



**Promoting Equitable & Effective Use of 9/11 Recovery Funds**

**Are We Keeping Faith With 9/11 Victims?**  
*A Review of Ongoing Areas of Unmet Needs*

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New York Disaster Interfaith Services  
Daniel H. Bush  
Director of Disaster Recovery & Victim Advocacy  
22 Cortlandt Street, 20th Floor  
New York, New York 10007  
[WWW.NYDIS.ORG](http://WWW.NYDIS.ORG)  
[INFO@NYDIS.ORG](mailto:INFO@NYDIS.ORG)

*NYDIS IS A FAITH-BASED FEDERATION OF SERVICE PROVIDERS AND CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS THAT  
WORK TOGETHER TO PROVIDE DISASTER READINESS, RESPONSE, AND RECOVERY SERVICES*

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## **About New York Disaster Interfaith Services (NYDIS)**

NYDIS is a faith-based federation of service providers and charitable organizations who work together to provide disaster services. The core mission of NYDIS is to develop and lead faith-based disaster readiness, response, and recovery services for New York. NYDIS convenes its leadership to network with local, state, and national agencies involved in disaster management to facilitate the delivery of services, resources, and information to religious communities, and under-served individuals, populations and impacted communities.

We provide services through three principal program areas: *9/11 Long-Term Recovery* through the Unmet Needs Roundtable, and training and support of case workers, clergy and caregivers; *Mitigation and Preparedness Education & Training* for faith-based communities, including houses of worship, lay, clergy and religious leaders, as well as their partner agencies and neighborhoods, and; *Disaster Advocacy*, on behalf of disaster victims, particularly vulnerable and under-served individuals, populations, and impacted communities.

## **Acknowledgements**

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Any mistakes herein belong entirely to the author.

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This report is dedicated to the victims of September 11, 2001. And it is dedicated to the efforts of recovery workers, caseworkers, chaplains, clergy, doctors, mental health providers, and advocates who have sought to repair the rupture that is still with us.

## Executive Summary

On September 11, 2001, religious leaders in New York City witnessed their churches, synagogues, temples, and mosques become sacred places of refuge during a day of terror. These were often the first places that dust-covered survivors rushed to seek safety and to pray. Houses of worship quickly became the first line of support in a time of crisis. Religious organizations offered people help quickly. Faith-based organizations will also be among the last institutions to offer resources to those who persist in need in 9/11's aftermath. These victims, increasingly invisible and forgotten, need advocates and services: this is the ongoing role of the religious community.

- A key ongoing resource for victims is the NYC 9/11 Unmet Needs Roundtable. To date the roundtable's donors have provided **over \$3.4 million** in cash assistance grants, food and clothing vouchers and other referral services.

Data gleaned from the Roundtable offers a compelling picture of individuals and communities hardest hit and significant areas of ongoing unmet needs:

- The five largest job groups served at the Roundtable were: Restaurant Food Service, Hotel Tourism, Financial Services, Maintenance, and Airline.
- A majority of the victims served are low-wage earners, many of them marginalized minorities and immigrants, some undocumented immigrants.
- The Roundtable has and will likely see many more ill Ground Zero recovery workers being treated at Mount Sinai who cannot meet their basic needs.
- The extreme burden of high rent upon clients brought to roundtable demonstrates the need for low-income housing was greatly intensified by 9/11.

Other Areas of Unmet Needs:

- The health of Lower Manhattan residents impacted by the WTC disaster
- 9/11 Caseworkers, Clergy & Mental Health providers who need support
- Victim's families who have only the unidentified remains at Fresh Kills Landfill

Actions Necessary to Address These Needs:

- Pass Maloney-Shays legislation to provide federal health insurance for Ground Zero recovery workers who are in ill-health as result of the 9/11 clean-up.
- Give Lower Manhattan clergy a more prominent role in healing the community
- Use the most flexible pool of recovery funds, the \$1 Billion remaining in Community Development Block Grants to invest in low-income housing, innovative jobs programs, and health programs for residents.
- Direct the remaining recovery money and relief efforts strategically at catchments of underserved people.

## The Role of the Religious Community In Responding

On September 11, 2001, religious leaders in New York City witnessed their churches, synagogues, temples, and mosques become sacred places of refuge during a day of terror. These were often the first places that dust-covered survivors rushed to seek safety and to pray. In lower Manhattan, the sanctuaries of Saint Paul's Chapel (directly across from Ground Zero) and Saint Peter's Church (on the corner of Barclay and Church Streets) became the places from which recovery operations were organized and sustained. The Seamen's Church Institute was the first to mobilize aide, setting up food outside Saint Paul's Chapel on the evening of 9/11.<sup>1</sup>

For victims of 9/11, religious institutions were and are uniquely situated to offer help. Houses of worship are the only public spaces that are present in every neighborhood in the city. They quickly became the first line of support in a time of crisis. This is for reasons both emotional and practical: People instinctively turn to spiritual authorities and religious organizations during times of crisis; and as a practical matter: Faith-based organizations are able to offer people help quickly, without undue bureaucracy, and do so regardless of a person's immigration status or ability to pay.

