

Responding to human need caused by any disaster

By Dr. John J. Scibilia, Executive Director

LDRNY was founded as a result of 9/11, but the vision and charge now and into the future is broader. It is committed to address human need caused by the 9/11 disaster for as long as it takes, as well as whatever needs arise due to natural disasters.

Until 9/11 there was no organized New York Lutheran presence in responding to disaster.

It was, in fact, one of the few states where Lutherans were not

involved, particularly as leaders in faith-based disaster response. The purpose of LDRNY as stated in its formation documents states simply, "To respond directly and encourage and facilitate response from others to the needs of persons and their families affected both directly and indirectly by tragedy or disaster."

We continue to feel the pain of the human-caused 9/11 disaster. More common, and where the church can now make a significant difference through LDRNY, is during natural disaster. There are hidden victims in every disaster, and it is the church that must stand with them. For example, a recent natural disaster caused by wind and rain affected thousands of people in 14 New York counties. Most of the damage reported is in counties where more than 13 percent of the population is below the poverty line. This is part of Appalachia with

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LDRNY Executive Director Dr. John J. Scibilia, center, meets with David Rudduck of the American Red Cross' national office in Washington, D.C., left, and Ryan Southard of the New York office.

www.LDRNY.org

While the group has been working informally since 9/11, NYDIS met for its inaugural kickoff in mid-August at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in upper Manhattan,



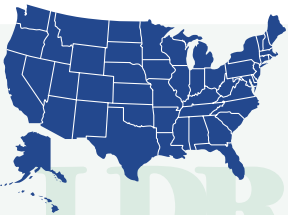
hosted by Episcopal Charities. It will soon be headquartered at 22 Cortlandt St., 20th floor, sharing offices in the Lutheran Disaster Response of New York Comfort & Renewal Center.

Faith-based agencies collaborate on disaster response

For the first time ever, several New York faith-based agencies have agreed to formally work collaboratively to provide support and services to people affected by disasters. The new collaborative organization, New York Disaster Interfaith Services (NYDIS), will address the 9/11 long-term recovery needs, in addition to assessing the disaster infrastructure of New York to better coordinate and prepare the faith-based community for future disasters.

NYDIS will work together with interfaith communities and in partnership with other service organizations to empower faith communities to respond effectively to disasters by facilitating the delivery of assistance programs, spiritual care, counseling and advocacy in responding to those affected by disaster, said NYDIS Treasurer Dr. John J. Scibilia, executive director of Lutheran Disaster Response of New York. Scibilia was among the leaders in getting NYDIS launched.

NYDIS membership includes disaster response agencies which include LDRNY, United Methodist Committee on Relief, United Church of Christ National Disaster Ministries and the Presbytery of NYC.



around the U.S.

Lutheran Disaster Response, a ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS), continues to help survivors recover from floods, hurricanes, tornadoes and other disasters across the United States. LDRNY is the local expression of this larger organization.

“This year has brought an unprecedented number of disasters,” said the Rev. Gilbert B. Furst, director, Lutheran

Disaster Response. More than “400 tornadoes and 2,000 storms brought havoc and devastation to the mid- and lower United States,” he said.

LDR organized and funded recovery work in 14 states and Guam, a U.S. territory. In addition, LDR is currently working in these areas: Ohio, Georgia, Florida, Illinois, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Tennessee, West Virginia, Arizona, Paget, Bermuda, after Hurricane Fabian; and in North Carolina and Virginia after tropical storm Isabel.

For more information, check out the LDR website at www.LDR.org.

LCC launches pastoral care program, with funding from LDRNY

Helping pastors take care of their mental, physical and emotional health has long been a building block of LDRNY.

In September, it funded Consultation Circles for Professional Growth and Renewal in Ministry, a one-year comprehensive wellness initiative for clergy developed by the Lutheran Counseling Center (LCC).

Consultation Circles is a pilot project designed to promote and sustain habits of wellness for clergy, according to Ausma Mursch, executive director of LCC. The

program will help each participant design and maintain a self-care process for increased effectiveness and empowerment in their personal and professional lives.

