



NEW YORK DISASTER INTERFAITH SERVICES

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Dear Friend,

Welcome to the first edition of NYDISnet online. This bi-weekly newsletter will keep you up to date on NYDIS and developments within the disaster response community.

If you would like to submit a story or information for publication, please send an email to The Rev. Susan Lockwood, Director of Disaster Planning and Training. To unsubscribe, use the link at the bottom of this message.

Thank you for your support of NYDIS.

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NYDIS Funds Recovery Worker Project

NYDIS has received a \$375,000 grant from Episcopal Relief and Development to assist Ground Zero recovery workers who served at the World Trade Center site and the Staten Island Landfill. The grant will assist those workers who are now receiving services at Mt. Sinai School of Medicine for WTC related ailments and lack the resources to cover unmet needs.

The three month pilot phase of the project will provide transportation for treatment, and food and clothing vouchers. Funding is also being provided by Lutheran Disaster Response of New York to cover administrative costs. Three Mt. Sinai programs are involved: Irving J. Selikoff Center for Occupational and Environmental Medicine, World Trade Center Health Effects and Treatment Program, and World Trade Center Medical Monitoring Program.



For information on the Mt. Sinai program, check out:
www.mssm.edu/cpm/wtcexams.shtml

Press Conference Set for Tuesday, Nov. 23 at 10:30 am

NYDIS will hold a joint press conference with Mt. Sinai School of Medicine on the steps of City Hall on Tuesday, Nov. 23, at 10:30 am to announce the Episcopal Relief and Development grant (outlined above) and draw attention to the deep and ongoing unmet needs of Ground Zero Recovery Workers. Ground Zero workers are expected to speak, and public officials including Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney have been invited. The presence of NYDIS members, partners and supporters of the project are encouraged to attend. For info, contact Daniel H. Bush, 212.669-6105 or dbush@nydis.org.

Arson Threat Made to Presbyterian Churches

The national office of the Presbyterian Church USA in Louisville, KY received an unsigned letter on Nov. 9 threatening to commit arson against Presbyterian churches because of positions the denomination's General Assembly has taken regarding peace in the Middle East and Presbyterian/Jewish relations. There was no return address, but the envelop was postmarked from Queens.

The Presbytery of NYC has been in consultation with officials from their national office, and both local and federal law enforcement officials. NYC Executive Presbyter Arabella Meadows-Rogers has requested that congregations increase their vigilance and contact their local police precinct to make them aware of the threat. She also requested that people of faith "please expand your prayer concerns for our churches throughout this city and the country and for the troubled soul who would write such a terrible letter."

To read more about positions taken by PCUSA's General Assembly, go to: www.pcusa.org.

To read the Executive Presbyter's letter to the Presbytery of NYC, Security Alert Information, and press release, go to: www.nydis.org/disasterplanning/7a.htm.

September 11th Fund Gives NYDIS \$500,000 for Roundtable

Executive Director Peter Gudaitis announced Nov. 5 that the September 11th Fund has awarded \$500,000 to NYDIS. The funds are designated for cash assistance at the NYC 9/11 Unmet Needs Roundtable. Special thanks to Theresa Hui and Daniel Bush for their outreach efforts to the Fund and to the donor agencies who met with the September 11th Fund's staff when they came to observe the table early last month.

For information on the September 11th fund, go to: www.september11fund.org

For information on the Roundtable, go to: www.nydis.org/unmetneeds/1.htm

9/11 Transitions Support Group Continues



NYDIS continues to offer support to 9/11 relief agency employees who are approaching a transitional period or have already terminated from their jobs. The current segment of the program which began Sept. 22 runs through Dec. 15. Staffed by the Psychotherapy & Spirituality Institute, the program alternates between a series of intensive career development workshops and support groups addressing topics such as stress, the challenges of ending service relationships and leaving the 9/11 community. Meetings take place at 74 Trinity Place, Second Floor Parlor, 4-6 pm. Enrollment is still open. For information, contact Theresa Hui, 212.669-6107, thui@nydis.org.

For information, check out: www.nydis.org/9-11recovery/4.htm.

NYDIS & September Space Collaborate on Interfaith Discussion Group Series

NYDIS has facilitated a monthly multi-faith discussion group at September Space since this year's 9/11 commemoration to address spirituality after 9/11 and post-9/11 rifts. The discussions are designed to explore the spiritual resources and traditions different religious leaders draw upon to address the challenges and ruptures 9/11 created. The last discussion group in this series will be held Wednesday, Dec. 1, 7-9 pm, at September Space, 520 Eighth Ave. at 36th St., 11 Flr. The Rev. Martha R. Jacobs of The HealthCare Chaplaincy will be guest speaker. For more info, contact Theresa Hui, thui@nydis.org.