This meant, in the chaotic aftermath of 9/11, that religious organizations were able to expediently offered cash assistance and food for people unable to meet their basic needs. They did so in the first weeks after 9/11, while some larger organizations were still organizing the means and standards by which they were going to distribute aid.<sup>2</sup> For the most vulnerable individuals and families who had no financial cushion to fall back on, this made a vital difference: a difference that kept many from becoming homeless or going hungry. Yet what back then New York food pantries thought was a spike in need, has held steady: crowds and long lines waiting for food continue unabated.<sup>3</sup> Cutbacks and the end of programs like the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Mortgage and Rental Assistance program have only exacerbated the situation.

The likelihood is that faith-based organizations will also be among the last institutions to offer resources to those who persist in need in 9/11's aftermath. At this writing, as the third anniversary of the terror attacks draws near, many community-based organizations are phasing out their assistance to 9/11 victims or have already done so. Approximately 75% of the agencies in the 9/11 United Services Group (case management umbrella organization) will have closed their programs by the third anniversary.<sup>4</sup> Some agencies

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<sup>1</sup> St. Paul's Chapel became a 24 hour 9 month long multi-faith sanctuary for recovery workers serving at Ground Zero. Many different religious groups brought supplies and volunteered there, the largest single group of volunteers coming from B'nai Jeshurun on the Upper West Side.

<sup>2</sup> The ideal sequence of service delivery is for Government agencies and the Red Cross to administer aide first, followed by longer-term aide given by the religious community.

<sup>3</sup> *No Recovery for the Hungry: Skyrocketing Demand and Decreasing Resources Force New York City Pantries and Kitchens to Close or Ration Food.* New York City Coalition Against Hunger, Annual New York City Hunger Survey, November 2003

<sup>4</sup> Summary of Current Phase Down Knowledge – March 30, 2004. United Services Group network.

have phased out their programs as they closed the majority of their cases. Others have had to close more abruptly. In such cases the reason for phase-down was likely not the lack of victims' needs.

Most New Yorkers, political leaders tell us, are naturally resilient: 9/11, though catastrophic, has drifted into the past, even if its tremors continue to be felt. But for those who were severely impacted, physically, psychologically, economically – often in overlapping ways – 9/11 remains insurmountable. Severely impacted individuals and families remain in a vulnerable and precarious state, struggling for economic and emotional security in a political environment that has less and less regard for their plight. These victims, increasingly invisible and forgotten, need advocates and services: this is the ongoing, and unfortunately necessary, role of the religious community.

### **The NYC 9/11 Unmet Needs Roundtable**

One resource that continues to be available through the faith community is the NYC 9/11 Unmet Needs Roundtable. The Roundtable is a service of New York Disaster Interfaith Services (NYDIS) and functions as a partnership between 14 donor agencies and a diverse range of 85 social service agencies in metro New York City. At the Roundtable, agencies providing case management to 9/11 victims present their cases to a panel of donor agencies. Formed in early 2002 through the organizing efforts of Benjamin Ross of the New York Immigration Coalition and Ken Curtin of FEMA, with the leadership of John Scibilia of Lutheran Disaster Response New York, who brought together donors, the roundtable's now enlarged partner-base provides for the unmet material needs of 9/11 victims for whom no other assistance is available.<sup>5</sup> To date the roundtable's donors have provided over \$3.4 million in cash assistance grants, food and clothing vouchers and other referral services to 9/11 clients.

The majority of the victims served are low-wage earners, many of whom are marginalized minorities and immigrants, some of whom are undocumented immigrants. This high level of need among those with the least means to fall back upon reflects the reality that 60% of the approximately 100,000 people whose jobs were directly displaced by the attacks were paid less than \$11 per hour: these individuals had annual pre-disaster incomes of \$22,880.<sup>6</sup> Many of these low-wage impacted workers were arbitrarily excluded from federal assistance programs.<sup>7</sup> The next section of this report offers a closer look at displaced persons served by the Roundtable.

The Roundtable, while serving as an essential means of last resort for the most neglected victims, has also served valuably as a means of guidance for 9/11 caseworkers. The

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<sup>5</sup> All cases funded by the Roundtable must have a documented link to 9/11. A complete list of Roundtable donor agencies and case management agencies is attached to this report.

<sup>6</sup> The Fiscal Policy Institute, *World Trade Center Job Impacts Take a Heavy Toll on Low-Wage Workers*, November 5, 2001 ([www.fiscalpolicy.org](http://www.fiscalpolicy.org)) Page 2

<sup>7</sup> For example: an airline worker at La Guardia who lost his job and lived in Queens would be ineligible for assistance from FEMA's Mortgage and Rental Assistance program because of the way the inclusion zone was delineated (as being the island of Manhattan) while his friend laid-off from the same job but living in Harlem, could receive assistance. In a separate example: undocumented immigrants are not eligible for SSI, even if they were injured while serving as recovery workers at Ground Zero.

majority of 9/11 caseworkers are not trained social workers but rather dedicated individuals who came forward at a time of crisis. Many 9/11 caseworkers were thrust into a world of social service that was new to them. A fortunate, albeit unintended, consequence of their presenting cases at the Roundtable has been that roundtable donors, many of whom have a depth of experience in social service work, often helped them by providing guidance: aiding them in evaluating their cases, helping them to further develop their client's recovery plan, and identifying with the caseworker resources they have overlooked or of which they have not been well informed. Because of this informal supervision, the work of the caseworkers and the level of service provided to their clients has been strengthened and greatly enhanced.