Clergy will be working with their peers and other professionals to address the physical, spiritual, emotional, and financial issues related to wellness. Forty-eight clergy participants are participating in the first group of circles.

For more information on this program, contact LCC at 516-741-0994 or at lcc132@aol.com.

LDRNY funds ESL program at Concordia for Fujianese students

Thanks to a grant from LDRNY, 12 students completed Concordia College's Summer ESL program in Bronxville, designed to help them better develop their language and cultural skills so they can succeed in high school.

The students are from the Fujianese province of China, a growing immigrant group in New York City, which was severely affected by the aftermath of 9/11. Many of the students' parents work in shops and restaurants in New York City's Chinatown section. In many cases, the students are the only interpreters in the family.

LDRNY, in concert with Lutheran Social Services Metropolitan New York, has also funded the New Life Center, a special counseling and resource program for the Fujianese and other Asian

immigrants in New York City. The students' counselor at Concordia was Wendy Wang of Lutheran Family and Community Services in Chinatown.

"The students are now in a far better position to succeed in high school and some are even considering college. Previously, that would have been an unimaginable opportunity for their parents," she said.



The Rev. Dr. David Benke, left, vice president of LDRNY and president of the Atlantic District, Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, celebrates with graduates of the ESL program.

Another 9/11 remembered



A: Ausma Mursch, executive director, Lutheran Counseling Center, left; with Pr. Brenda Smith, New Hope, Queens.

B: Pr. Tom Taylor, deputy coordinator of LDRNY, left, and the Rev. Dr. David Benke, president, Atlantic District, Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, and vice president of LDRNY.

C: Thrivent's Chris Jones and wife, Maddy.

D: The team at the New Life Center in Chinatown, with the Rev. Dr. Stephen Bouman, Bishop of the Metropolitan New York Synod, ELCA, and president of LDRNY, in the back.

E: Orienne Sharir and Kathy Hopkins from Lutheran Medical Center, left, and Pr. Khader El-Yateem, Salam Lutheran Church, and his wife.

LDRNY and its partners got together in early September as the world commemorated another anniversary of the 9/11 disaster. More than 120 people from organizations that included the American Red Cross, FEMA, and the National Organization for Victims Assistance, attended an event at the World Financial Center in downtown Manhattan, across the street from Ground Zero. The event was sponsored, in part, by LDRNY friends, including:

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|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Baylis & Geist | HSBC |
| Capell & Vishnick | Lansco Corp. |
| Cataleno & Co. | The Grill Room |
| Griffin Communications | Thrivent Financial for Lutherans |
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View on 9/11/03



Family members of those who died on 9/11/01 met at Ground Zero on Sept. 11 of this year for a ceremony to mark the day. This photo was taken from the offices of LDRNY, which overlook Ground Zero.

Memorial & Honor Gifts

LDRNY is thankful for the gifts we've received in the following names:

In memory of Marian Scibilia

- Sal Scibilia
Mr. and Mrs. Antonio DeRupo
Paul Jensen and MaryEllen Herbert
Sandy and James Paul
Marie Carleo
Frances Pisani
Joanne and Stephen Strunck
Vincent Abbenda
Rev. Cherlyne Beck
Celia and George Petersen
Wendy & Ken Healy
Melvin and Jane Kieschnick
Vivian A. Emmi
Joel and Irene McFadden
Kevin and Ann Marie Fitze
Thomas Ray Cloninger
Harold and Carole Prummell
Valerie Maggitt
Christopher McDonald
Joseph and Ann Gadaleta
Neil and Debra DeRupo
Nora and Patricia Murphy
Dorothy Nelson
Mikki Baloy
Jennifer Singer & Damien Munsinger
Howard Capell
Robert and Karen Hoffman
American Legion Auxiliary Post 1718

In memory of Michael Fiore

Sarah J. Smith

Lutheran Medical Center's Healthy Connections program continues to help those affected by 9/11 & other traumas

Lutheran Medical Center (LMC) in Brooklyn reports that its Healthy Connections program is going very well. Located in Bay Ridge, in the heart of a growing Middle Eastern, Asian and Latino community, Healthy Connections is a multipurpose wellness center designated to meet the comprehensive needs of families coping with the aftermath of trauma, grief and loss in their lives. It serves as a hub for services related to 9/11 and other traumas, training staff in the best practices related to community-oriented trauma, grief, counseling and other supportive services.

