**AVSP RECOVERS & REBUILDS FROM HURRICANE SANDY**

This past October, A Very Special Place was unfortunately greatly impacted by Superstorm Sandy with three sites being directly hit by the storm in the New Dorp Beach area. The basement and lower levels of the New Dorp Center, Harvest Café and AVSP's Main Office sustained major water and sewer damage as well as loss of all equipment and furniture contained in these areas. For weeks following the storm, over 140 of our participants were either displaced from their homes or not receiving services because these sites needed repair and restoration. During this same time, the agency allowed a community relief effort that formed in the days following the storm to use the parking lot of its Executive Office.

Work continues for the Agency on the damage sustained by the storm, with the losses estimated over $900,000. The Agency has been able to reopen the three damaged sites, while the lower levels of the New Dorp Center and Main Office are still under reconstruction. Costs related to the damage sustained are still being assessed and incurred. Insurance will not cover all the content lost in these sites, the revenue lost by not being open, and the costs to repair properly and safely. The Agency hopes to restore fully the areas affected so that the services normally provided daily to our program participants can return to pre-storm conditions. As one of a very few non-profit organizations directly impacted on Staten Island so greatly by this storm, the only way to recover from the damage the storm left is with financial support. While the Agency has already received several donations, more is needed to help get all operations up and running again. "We are so thankful to the many groups that have helped us with their time and monetary support so far" said Ms. Benoit.

The Agency is continuing to look for financial support to help with the costs associated to clean, sanitize, and reconstruct the damaged areas, replace equipment that was damaged, and retain damaged agency documentation. Please visit our website www.avspny.org to make a donation on-line or call to see how you can help. *Please give as generously as you can.*

---

**AVSP takes on Extreme Couponing**

Do you have extra coupons lying around?

Do you get the Sunday paper and throw away the coupons?

Do you have so many coupons that you don't know what to do with them?

The Milton Avenue Day Habilitation participants have found a fun new way to learn, recycle and support US soldiers and their families.

They have started a coupon program to help them learn how to clip coupons and utilize their practicality in saving money on groceries and supplies for their cooking and baking classes.

The participants are putting the unused and expired coupons to good use as well. They are helping out the families of US soldiers stationed overseas as they are able to use coupons up to six months after the expiration date.

If you have any coupons that you would like to send to the participants for their project, they can be sent to:

634 New Dorp Lane,
Staten Island, NY 10306

No Clipping Needed!
A Special Thank You

AVSP is grateful for the ongoing support received from individuals, fellow non-profits, businesses, and the community at large to help recover and rebuild from Hurricane Sandy. Below are a few examples of how AVSP has received some wonderful support from corporations and foundations. Our thanks to all those that have supported AVSP in the recovery and rebuilding.

Skinnygirl Cocktails Spends Day of Volunteering

A crew of Skinnygirl Cocktail volunteers led by Bethenny Frankel spent a day repairing and renovating at all three of the damaged buildings just weeks after the storm. In addition to working on the needed repairs, Skinnygirl Cocktails donated products and supplies needed for the repairs and made a $25,000 monetary donation to be used for the larger repairs and work still to be done.

More than 20 volunteers from Skinnygirl Cocktails and its parent company, Beam, Inc., spent the day. In addition, Lou Manfredini, a home improvement contributor from the “Today” show joined the team. He did some prep work, deciding what materials were needed for the jobs to be completed by the volunteers. Paula Erickson, vice-president of communications and public relations for Beam, and Lara Beauregard purchased all the materials with help from Home Depot and Lowe’s stores on Staten Island, who delivered the materials to the site. Volunteers pitched in to rebuild and replace all of the shelving lost to the storm in the three buildings, painted doors, power washed the areas outside the buildings, and re-erected the sign outside of the Harvest Café.

Our thanks to the Staten Island Economic Development Corp. (SIEDC) who was instrumental in arranging for the Skinnygirl relief efforts, after Ms. Frankel reached out to the Women’s Business Council of the SIEDC to identify a women-led business that was affected by the storm.

LEFT: A group of volunteers from NRG Energy from across the East Coast helped to remove all the damaged contents of the basement in our Main Office.

RIGHT: The Carl V. Bini Fund gave a donation to help replace appliances lost in Hurricane Sandy at all three buildings. The check was presented at Harvest Café in New Dorp by Massimo DiDonna, co-founder of the Fund, and Anthony Rapacciuolo, board member. The funding will be used to purchase and install appliances and equipment such as refrigerators, a TV and a commercial blender for the Harvest Café, among other items.