Another equally invaluable legacy of the NYC 9/11 Unmet Needs Roundtable is that it has allowed us to document the needs of individuals and indeed entire pockets of people that would otherwise go unnoticed and underserved because they do not fit the particular eligibility requirements of larger less flexible programs. These data in turn, help to inform the work of partnering agencies. For example, the Coordinator of the American Red Cross Additional Assistance Program has been attending the Roundtable for the last several months: This allows the Red Cross to pick up clients they have missed or might seem to fall slightly outside their eligibility matrix and likewise informs the Roundtable donor agencies of a case's status with the Red Cross Additional Assistance program as they are putting together an appropriate aide package. Safe Horizon and the Lutheran Immigration Services, as an advisor, have been part of the Roundtable from its inception. The Unmet Needs Roundtable, like the 9/11 United Services Group, has helped to insure that 9/11 monies are distributed diligently.

### **A Portrait of Individuals and Communities Served and Their Needs**

The Roundtable's statistics show that the five largest job groups served were, in size order: Restaurant Food Service, Hotel Tourism, Financial Services, Maintenance, and Airline. Taxi drivers and street vendors were also frequently aided by the roundtable.<sup>8</sup> This is largely because many who lost their jobs in these industries did not fall into the geographic regions or meet eligibility requirements delineated by FEMA and other large agencies administering aide programs, or the aide available was not enough.

The Roundtable has seen many cases, and will likely see many more, of individuals who served as Ground Zero recovery workers who are now ill and being treated at Mount Sinai Medical Center. The Roundtable has a collaborative relationship with the staff of the Mount Sinai Medical Screening and Treatment program; both referring clients to the program and offering assistance to needy recovery workers who are now unable to meet basic expenses. A Mount Sinai case worker regularly presents cases to the Roundtable.

The Roundtable is often witness to the challenges of providing integrated care to those displaced by 9/11. As Dr. Ramon Nieves, Head of Mission for the United Methodist

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<sup>8</sup> This Roundtable data largely mirrors the statistical findings of the Fiscal Policy Institute on displaced workers. See "World Trade Center Job Impacts Take a Heavy Toll on Low-Wage Workers," November 5, 2001 ([www.fiscalpolicy.org](http://www.fiscalpolicy.org)) Table 1

Committee on Relief, observes: “Over 70% of our clientele at UMCOR walk in with a diagnosis of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (P.T.S.D.). Many do not acknowledge (or want to acknowledge) their present state of mind. They feel that if they address their financial situation, all will be well. Economic recovery is not synonymous with mental wellness.” A challenge in serving many immigrants, particularly Muslims, Asians and South Asians, was that they were afraid to come forward to receive aid given the post-9/11 climate of fear and backlash against immigrants. Each of these challenges had to be addressed by caseworkers and providers because to receive aid from the Roundtable a client must demonstrate that they have a sound long-term recovery plan that provides a path back to stability.

As individuals and whole communities were and are unemployed or underemployed they have been unable to meet basic expenses; many expended their savings, maxed out their credit cards, and fell behind in rental payments. Large numbers of individuals and families began to face eviction proceedings.<sup>9</sup> The following examples present some of the people served by the roundtable and some common themes of needs served:

### **A Restaurant Worker**

One man aided by the roundtable, married and supporting two children works in a restaurant below Canal Street. After 9/11, his hours were cut in half due to the dramatic decrease in business (for over six weeks the area was cordoned off by the police and there was very little business going on at all). Over time, his decrease in salary made it impossible for him to keep up with his expenses. Though the restaurant owner managed to keep the restaurant open, he could not increase the workers’ hours; business continued to be sluggish. This worker fell behind three months in his rent and could not catch up. The Unmet Needs Table awarded him \$2,200.00 to pay the overdue rent, at the same time providing clothing vouchers for his children and food vouchers for his family.<sup>10</sup>

### **A Maintenance Worker**

A single mother of three lost her maintenance job downtown as a result of the attacks. She was unemployed for a full two years. She started working again, but was unable to pay the arrears on her rent, a substantial debt that had accrued over time and would have led to her eviction. Roundtable partners paid all of her back rent of \$6,150, bringing her up to date, allowing her to regain financial independence.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> For a statistical breakdown see *Ripple Effect: The Crisis in NYC’s Low Income Communities after 9/11<sup>th</sup>*. The Urban Justice Center. September, 2002. Page 22

<sup>10</sup> Records of Islamic Circle of North America, who presented this client’s case to the Roundtable.

<sup>11</sup> Record of LDRNY, Luther Disaster Response New York, who funded this client at the Roundtable.