Its programs include:

- **Project Liberty** LMC's home base for Project Liberty program, which provides free crisis counseling services to persons, families and groups affected by 9/11.
- **The Arab American Initiative** Culturally appropriate counseling and supportive services to meet the unmet needs of the Arab community.

- **Integrating Supportive Services into Primary Care** Through a grant, LMC is able to place counselors in several primary care sites to provide psychosocial services to health center clients.

- **Supportive Play for Children in Crisis** In conjunction with the Center for Child Development, the program facilitates healing for children and families whose lives were touched by 9/11.

- **Create Arts Therapy** Trauma recovery services through the use of expressive or creative arts therapy.

- **Project LIFE of Lutheran Social Services-Metropolitan New York** Two bilingual Project LIFE care managers are based at LMC one day a week to provide on-site services for Brooklyn residents.

- **Substance abuse services**

Your gifts at work

Through your generosity, Lutheran Disaster Response of New York can provide funding and support for programs that assist people affected by Sept. 11.

Programs include:

- **Comfort and Renew Grant Program for congregations and grass roots ministries.** Grants of up to \$15,000, mostly provided by AAL/LB, are available to establish a program that will provide comfort and renewal to people affected by Sept. 11 and its wave effects. For information, contact for the LCMS: Kathy Jagow, Atlantic District, 914-337-5700, ext. 6, ad_kj@concordia-ny.edu; for ELCA: Connie Duever, cduever@mny.org., 212-665-0732,
- **Food Programs.** Emergency cash assistance is available to soup kitchens, food pantries and programs run by Lutheran churches or organizations, or operated in conjunction with community efforts, to help meet increased demand following 9/11. For more information, or to apply, contact Jennifer@LDRNY.org (1-866-864-1600).
- **Project LIFE (Lutheran Initiative for Empowerment).** A "care" management program coordinated by Lutheran Social Services -Metro New York to help victims of Sept. 11 access the myriad of help and benefits available to them, as well as connect them to the right public assistance. Call 1-800-729-9209.
- **Tuition assistance program for Lutheran Schools and Early Childhood Education Programs.** Tuition assistance is available to any child attending a Lutheran School who was affected by Sept. 11. Call Lutheran Schools Association at 212-665-5599.
- **New Ground, a camp for New York Neighborhoods, administered by Koinonia.** Call 800-980-2267, email koinoniaNY@yahoo.com.
- **New LIFE Center, support center for people affected by 9/11 who speak Fujianese.** 195 Worth St., Manhattan, 212-748-1754
- **Lutheran Counseling Center (LCC). Individual counseling, group sessions and special programs available to churches.** Call (800) 317-1173
- **Ongoing training sessions for caregivers and first responders** in cooperation with New York Disaster Response Interfaith Task Force, National Organization of Victims Assistance, VOAD and other groups.
- **New York City 9/11 Unmet Needs Roundtable provides assistance to victims of 9/11.** NYCroundtable@yahoo.com, 917-686-1252.

For more information on any of our programs, go to our website, LDRNY.org, or call 866-864-1600.

Thanks to LDRNY

Notes to Executive Director Dr. John J. Scibilia

Nassau County Office of Emergency Management would like to thank you for your outstanding assistance during the days leading up to Hurricane Isabel. The efforts of Lutheran Disaster Response provided valuable aid to our agency allowing us to perform our duties at a greater level. Without the coordination and collaboration of agencies like yours, the overall effort would have been more challenging and difficult.

