

Resolution on Library Service to the Community in a Natural Disaster

Whereas (public) libraries provide critical information for their communities throughout the year;

Whereas libraries serve as centers of the community, providing access to technology and print resources, as well as welcoming residents and visitors for educational, informational and leisure pursuits;

Whereas, when Superstorm Sandy arrived in the northeast in October 2012 and Hurricane Irene in 2011, communities throughout New York, New Jersey, Connecticut and Vermont were severely affected, experiencing severe flooding, destruction of property and long term disruption of internet access and electrical power;

Whereas many residents of these areas were isolated without access to electrical power, internet access, heat or important information about storm relief and recovery efforts;

Whereas many libraries, even if in areas affected by the storm were able to serve as gathering centers for their community, providing information, a warm location, a place to recharge cell phones and access to wifi and internet;

Whereas, these libraries increased their efforts to serve their communities, by extending hours, increasing staff presence, scheduling special programs, providing resources to shelters and even by simply adding multiple power strips for recharging purposes;

Whereas, library support staff such as maintenance and custodial workers responded to the needs of their community in an emergency situation, by ensuring that generators had fuel, ensuring safety in buildings that were affected, and working overtime to ensure that facilities could be opened as soon as possible after the storms; and

Whereas these libraries clearly demonstrated that a library serves as the center of the community and can go beyond traditional roles to meet the immediate needs of the residents of a community: now, therefore, be it

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Resolved, that the American Library Association (ALA), on behalf of its members:

1. recognizes the significant contributions of libraries and library staff who have provided effective emergency response/recovery services, and responded to the needs of their communities following hurricanes Sandy and Irene in ways that go above and beyond the regular call of duty;
2. continues to encourage libraries to continue research documenting library needs and capacity to provide effective e-government and emergency response/recovery services as an essential part of library missions;
3. shall direct a letter acknowledging the work and contributions of libraries and library staff to the State Chapters in the affected states of New York, New Jersey, Vermont and Connecticut to be passed on to the appropriate parties.

Mover: Lauren Comito, Councilor at Large, 646-662-6209

Secunder: Cynthia Czesak, New Jersey Chapter Councilor, 201-317-1832

Sara Kelly Johns, AASL Division Councilor, 518-569-2339

Version 2: June 24, 2013 7:03pm

Revised June 27, 2013 7:23

E-FORM

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Natural Disaster

Submitted on Fri, 06/14/2013 - 13:36

Submitted by user:

Submitted values are:

Date: 06/14/2013

Resolution author(s): Lauren Comito, Cynthia Csezak

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1. Title of Resolution: Resolution on Library Service to the Community in a
Natural Disaster

2. ALA Units and/or Committees Consulted (if any):

3. Endorsements by ALA Units and/or Committees (if any):

4. Fiscal implications: Resources will include staff time needed to forward
the resolution to the appropriate parties.

5. List all parties to whom resolution should be sent:

New York Library Association

Jeremy Johannesen

6021 State Farm Road

Guilderland, New York 12084

New Jersey Library Association

Pat Tumulty

PO Box 1534

Trenton, NJ 08607

Connecticut Library Association

Carl R. DeMilia

234 Court St.

Middletown, CT 06457

Vermont Library Association

Amber Billey

P.O. Box 803

Burlington, VT 05402

6. Impact on ALA Policies and Positions:

By supporting our member libraries and library staff in providing excellent service to their communities, this resolution supports the following goal areas of the 2015 Strategic Plan.

-ALA equips and leads advocates for libraries, library issues and the library profession, and plays a key role in formulating legislation, policies and standards that affect library and information services.

-ALA promotes excellence and diversity in the library field

6a) ALA general policy or viewpoint: This resolution is intended to reinforce ALA policy B.8.11, already in place.

6b) Change in existing policy:

6c) New policy:

6d) Policy conflicts:

7. Initiating Committee or Unit (if any):

8. Pertinent Background Information:

Following Hurricanes Irene and Sandy, Libraries throughout the tristate area provided essential services to their affected communities. Staff worked overtime, and came to work, in many cases with their homes still damaged. Examples and documentation of the response is included below.

Hurricane Sandy

Media Bistro

Library Status Updates After Hurricane Sandy

<http://goo.gl/MZv7R>

School Library Journal

Libraries Respond to Hurricane Sandy, Offering Refuge, WiFi, and Services to Needy Communities

<http://goo.gl/WwF0t>

Queens Library Hurricane Sandy Documentation

<http://www.queenslibrary.org/sandy>

Hurricane Irene

Library Journal

The Storm Battered Flock to the Public Library

<http://lj.libraryjournal.com/2011/08/opinion/lj-insider/the-storm-battered-flock-to-the-public-library/>

NJ State Library

Hurricane Irene's Effect on NJ Libraries

<http://goo.gl/Qd9vi>

9. Mover's Name: Lauren Comito

9a) Mover's Local Telephone Number: [6466626209](tel:6466626209)

10 Seconder's Name: Cynthia Csezak

10a) Seconder's Local Telephone Number: [201-317-1832](tel:201-317-1832)