## **A Utility Worker**

A man working for a utility company before and on the day of 9/11 became a part of the crew which restored telephone service to the area. Like many others on the scene immediately after the towers collapse, he breathed in toxic air, and subsequently was diagnosed with a lung condition.<sup>12</sup> This condition causes him to have difficulty breathing.<sup>13</sup> As happened with other restorative workers, he did not seek medical attention within the first two weeks of his “injury” and consequently did not qualify for the large assistance package offered by the Red Cross. Compounding his troubles he became one of a number of employees who were laid off by his company. Looking for work, he sought out and obtained odd jobs and worked part-time driving a livery cab to cover bills, he supports a wife and two small children. He applied for disability but was rejected. As he gained full time hours as a livery cab driver, his case was brought before the Roundtable. He was granted \$3,500 to pay off outstanding rent arrears, a electric bill and a phone bill. He also applied for and was accepted into the Mount Sinai Medical Treatment Program for recovery workers with respiratory problems as a result of being at the WTC site.<sup>14</sup>

## **An Asbestos Abatement Worker**

A woman worked as an asbestos abatement laborer and was deployed to Ground Zero and nearby areas as a clean-up worker after 9/11. She was a local 78 member and worked downtown for 800 hours. She was forced to leave her job November 18, 2002 as a result of WTC related physical and mental health problems. Her conditions include low back pain, occupational WTC-related asthma, GERD, chronic rhinitis, prolonged PTSD and prolonged depressive adjustment reaction disorder. Since losing her job as an asbestos abatement laborer, she has been working as a self-employed housekeeper and street vendor. Currently she cleans two homes for \$80 a week and earns about \$25 a day selling trinkets in the streets of Queens. She is underemployed and unable to provide for her two children, ages 14 and 16. She has been referred to the American Red Cross Additional Assistance and to Safe Horizon’s Queens Community Office for advocacy with the Crime Victims Board. The Roundtable has assisted her with rental arrears, food, clothing, transportation costs and phone bill on three separate occasions.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> The toxic quality of the air has been well documented in Suzanne Mattei’s report: *Pollution and Deception at Ground Zero*. Sierra Club. August 2004. (<http://www.sierraclub.org/groundzero/>)

<sup>13</sup> These conditions are now documented. Ibid, Pages 152 - 156

<sup>14</sup> Records of ICNA, Islamic Circle of North America, who presented this client’s case to the Roundtable.

<sup>15</sup> Records Mount Sinai Health Effects Treatment Program, who presented this case at the Roundtable.

## **An Accountant**

An accountant lost her job on 9/11, but was confident that she would find other employment quickly due to her experience and references. She did not seek any financial help from federal or private resources because she thought they were for “needier people,” and she considered herself lucky to have escaped the terror uninjured. Unfortunately, her job search was unsuccessful. As she started to fall behind in her bills, her daughter dropped out of college in order to work,. By the time she realized she needed assistance, many deadlines had already passed. At the Roundtable, she was provided with \$3,000 in aid, for clothing, food, and pharmacy expenses, enabling her to continue an aggressive job search.<sup>16</sup> The Roundtable has seen many similar cases of people who did not think of themselves as a victim and therefore did not seek aide. Many have expended most or all of their savings before they look for help.

## **Two Limousine Drivers**

A limousine driver saw his business decrease by 40% in the months after 9/11, allowing him to work only part-time. As he fell behind in his payments he faced mounting eviction and disconnection notices. He borrowed money from relatives and his credit cards until no one would lend him anymore. The Roundtable granted him \$5,375.47 to pay his debts and prevent his eviction as he continued to look for other work.<sup>17</sup>

One driver’s company closed down in June 2002 due to financial loses and refused to give him a letter attesting to his employment with them because of his status as undocumented immigrant. He could not pay his rent from November 2003 until February 2004 and would have been evicted if the Roundtable had not granted him \$3,800.<sup>18</sup> His struggles due to his immigration status capture in a microcosm the discrimination that many immigrants confronted in the climate of fear after 9/11.

## **A Driver**

A driver for a Queens-based trucking company lost his job soon after 9/11 as the company’s primary business was with companies located in both of the World Trade Center Towers. He struggled to secure new employment. Without his income, the family defaulted on their home mortgage and utility bills, to the order of \$10,878.72. They were threatened with foreclosure and utility cut-offs; however, because of the Roundtable’s donation of \$10,878.72, the family was able to avert foreclosure, and their utilities were brought up to date.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Record of LDRNY, Luther Disaster Response New York, who funded this client at the Roundtable.

<sup>17</sup> Records of UMCOR, United Methodist Committee on Relief, who presented this client’s case to the Roundtable.

<sup>18</sup> Records of the Asian American Federation, who presented this client’s case to the Roundtable.

<sup>19</sup> Records of the Foreclosure Prevention Project at South Brooklyn Legal Services who presented this client’s case to the Roundtable.