While Nassau County was fortunate in that Hurricane Isabel did not directly affect Nassau County, it did provide agencies an opportunity to "test" coordinated efforts and share resources. It is evident that OEM and Lutheran Disaster Response collaborated and communicated well.

— Richard Rotanz, Commissioner, Nassau OEM

On behalf of the Health and Welfare Council, the Nassau County Office of Emergency Management and the Long Island Voluntary Agencies Active in Disaster (LIVOAD), thank you and LDRNY for its support of \$1,750 which will allow us to utilize an AmeriCorp volunteer to assist with the development of the LIVOAD.

— Kate Anastasia, Health and Welfare Council of LI

We write to extend our heartfelt thanks for your most generous hospitality and sponsoring of the Pre-Assembly (Lutheran World Federation) Visitation. The program you arranged under the theme, "For the Healing of the World," was not only a unique opportunity for us to witness and learn from New Yorker's deep commitment to recovery, but also an experience rich in human warmth and kindness. It was a privilege to meet with your team and the other leaders in the comfort and renewal efforts, not least those who lost family members in the 9/11 events."

— Karen Achtelstetter, Pauline Mumia, Janet Bond-Nash, Lutheran World Federation

I did want to let you know how much the Year II Commemoration Dinner meant to me. It was so rejuvenating to be surrounded by people who have the same challenges and rewards and to share those experiences in such a celebratory and reverent event. It really did remind me why I do what I do, and it gave me new energy to assist with the Commemoration on 9/11.

Thanks always for reminding us that our work is a celebration.

— Johanna Burke, Acting Assistant Director, Government Relations, American Red Cross in Greater New York

Responding

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federal, state and American Red Cross programs being scaled back recently, coupled with the issue of poverty, there are many basic needs still not being met.

House repairs, just to bring a house to a safe, sanitary and secure state, require more resources than are available through these programs. One such person, a disabled veteran and single parent of three on a low-fixed income, can't come up with the funds or materials needed to get his family back into the house. When the limited federal dollars now paying for temporary housing run out, homelessness may be a reality for this family. The church can make a difference to this family through LDRNY.

LDRNY was present and among emergency service workers during the summer blackout. During the threat of Hurricane Isabel, LDRNY was the church supporting and serving among disaster preparedness operations in addition to providing current information to congregations. As LDRNY matures, it will increasingly assist congregations, their members and neighborhoods in disaster preparedness as well as organizing how they can respond locally in tangible and planned ways.



LDRNY Executive Director Dr. John J. Scibilia at work on the night of 9/11/03, when the towers of light were turned on in downtown Manhattan. In September, LDRNY moved its offices to Cortlandt Street, which is right across the street from Ground Zero.

Most of the contributions received to date by LDRNY are designated for our 9/11 response on behalf of the donors and as the church. These gifts won't be diverted in response to other disasters.

We have learned with the involvement and leadership of LDRNY in subsequent disaster situations the church makes a significant tangible and incarnational impact. The support of this ministry is vital to maintain a total Lutheran response to disaster, together with District, Synod, partner Lutheran agencies and other agencies.

We've been given the opportunity to serve particularly persons at risk, such as the elderly and homebound, when they are impacted by disasters such as ice storms and Nor'easters. In addition, we've been given the gift to serve in the long-term response, assisting where no other agencies assist the forgotten and hidden victims.

LDRNY, the face of the church in response to disaster, facilitates and supports the relationships, making it possible to attend to their basic physical, emotional and spiritual needs. It is a rose which has risen from the rubble of Ground Zero and one which will continue to grow and blossom among those who need us most in their time of need.

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**22 Cortlandt St., 20th Floor
New York, N.Y. 10007
1-866-864-1600
Email: help@LDRNY.org**

www.LDRNY.org

**The Rev. Dr. Stephen Bouman, President
The Rev. Dr. David Benke, Vice President
Dr. John J. Scibilia, Executive Director
Jennifer Singer, Coordinator
Mikki Baloy, Deputy Coordinator of Operations
Pr. Tom Taylor, Deputy Coordinator, Long Island
Wendy Healy, Communications**