



**New Jersey Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NJVOAD)  
Full Membership Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, September 24, 2015 - 10:00 AM  
Salvation Army 4 Gary Rd, Union, NJ 07083**

**Attendees**

In Person: Buddhist Tzu Chi (Jackson Chen), Catholic Charities (Maria Nikolatos), LSMNJ (Alex Elefante), Team Rubicon (Todd Adrian), Episcopal Relief & Development/NJVOAD (Keith Adams, Ester Valentin), NJVOAD (Kelly Higgs, Linda Hardy, Themba Johnson, Marc Santiago, Bob Berardo, Cynthia Campbell), FEMA (Lori Ross), NJ211 (Joe Geleta), Salvation Army (Brenda Beavers, Betty Israel), NJ Office of Volunteerism (Judy Lieberman), Health Association (Anne DeSantis Lopez), NJ 2-1-1 (Joe Geleta), Alliance Center for Independence (Luke Koppisch), United Methodist Church (Chis Miller), Tri - State Canine Response (Janice Campbell, Andrea Herring), Hunterdon County (Amy Anderson), Ocean County (Sue Marticek), United Way (Fran Wise), NJ National Guard (SFC Anthony Mauro)

Teleconference: Hearts and Hands Disaster Recovery (Falon Alo), Community Food Bank of NJ (Cathy McCann), Heart 911 (Kelly Mead, Chris Salem)

**Meeting was called to order at 10:07am**

**Welcome and Introductions**

NJVOAD welcomes 2 new member organizations: Tri-State Canine Response and Alliance Center for Independence and both organizations shared how they contribute in disaster, recovery and response situations.

Tri State Canine Response:

CRT Teams provide comfort, stress relief, emotional support and crisis intervention services for people affected by crisis and disasters in complex, unpredictable environments related to traumatic events. All teams must complete FEMA's incident command, psychological first aid, human and canine first aid and CPR. Canine can also respond to school. They are deployed thru a

call system and dogs are matched to the crisis. They work mainly in the recovery phase.

#### Alliance Center for Independence

Alliance Center for independence serves clients in Union, Somerset and Middlesex Counties. They assist people with disabilities to live independently. They advocate for people in various situations including Emergency preparedness. ACI trains first responders to assist people with a disability during a crisis.

### **Approval of Minutes**

The minutes from the previous meeting were approved as presented.

### **New Business**

**Papal Visit Planning** – This is the Pope’s first visit to the U.S. and the visits to NYC and Washington have an impact on NJ as NJ is part of the contingency plans of both states. Catholic Charities, NJ 2-1-1 and the Salvation Army are working together for the Unification Initiative. NJ 2-1-1 will have additional staff in place if there are carryover calls. Red Cross Staff will be working in the NJ 2-1-1 office in Whippany, NJ. The number for reunification is 855-259-2114. NJ 2-1-1 is working with the OEMs of PA and NJ. Catholic Charities is on call during the Papal event as well and will respond as needed. Buddhist Tzu Chi is also working with the Red Cross. The Salvation Army is feeding the volunteers and first responders during this event (approximately 800 people) with 3 meals a day. They have the capacity to stand up and support in a crisis.

### **Three Year Creative Event**

Kelly and the VISTAs have planned a three year prospective event with Creative NJ which is an Open Space Dialogue event. The topic of the event is “How can we harness the best learning from ongoing recovery efforts in order to ensure implementation in the future? Participants set the agenda, pose questions and actually facilitate the topic that they bring up. There is optimism that this event will garner attention from the philanthropic community and can hopefully spark future and current philanthropic donations to aid in the recovery process. Creative NJ will be documenting this event via video tape and transcription and the compiled document after transcription will be available to all in a very timely manner. This event falls under RWJF and a generous discount from the Spring Lake Manor.

### **Interfaith Meeting**

Betty Israel presented the Interfaith group. The Interfaith Group (The NJ Partners in Disaster Response) is still regrouping. A meeting was held with the eboard this past week to redefine their mission. There are plans to have a general membership meeting in Nov. (planned for Nov. 10<sup>th</sup>) in Hightstown. The group is scheduled to discuss the functioning of the group, frequency of meetings, purpose of the group and what needs to be done on a local level. Major Betty is the chair for this organization.

### **NJVOAD New Business Address**

NJVOAD obtained its 501c(3) last November and is moving forward, therefore, we need to have a separate business address that will remain constant throughout different co-chairs. NJVOAD will be utilizing Collaboration Corp for NJVOAD's hub mailing address. The address for NJVOAD is 3150 Brunswick Pike, Suite 300, Lawrenceville, NJ 08648.

### **Proposed By Laws Changes – Review and Approval**

Amendments to the bylaws were approved. The amendments made to the Bylaws are, NJVOAD change of Address, Article 6 (this will allow an opportunity for the counties to have a representative on the board. They could also vote on their representative to come to the meetings), Article 7 (Ex – Officio chair will be added to the board should he or she decides to a part of the board).

### **Nominations Committee**

There are a total of 7 open slots and 2 at large members. NJVOAD needs a treasurer as well. Ester Valentin, Maria Nikolatos and Judy Lieberman volunteered to be part of the nominations committee.