## **A Produce Vendor**

A fruit and vegetable vendor who worked on Church Street for 20 years suffered the destruction of his vending cart and substantial damages to his truck on 9/11. His pushcart business was the only livelihood he had known, having sold produce since he was a teenager. The Roundtable provided him with funds to repair the truck, secure a current vending permit, and buy a new pushcart, a total financial package of almost \$4,000. He planned to return to Lower Manhattan, looking forward to renewing his relationships with downtown customers, able again to support his wife and two children.<sup>20</sup>

These are only 9 people out of 1483 aided by the Roundtable, yet these individual descriptions help to portray a composite portrait of those assisted, those who in being displaced after the attacks found themselves no longer able to meet basic expenses or pay major bills, like rent. As the 18 month Mortgage and Rental Assistance Program offered by FEMA has ended, the Roundtable has seen even greater requests for assistance with rental arrears as people remained unemployed a year and half after the tragedy were still unable to find work or have only recently found employment.<sup>21</sup>

As the extreme burden of high rent upon clients brought to roundtable demonstrates, even those that were able to continue working, the need for low-income housing was greatly intensified by 9/11. Offering emergency assistance is only a stop-gap measure. The city government recognized this, extending Section 8 housing to some 9/11 victims. But federal money given to New York City in 9/11's aftermath has not been used to address this urgent need. Resources given in the form of Liberty Bonds have been used to finance "thousands of new luxury rental units" while the Residential Grant Program administered by the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation "has contributed to an increase in market rate housing downtown."<sup>22</sup> The second of these funds was given in the form of US Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grants, which are often used predominantly to build low-income housing.

## **Challenges in Reaching the Underserved**

### **Ethnic and Immigrant Populations**

Some of the most impacted and vulnerable 9/11 victims, displaced workers, come largely from ethnic and immigrant communities. One of the greatest continuing challenges to reaching them is the dearth of available infrastructure. A glance at the agency phase-

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<sup>20</sup> Record of LDRNY, Luther Disaster Response New York, who funded this client at the Roundtable.

<sup>21</sup> The Stafford Act provision for the FEMA Mortgage and Rental Assistance Program has now lapsed, meaning that the 18 months of Mortgage and Rental Assistance available to victims of 9/11 is not and will not be available to victims of future disasters.

<sup>22</sup> *The LMDC: They're in the Money; We're in the Dark: A Review of the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation's Use of 9/11 Funds*. Reconstruction Watch. Good Jobs New York. August, 2004. Pages 18 – 19 ([www.goodjobsny.org](http://www.goodjobsny.org))

down table of the 9/11 United Services Group (the agency that largely coordinated 9/11 casework) reveals that among the first agencies to close their 9/11 programs were those grassroots agencies that specifically served impacted ethnic communities, like the Latino community and Chinatown. Many of these agencies closed because they ran out of funding not because their clients ran out of needs. Though there is now additional Red Cross money available for case management agencies it is too late for these agencies which have already closed their 9/11 recovery programs.<sup>23</sup> This means that even though there continue to be available resources, like the Unmet Needs Roundtable, there are fewer and fewer caseworkers to present cases to the Roundtable. In effect, the necessary bridge to the Roundtable and other remaining resources is growing continually more narrow.

### **Ground Zero Recovery Workers**

Ground Zero recovery workers constitute a community with ongoing unmet needs. According to Mount Sinai's data, 40% of the recovery workers they have screened have no health insurance, approximately 50% require social work services, and 40% are immigrant workers.<sup>24</sup> Many of those screened and treated at Mount Sinai are unable to meet basic expenses, as noted above. Some of the 10,000 screened already have respiratory and pulmonary ailments so severe they are no longer able to work. Many others have had their workers compensation claims rejected or endlessly delayed. And still a large number of recovery workers have yet to be screened or treated. Descriptions of the breadth, depth, and severity of the health impacts on rescue/recovery workers and service restoration workers is diligently collected in the Sierra Club's recently released report "Pollution and Deception at Ground Zero," which utilizes the findings of several doctors and Fire Department experts.<sup>25</sup>

The Mount Sinai program for rescue, recovery, restoration workers and volunteers at Ground Zero is both unique and essential. The leadership of Senator Hillary Clinton and Representative Carolyn Maloney, along with rest of the New York delegation, were key in getting funding for the screening and monitoring programs. The treatment program however continues to be funded only by private donations. Congressional Representatives Carolyn Maloney and Christopher Shays have co-sponsored legislation to provide federal health insurance to recovery workers who now suffer ill-health related to the 9/11 clean-up.<sup>26</sup> But the legislation has yet to gather momentum. Passage of the legislation is needed if the Mount Sinai program is to continue to screen, treat and tract recovery workers. If this funding is forth coming, further outreach to those who served at Ground Zero is necessary and possible. NYDIS recently received boxes of handwritten contact information for volunteers and recovery workers who came through Saint Paul's Chapel while working at Ground Zero.<sup>27</sup> But the information would need to be put into

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<sup>23</sup> Additionally, agencies that do not offer full-service case management do qualify for this grant.

