

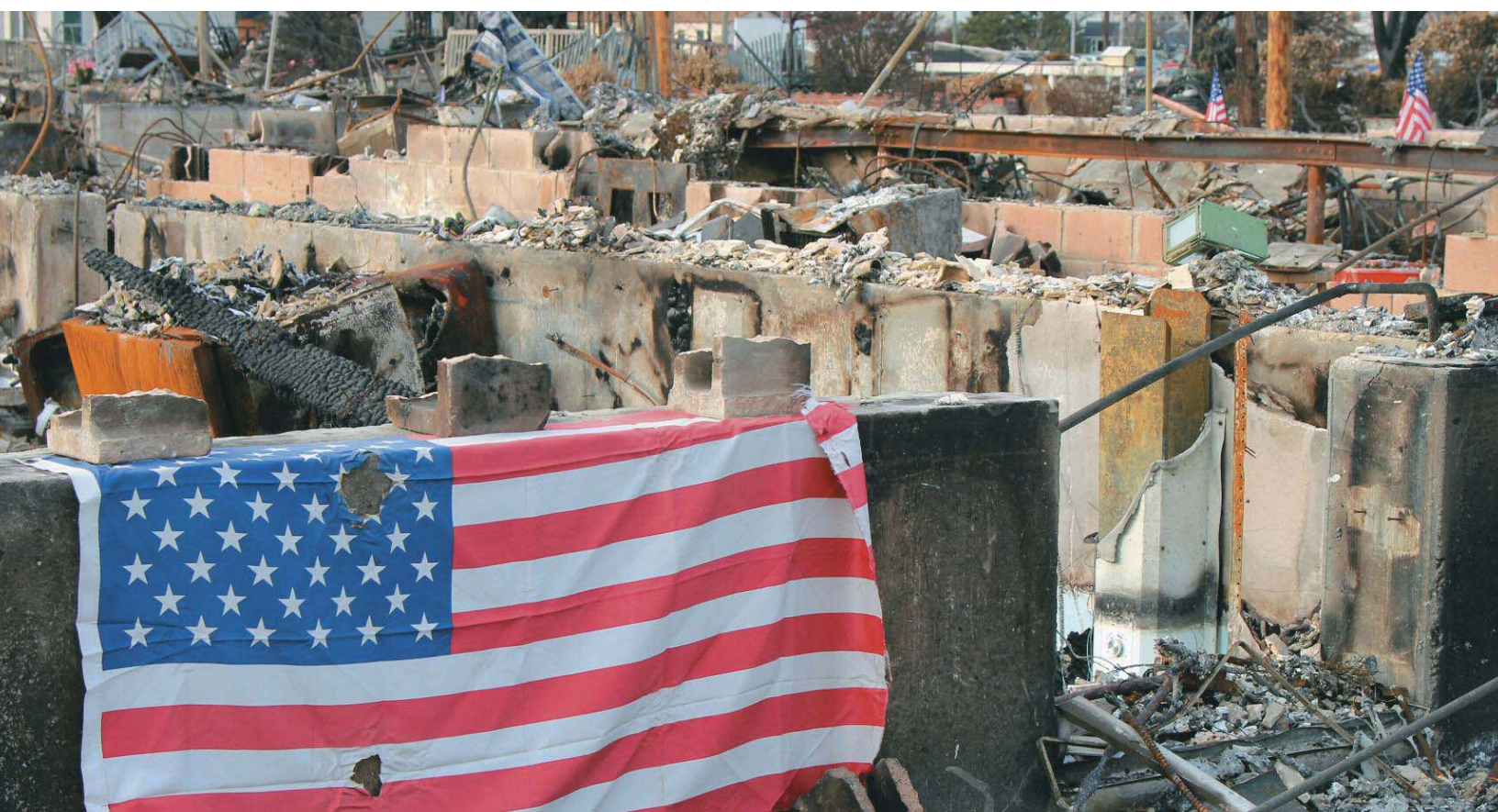
Hurricane Sandy Hits Home



Thousands of people were left homeless and without power after Hurricane Sandy hit New York and New Jersey.

The Ireland Funds Give Back to a Community That Has Given So Much

The tri-state area has always stood up for Ireland at its time of need. When Hurricane Sandy ripped through the predominantly Irish-American communities of Breezy Point and Rockaway in 2012, it was a moment for The Ireland Funds to reciprocate with over \$250,000 in relief aid.