For information, check out:

www.nydis.org/resources/headlines/11-10-04.htm

www.septemberspace.org/eventcalendar/calendar.htm

NYDIS and Institute for Disaster Spiritual Care Sign SOU

NYDIS and the Institute for Disaster Spiritual Care signed a Statement of Understanding affirming their partnership in disaster ministry in NYC and recognizing a division of the Institute, Disaster Spiritual Care Services-NY, as the exclusive agency for training and deploying chaplains at disaster sites. Rabbi Zahara Farkas-Davidowitz, executive director of the Institute, and NYDIS executive director Peter Gudaitis finalized the agreement Friday, Nov. 5. For information on disaster chaplaincy training, contact Rabbi Davidowitz at 646.879-9029 or zdavidowitz@mindspring.org.

Living in An Age of Terror: Creating Spiritual & Psychological Resilience Conference A Success

On Oct. 27, over 180 religious leaders and mental health practitioners gathered for a day-long conference at NYU's Kimmel Center to reflect on their 9/11 experience, to explore commonalities, and to strategize ways to best serve those still impacted and left vulnerable by 9/11. The conference was widely praised as a useful model for building partnerships between spiritual care and mental health caregivers.

Keynote speaker for the event was internationally recognized expert in trauma, Dr. Arie Y. Shalev, Chair of the Dept. of Psychiatry at Hadassah University Hospital, Jerusalem, and Visiting Professor in the Dept. of Psychiatry and Behavioral Health at St. Vincent Medical Center, NYC. He observed that "terror painfully exposes the cracks in our society: Greed, Lies, Exploitation and Vanity." He asked those present "to help survivors who have been touched by Evil disengage from its hold on their inner life." Our work, Shalev emphasized, is "to make peace within minds and between people."



Co-sponsored by Disaster Psychiatry Outreach, the conference will provide a spring board for follow up events and opportunities for ongoing cross disciplinary learning.

For more information:

www.nydis.org/9-11recovery/3.htm

For info about DPO:

Fourth Annual Interfaith IFTAR Reflects on A Time of Hope: Spiritual Preparation and Renewal in Our Faith Traditions

NYDIS board members Tariq Rahman and Adem Carroll of the Islamic Circle of North America Relief gave leadership to the Fourth Annual Interfaith IFTAR: Breaking the Daily Fast of Ramadan at Union Theological Seminary on Tuesday, Nov. 9. The event brought together people across faiths to initiate and deepen relationships and develop understanding across faith traditions. The evening included prayers, Qur'anic recitation, a panel of speakers from the Islamic, Jewish, Christian, and Buddhist faith communities, and a wonderful meal. Sponsors were Islamic Circle of North America Relief, Union Theological Seminary, Interfaith Center, Auburn Seminary.

For more info, check out www.reliefonline.org.

NYDIS Is Host Site For AmeriCorps Members

Through a grant from the NY State Corps Collaboration, NYDIS is host site for five Homeland Security Project ROSES - AmeriCorps members. Three of the members are assisting NYDIS in resourcing our major program areas. They began this fall and will complete their service in May 2005.



- **Adja Sakho** is working full-time on the Database & Asset Mapping Project for NYDIS' Office of Disaster Planning & Training. She is a graduate of Binghamton University with a B.A. in Sociology and Africana Studies, and has worked with a wide array of human service/community service-based agencies whose focus has included immigrant advocacy.
- **Jahneen Keatz** is working part-time with NYDIS' 9/11 Recovery Program. She is a graduate of Medgar Evers College with a B.A. in Psychology, and has worked with not-for-profit organizations and in the social service/human service field with at-risk-youth.
- **Yvette J. Matute** is working part-time with NYDIS' 9/11 Recovery Program while pursuing a graduate degree in Public Policy Analysis and Management at The New School University. Her professional background includes patient representation and non-profit programming.

For information on AmeriCorps, go to www.americorps.org

NYDIS Provides Office and Staff to NYC VOAD

In recognition of the important role New York City Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster plays in disaster response, NYDIS has supplied the coalition with office space and two Homeland Security Project ROSES - AmeriCorps Members. **Mary A. Kozich-Rohrbaugh** and **David Peppas**, are working part-time to staff the organization, build its infrastructure and capacity to respond, and help its member agencies to build their network of resources.

- **Mary** is a former Human Resources Director in the non-profit healthcare sector. She has spent the last two years away from traditional employment, volunteering with various social service organizations throughout New York State and NYC.
- **David** is currently a graduate student at the New School for Social Research where he studies historical anthropology and is working on a research project related to 9/11.

For more information email mkozich@nydis.org.

We Recommend...

- Hartford Seminary's list of websites for various faith communities. www.hartsem.edu
- The World Trade Center Environmental Organization's critique of governmental response to 9/11 environmental issues. www.wtceo.org
- *Emotional and Spiritual Care, An Introduction on Basic Concepts* is a document produced by a working committee of National VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Assisting in Disaster). It offers broad term definitions of emotional and spiritual care in disaster response and recovery and offers some basic resources to promote discussion: www.nvoad.org/documents.php
- The September 11 Fund Hotline: 866.689-HELP www.sept11help.org
- 9/11 Mental Health and Substance Abuse Programs and Hotline: 800.543-3638 (English); 877.298-3373 (Spanish); 877.990-8585 (Asian); 212.982-5284 (TTY) www.mhaofnyc.org