<sup>24</sup> Records Mount Sinai Health Effects Treatment Program

<sup>25</sup> Mattei, Suzanne. *Pollution and Deception at Ground Zero*. Sierra Club. August 2004. Pages 152 – 156 (<http://www.sierraclub.org/groundzero/>)

<sup>26</sup> "Bill Would Protect Ground Zero Workers," The Associate Press. March 29, 2004.

<sup>27</sup> These records came from an organization known as the 9/12 Community.

some useable database in order to contact those who served at the World Trade Center site to inform them of the Mount Sinai screening and treatment programs and the Red Cross Assistance that is available to them. NYDIS recently received a \$375,000 grant to further assist recovery workers from Episcopal Relief and Development.

### **Lower Manhattan Residents**

The health impact of the collapse of the towers on Lower Manhattan residents is not likely to be fully understood for many years, if then, but the urgent need to screen residents and offer treatment to those already affected is urgent. The Sierra Club report quotes Dr. Robin Herbert of Mount Sinai in observing that “too few health care providers are knowledgeable about how to recognize and treat WTC-related illness.”<sup>28</sup> A dangerous blind-spot considering the early findings of Dr. Joan Reibman of the NYU medical center, who studied over 2000 residents living within a mile of Ground Zero eight months after the attack, discovering “a prolonged increase in respiratory symptoms.”<sup>29</sup> Likewise, a study of Chinese-American children in Chinatown showed a rise in the number of visits to the clinic of those who already had asthma in addition to an overall 67% rise in the number of children in the asthma program, from 306 to 510 after the attack.<sup>30</sup>

Early efforts to organize a health screening study and treatment program have been led by Stan Mark of the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund working with Dr. Reibman and Kimberly Flynn of the 9/11 Environmental Action community group. The eventual success of their effectiveness in organizing and mobilizing members of the Lower Manhattan communities however hinges on whether proper funding is allocated to a health program. The most obvious existing source of funding is the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation’s Community Development Block Grants, which might be wisely invested in the long-term health recovery of Lower Manhattan residents. As these needs are addressed, the psychological and spiritual impact on residents, particularly on children, ought to be thoughtfully included in health recovery programs. The work to be done is as much rebuilding lives as rebuilding buildings.

### **9/11 Caseworkers**

The industrious and dedicated group of people who came forward in 9/11<sup>th</sup>’s aftermath to serve as caseworkers to 9/11 victims is a community of people unlikely to be fully celebrated. Many have already been released from their jobs, others are in the process of trying to close their cases as they are being phased-out. NYDIS with the Psychotherapy and Spirituality Institute is offering career development and support groups to caseworkers as they transition out of their positions and begin to job search, but the lack of a comprehensive database of caseworkers and the instability of agency’s closing their 9/11 programs present significant challenges. The religious community, however, mindful of the intense grief and suffering these caseworkers absorbed during the course

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<sup>28</sup>Mattei, Page 156

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, Pages 157 - 8

<sup>30</sup> Ibid Pages 156 - 157

of their work with people displaced or injured by the 9/11 attacks, is committed to offering the most comprehensive support possible.

### **Clergy & Mental Health Providers**

The impact of 9/11 on clergy and mental health providers, who not only experienced the attack themselves, but came forward to attend to the needs of others, is only just beginning to be properly examined. A grant of \$1 million was given to the City Council of Churches to provide a one year program, “Caring for Caregivers,” but it has since ended. Other programs that offer support to clergy and mental health providers, who continue to be indispensable in work of long-term 9/11 recovery, are part of the core mission of NYDIS. Such programs and trainings are particularly necessary if clergy and mental health providers are to be prepared for future disasters and equipped to handle the ongoing threat of terrorism that shadows our community life. NYDIS is sponsoring a conference with Disaster Psychiatry Outreach this October 27, titled “Living in An Age of Terror” focusing on long-term recovery from 9/11 and resilience as one such endeavor.

### **The Ground Zero Memorial & The Fresh Kills Landfill**

The Lower Manhattan Clergy who were the first to receive WTC survivor’s into their sanctuaries and who saw the conversion of their sacred space into recovery operation centers have expressed a deep and committed interest to the memorial at Ground Zero, noting that there is not a single religious leader on the memorial committee. This omission has mirrored the feelings of powerlessness congregations of the neighborhood and their religious leaders have felt about the decisions being made for the community. Though these leaders are intimately familiar with the struggles of residents and those who work in the neighborhood, their voices remain unheard or ignored. And they, perhaps more fully than others recognize that reconstruction is not only about buildings; but about the lives of individuals and families and a rebirth of a sense of neighborhood where they live. The clergy of the neighborhood and throughout the city provided leadership during the time of crises following 9/11. They are also charged with providing leadership during these times of healing and growth.

The religious communities have vital contributions to make in shaping how the Lower Manhattan neighborhood is nurtured and made vibrant. The clergy believe they have a charge to be invested in the development of the memorial at Ground Zero, as the memorial observes not only a site of human and economic calamity but also a sacred space, a place of central significance to the community that remembers victims, and one to which the religious communities of the neighborhood are witnesses.<sup>31</sup> Ground Zero is already a pilgrimage sight for religious groups, a shrine that is understood to be hallowed ground, a place that will become a tomb for remains. Nearby Saint Paul’s Chapel has already become a memorial and has been visited by more than one million people. The

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<sup>31</sup> The clergy with NYDIS drafted a letter to the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation asking for a meeting to discuss the memorial. The letter was sent August 3, but the meeting has yet to take place.

other houses of worship in the neighborhood, some of the oldest and most historic in the city, ought also to be thoughtfully connected with the memorial.