We would also like to acknowledge support received from

UNITED WAY of NEW YORK CITY
THE STATEN ISLAND FOUNDATION
RICHMOND COUNTY SAVINGS FOUNDATION

Please check our website and Facebook page recognizing gifts.
A Special Recognition

Genevieve Benoit, Executive Director at A Very Special Place, Inc. was honored with the Louis R. Miller Distinguished Service Award from Meals on Wheels of Staten Island, Inc.

Staff and Programs Honored by the Staten Island Developmental Disabilities Council

On October 23, 2012, AVSP employee Andrew Maiorano received the Robert Witkowski Direct Support Staff Recognition Award at the Family Support Conference presented by the SIDDC.

Andrew has been working for AVSP for more than three years as a Resident Assistant at the Glenwood Residence. He is a supportive team player who creates a positive environment for both his colleagues and for the individuals he works with. He is a beloved friend of the residents as they gravitate to him, knowing he’s always willing to go the extra distance for them.

On December 14, 2012, the Council held their annual Celebrating Achievements ceremony. AVSP was proud to have two program participants, Shanta and Drake, be honored for their hard work at Harvest Café and for becoming gainfully employed at the Café after attending the Day Habilitation Program as a trainee.

Shanta and Drake were honored that the SIDDC chose to recognize their work and achievements, and also to have their friends and fellow Café employees on hand to support them.

AVSP's Annual Sports Awards Dinner

AVSP's Annual Sports Awards Dinner is always a fun and festive night. The 31st celebration held on June 5, 2012 was no exception. There was excitement and good cheer as athletic achievement, individual and team efforts, as well as sportsmanship were celebrated with over 60 awards given out. Athletes, their families and friends, and AVSP staff all enjoyed an evening of award presentations, excellent food, and great company.

Awards were received for basketball, softball, volleyball, team sports, flag football, soccer, swimming, and bowling and perfect attendance. Members of the Community Center actively planned the awards dinner and participated as speakers and master of ceremonies.

The Community Center is AVSP’s resource for therapeutic and recreational activities on weekday evenings and Saturday mornings for people aged 18 and over. Many sports are offered on a seasonal basis, while others are offered upon request of the individual participants.

The awards dinner was a great chance for everybody to socialize and support one another. Coaches and families were also honored at this event, for all of their encouragement throughout the year. The evening demonstrated how hard work and dedication can be rewarding from successes throughout the year in various sports as well as the planning of the dinner.

Save the Date!

The 24th Annual Special Strokes for Special Folks Golf Outing

Tuesday, August 20, 2013
A grant for Harvest Café

Our thanks to
The Richard and Lois Nicotra
for a grant to purchase uniforms for the staff and trainees at Harvest Café. Stop by the Café soon to see their new attire. The Café is open:

Monday-Saturday for Breakfast and Lunch
8:30am-3:30pm
Thursday-Friday for Dinner 4:30pm-9:30pm
Holiday Happenings.....

at Supportive Apartments

at Glenwood

at Benton

at Hylan

at Jefferson
This past holiday season was a special time for the participants at A Very Special Place, Inc., their friends, families, and AVSP staff. We celebrated the joys of family, the importance of giving, the support offered by friendships, and the continuing dedication of our employees.

Despite the damage done by Hurricane Sandy, there were several celebrations throughout this holiday season. Our thanks to the Staten Island Lions Club who celebrated with the members of the Amboy Residence, by spending time with the residents and staff, and distributing presents and sharing holiday cheer. Avon Representatives on Staten Island were also generous supporters of AVSP during the holiday season.

Thank you to all who made this season brighter!

Visit with SI Lions Club

Members of the Staten Island Lions Club continued their generous tradition of celebrating the holiday season at one of our AVSP residences, this year celebrating with the residents at Amboy. On December 8th, they brought gifts and good cheer with them. All those who attended enjoyed good food and great company. It was a great chance for members of the Lions Club to get to know both the residents and AVSP staff.

Service Coordinators coordinated the delivery of toys that were donated this year by Avon representatives on Staten Island. Each year, an assortment of toys are distributed to the children in the Residential Habilitation, Creative Arts Network, and After School programs.

On December 11th, the Community Center program participants celebrated the holiday season with their annual party at The Staaten on Forest Avenue. Everybody looked fabulous in their holiday best as they enjoyed the food and good friends, but especially the dancing afterwards!

In addition to the Lions Club visit, residents at Amboy also got a chance to celebrate the holiday season on December 16th. They had a great time, had a delicious dinner, and enjoyed the company of their loved ones.