After Hurricane Sandy hit the east coast of the United States in late October of 2012, thousands of people were left homeless, without power, and many were left without hope. Seaside communities in New York and New Jersey were hit the hardest. It was immediately apparent that emergency aid was vital, and that the grassroots efforts of local Irish centers in the area were proving to be effective in reaching those in need.

IrishCentral.com later reported, "The American Ireland Fund was quickest to the rescue." Within hours of the super storm passing through, The American Ireland Fund assessed the situation and provided grants to:

- The New York Irish Center, Long Island
- The Emerald Isle Irish Center, Queens
- The Aisling Irish Center, the Bronx and Queens
- The Breezy Point Cooperative Disaster Relief Fund
- The Parish of St. Francis De Sales, Belle Harbor New York
- The FoodBank of Monmouth/Ocean County New Jersey
- The Mayor's Fund

In particular, a grant of \$100,000 from American Ireland Fund Board Director Bob McCann and his wife Cindy kicked off the fundraising for emergency relief efforts. Other donations followed and in total, over \$250,000 was granted to these organizations working on the ground.

Efforts did not stop with the emergency aid. The Ireland Funds Young Leaders organized fundraising events in NYC, Dublin, and Washington DC to raise further support. The American Ireland Fund along with the Irish Government and numerous Irish American community groups organized two "Irish Days of Action" for volunteers to go to the hardest hit areas and assist with clean up and rebuilding.

It is acknowledged that the communities hit will never be the same. But while the infrastructure will change, neighborhoods are slowly being rebuilt and hope is being restored. The Ireland Funds and their supporters are proud to have played a small part in helping restore this hope by showing the best of the global Irish making a difference together.



Volunteers including many Ireland Fund Young Leaders came to the two Irish Days of Action to help clean up and begin to rebuild.

"There is no doubt but that a crisis brings out the best in the Irish. We saw that with the reaction of the Irish among the first responders during the 9/11 attacks. We saw it again over the past two months as the Irish and Irish American communities responded immediately to the tragedy of Hurricane Sandy. That response took many forms ranging from immediate assistance with clothes and food in the first days to more long-term financial support to the worst affected communities—and not just in the traditional Irish neighborhoods of Breezy Point and Belle Harbor. Two Irish Days of Action in the Rockaways brought together all the Irish and Irish American organizations in a common effort to bring assistance to the worst affected areas.

Large financial contributions through The American Ireland Fund and the American Irish Historical Society and a wide range of smaller donations to the three Irish Centers are playing a role in helping affected communities recover. The Irish Government's contribution of €320,000 is a further part of the combined Irish effort to help those worst affected by Hurricane Sandy." - Noel Kilkenny, Ireland's Consul General of New York





"In addition to Aisling Irish Community Center organizing the donation of supplies on a weekly basis and the coordination of volunteers on a daily basis over the past six weeks since Hurricane Sandy struck and devastated the Rockaways, we were delighted to be involved in both Irish Days of Action on November 24th and December 15th. Over 200 volunteers left from Yonkers on buses to participate in the Irish Days of Action and did some tremendous work clearing out homes and helping people of the Rockaways to restore their lives.

Funding from The American Ireland Fund was fundamental to all aspects of our relief efforts from transporting volunteers to areas affected by Hurricane Sandy to providing critical supplies to distribution centers to assisting families who had relocated to Yonkers/Woodlawn having been displaced by the hurricane to ensuring children in need have a happy memory of Christmas by receiving a small gift of a toy or clothing. We received the funding from The American Ireland Fund immediately and this ensured our efforts were not thwarted in any way to help people in desperate need—people who had no heat, no power, no water, no food and no way of communicating with anybody, and whose cars had been destroyed by the hurricane which rendered them completely immobile and helpless. The help we gave them would not have been possible without the funding we received from The American Ireland Fund, and for that we are **extremely grateful.**" - Órla Kelleher, Executive Director of the Aisling Irish Community Center





"Hurricane Sandy was devastating to our region. In the initial aftermath of the storm, it was providers of direct services like ourselves, the New York Irish Center, and our sister Irish centers—Emerald Isle Immigration Center and the Aisling Irish Center—that were quickest to respond to the enormous humanitarian crisis that was rapidly unfolding. It is in such moments of crisis that we see the true value of frontline services to the community. The support received from The American Ireland Fund is crucial to the on-going existence of organizations like us that provide those frontline services." — Paul Finnegan, Executive Director of the New York Irish Center