The painful issue of the Fresh Kills landfill and the unidentified remains of 9/11 victims that are there in the West Mound is also connected to burden of memory and memorial. The families of those for whom no remains have been identified continue not to have their concerns recognized by the city authorities who buried the remains there.<sup>32</sup> At the last public meeting at Trinity Church Wall Street, on August 10, the victims families' present spoke when the floor was opened to comments, making repeated pleas that the remains of their family members be transported to a more appropriate place. The city officials did not respond to these requests, instead seeking comment on how the site could be beautified and made appropriate.

Though there have been a series of meetings between families and city officials; the outcome of these meetings appears to have yielded only an ineffectual stalemate. The human needs of the families remain unmet. The religious communities have yet to take a unified position on this issue, but the Episcopal Church through its executive council has taken the lead in urging the city "to enter into sincere and respectful dialogue with WTC Families for Proper Burial, to identify and implement steps to bring solace and resolution to these grieving families."<sup>33</sup>

## **Sources of Recovery Funding & Innovative Programs**

The most flexible pool of funds, with still almost \$1 Billion remaining is the Community Development Block Grants controlled by the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation (LMDC). These cash grants could be spent quickly to invest in low-income housing, to create a diversity of jobs, and to invest in both the physical and psychological health of residents. The decisions the LMDC makes about how to allocate these funds continues to be extremely important to the long-term recovery of the community. Recent recommendations for the LMDC are extremely timely and indisputably appropriate:

- The four open vacancies on the Board of Directors should be filled with stakeholders not already represented on the Board, particularly community leaders of Chinatown and the Lower East Side. Those representing severely impacted workers populations would also be highly appropriate.
- The decision making process needs to be more accessible. Guidelines about how proposed projects will be evaluated should be clear and applications need to include a timetable for how funds will be designated.
- Public hearings with Board members present should be held on Partial Action Plans before final approval is given. This will serve not only the procedural function of giving community members a say, but will serve the therapeutic

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<sup>32</sup> The families concerns and accompanying news articles are listed on their website: (<http://www.wtcfamiliesforproperburial.com/index.htm>)

<sup>33</sup> Davies, Matthew. "9/11 Burials Taken Up By Executive Council," *Episcopal News Service*. June 18, 2004

purpose of *restoring to the community*, its leaders and congregations, *a sense of agency and voice in the direction of their community*. These are the very things which the attacks of 9/11 robbed them of.<sup>34</sup>

There are several innovative programs which address key areas of unmet needs among severely impacted groups. One obvious such program is the Co-op Restaurant proposed by the Restaurant Opportunity Center of New York, the organization composed of former Windows on the World workers. Their proposal not only creates jobs for those who were directly displaced by the attacks, it gives the restaurant workers a voice and the power of agency in achieving their own recovery. This project could and ought to be a model to others of what recovery from 9/11 looks like. The LMDC and other foundations should be leaning to fund this initiative, yet strangely this has not occurred.<sup>35</sup>

A proposal by the New York Immigration Coalition to build English as a Second Language programs in Lower Manhattan is equally sensible, given the disproportionate impact the attacks had on immigrants, and the barriers language present both to finding employment and to getting basic services. Such a program would also serve to create teaching jobs in an area of learning that is in high demand.

City Councilman Alan Gerson, representing Lower Manhattan, has proposed, among other innovative programs for the community, an International Children's Center that will "provide opportunities for young people to formulate, articulate, develop and communicate their hopes and dreams for the future of the world around them." The center would amplify the voice of children in determining the future and would be thoughtfully connected to the local public schools, which were evacuated on 9/11 and returned to soon after. The center would address the experiences of these children and the children of those who died on 9/11.<sup>36</sup> In so doing, the center would be rooted in memory while making the Lower Manhattan community a central place for envisioning a future world more dedicated to peace, to resolving trauma and to addressing conflicts.

## **Recommendations**

1. At this point in the 9/11 long-term recovery effort, and in future disasters, relief programs should eliminate geographic eligibility requirements and evaluate applicants in a manner similar to the Unmet Needs Roundtable: on a case by case basis that evaluates a person's need and relationship to 9/11. Flexibility is essential as immigrants, particularly undocumented immigrants, are among the most needy and the least served.
2. The Mount Sinai program for recovery workers, particularly the Medical Treatment Services, needs to be fully funded. Many of the recovery workers now have chronic illnesses. The Maloney-Shays bill for Ground Zero Recovery

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<sup>34</sup> Adapted from the Reconstruction Watch report. Good Jobs New York. Pages 27 - 28

<sup>35</sup> Louis, Errol. "The 9-11 Black Hole: LMDC's Secret Ways Keep Little Guys From Getting Rebuilding Bucks," *Daily News* (New York), July 6, 2004.

<sup>36</sup> Information provided by Councilman Alan Gerson's office.

Workers should be swiftly passed. The processing of the workers compensation claims of these recovery workers should be expedited.

3. The LMDC should prioritize funding programs that address the needs of vulnerable immigrants in Chinatown and the Lower East Side. The four open vacancies on LMDC the Board of Directors should be filled by community leaders of Chinatown and the Lower East Side. Those representing severely impacted workers would be highly appropriate. The decision making process for Community Development Block Grants should be accessible, with clear guidelines on how proposed projects will be evaluated, including a timetable for how funds will be designated. Public hearings with Board members present should be held on Partial Action Plans before final approval is given.<sup>37</sup>
4. The city government and relief agencies should focus efforts on supporting small community providers that serve significant catchments of underserved people, and those that have still not recovered from 9/11.

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<sup>37</sup> Adapted from the Reconstruction Watch report. Good Jobs New York. Pages 27 - 28

### **Unmet Needs Roundtable Donor Agencies**

The Bridge Fund of the City of New York  
Chadbourn & Park Foundation  
Church World Service  
Council of Churches of the City of New York  
Episcopal Charities of the Diocese of New York  
Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies  
Islamic Circle of North America  
Lutheran Disaster Response of New York  
New York Disaster Interfaith Services  
Presbytery of NYC–Presbyterian Disaster Assistance  
Safe Horizon  
Stroock & Stroock & Lavan-Spirit of New York Fund  
United Methodist Committee on Relief  
United Church of Christ – Disaster Response Program

### **Unmet Needs Roundtable Network Members**

9/11 South Asian Assistance Project  
African Immigrant Ministry  
Alianza Dominicana, Inc.  
American Red Cross  
Arab-American Family Support Center  
Asian American Federation of New York (AAFNY)  
Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund  
Asociacion Tepeyac de Nueva York  
Bridge Fund of New York  
Brooklyn Bureau of Community Services (BBCS)  
Brooklyn Chinese-American Association  
Cathedral Community Cares  
Catholic Charities of Brooklyn & Queens (CCBQ)  
Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New York  
Center for Independence of Disabled of NY  
Center for Independence of the Disabled in NY (CIDNY)  
Central American Legal Assistance  
Charles B. Wang Community Health Center  
Children's Aid Society  
Chinatown Manpower Project  
Chinatown YMCA  
Chinese Staff and Workers Association  
Chinese-American Planning Council  
Church Avenue Merchants Block Association (CAMBA)  
Committee for Hispanic Children & Family (CHCF)

Community Service Society of NY  
Coney Island Avenue Project  
Council of Orthodox Jewish Organizations (COJO)  
Council of Pakistan Organization  
Counsel on Adoptable Children  
Family Service League  
Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies (FPWA)  
FECS  
FECS - Long Island  
Filipino American Human Services, Inc. (FAHSI)  
Forest Hills Community House  
From the Ground Up  
Hamilton Madison House  
Henry Street Settlement  
Hispanic Mission Outreach  
Institute of Puerto Rican/Hispanic Elderly  
Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA)  
Japanese American Social Services Inc.  
Jewish Board of Family & Children's Services, Inc. (JBFCSS)  
Jewish Child Care Association  
Karen Horney Clinic  
Latin American Workers Project  
Legal Aid Society of New York  
Legal Services of NYC - Manhattan  
Lower East Side Family Union  
Lower Manhattan Resident Relief Coalition  
Lutheran Social Services/ Project LIFE  
Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty  
Mt. Sinai WTC Health Screening Program  
Muslim Women's Institute  
National Mobilization Against Sweatshops (NMASS)  
New Life Center  
Northeast Clergy Group  
Puerto Rican Family Institute  
Puerto Rican Legal Defense Fund (PRLDEF)  
Queens Legal Services  
Reconciliation and Culture Cooperative Network  
Resiliency Project - Columbia University  
Restart Central  
Safe Horizon  
Shorefront YM-YWHA  
Society of St. Vincent de Paul  
Solidarity Action for Human Rights (SAHR)  
South Brooklyn Legal Services  
St. Mark's Place Institute of Mental Health  
Supportive Children's Advocacy Network of New York (SCAN NY)

TAMKEEN

The Salvation Army of Greater New York

Unitas Therapeutic Community

United Bengali Church

United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR)

University Settlement

Urban Health Plus

Urban Justice Center

Westchester Family Response Center

Westchester Jewish Community Services

Women's Center for Education and Career Advancement

# Total Cases Presented to Roundtable

For the Period **BEGINNING:** 04/01/2002 **ENDING:** 07/31/2004

## Case Status Number of Cases

Funded 1484

Not Funded 49

# Total Amount Funded at Roundtable

For the Period **BEGINNING:** 04/01/2002 **ENDING:** 07/31/2004

## Total Cash Funded

\$3,216,245.31

## Total Voucher Funded

\$197,556.10

## Total Amount Funded

\$3,413,801.41