### **Resource Directory Spreadsheet & Resource Guide**

An updated resource guide and new spreadsheet was distributed to members in attendance to review and make changes. If there are any additional additions or deletions, please contact [thembajohnson@njvoad.org](mailto:thembajohnson@njvoad.org) or [businessadmin@njvoad.org](mailto:businessadmin@njvoad.org) for inclusions and updates.

## **Old Business**

### **Strategic Planning**

The VISTAs have been interviewing people who were involved in recovery in an effort to capture people who were involved in the recovery's viewpoints to assist with tools and resources in the future. They will have another meeting to go over the results in the end of Oct.

### **AmeriCorps VISTA Year 2 Update**

This is Linda Hardy's 2<sup>nd</sup> year of service. The current VISTAs started in June and they are working to support the VOADs and COADs. COAD/VOAD updates are as follows:

- Atlantic, Cape May, and Cumberland became a Tri-County COAD. Sarah Goodman (VISTA) was very active in drafting the bylaws for this COAD which included very inclusive language for all three counties.
- Monmouth County COAD – Bob Berardo and Linda Hardy helped to plan and execute the first launch meeting of the Monmouth County COAD. They had a successful meeting where there were more than 40 people in attendance. They are moving in the right direction.
- Salem County – Marc Santiago has been working diligently to start a COAD or VOAD in Salem County. Currently there are 20+ organizations interested in starting a COAD or VOAD and has 25 RSVPs for the meeting on Oct. 5<sup>th</sup>.
- Passaic County – Anne Goodman has been working with the health departments up there in hopes that this will spark so interest in this area. .
- Essex County – working on still cultivating interest in this area. Brenda posed a question about having a meeting at the West Orange Armory.
- In NJ there are 19 counties with either a VOAD or COAD in place.

One of the goals of the VISTA's and NJVOAD will be to ensure that COADs/VOADs are sustainable so the VISTAs will be developing a tool kit which will contain resources that will help sustain the leadership of the VOADs and COADs and ultimately grow and sustain these organizations. Cynthia Campbell will be working on social media and our communications strategy.

### **HELPNJNOW.ORG**

Launched HELPNJNOW.ORG launched in April and since then the site has had more than 5000+ views. Would like to have some public excitement around National Preparedness Month and National Preparedness Day (September 30th). Currently, Kelly and Linda are working on how they are going to manage the backend of volunteers on the site. They would like to have a portal for people to put in their info, register and match them to the need. Currently looking for a real time linkage. Kelly currently has 5-6 tweets that you could share to help spread the word about the site. Joe Geleta and Lori Ross will assist with gathering information that can possibly assist in the volunteer interface. If you wouldn't mind putting it on your website contact Kelly Higgs @ [khiggs@nj211.org](mailto:khiggs@nj211.org). Kelly will send out the press release, social media and logo to everyone to include on their websites.

### **Quarterly report on Staff Activities and Grant Performance Objectives**

Cape May- closing in Sept. 2015

Cumberland – closing next month  
Hudson – closing  
Middlesex – closing Oct 2015  
Monmouth – active with funding to the end of 2015  
Ocean – active thru March 2016 possibly April  
Union – closing in Sept. 2015

**NJ 2-1-1 (Joe Geleta)**

NJ 2-1-1 will launch a new website and have a dedicated line to the AC Casino workers who have lost their jobs.

**Ocean LTRG (Sue Marticek)**

Ocean LTRG is 100% committed to get people to “opt in” to the FEMA claim review Ocean LTRG is supporting their clients and encouraging them to “opt in” into the program. Duplication of Benefits (DOB) was an important concern for many of their clients and a large reason why many people did not opt in to the FEMA/NFIP program. Now, the state will not recoup any additional funding. HUD will be forgiving the first 20K. Ocean has hired 2 insurance experts to review their client’s paperwork so the clients will know what to look for. According to Keith Adams (NJVOAD Chair), he stated that there is approximately 5 million dollars of money that is available thru the FEMA/NFIP program thru claims review which more than exceeds what is available thru partner organizations so clients should take advantage of this program.

**ERD (Keith Adams)**

DCMP program is ending next month (October). 3 Dioceses will continue to have DCM focus on the coastal areas of NJ.

**Catholic Charities (Maria Nikolatos)**

The State DCMP program is ending October 31<sup>st</sup>. 3 Dioceses will remain active. CC will be offering rebuild workshops for Ocean and Monmouth Counties. CC are in need of free space to deliver these workshops. CC also has resiliency workshops for groups and schools to help prepare. Their free counseling service is currently at capacity. CC 2<sup>nd</sup> homes program which requires a small fee is useful for people who own a second home but are also in recovery. Please contact Maria Nikolatos at: [mnikolatos@cctrenton.org](mailto:mnikolatos@cctrenton.org).

**Mental Health Association (Anne Lopez)**

MHA will have case mgmt. services in Atlantic and Ocean Counties. The “Too Much Stuff” meetings have been met with enthusiasm and the attendance was so high they had to increase the frequency of their meetings. Looking for possible funding streams to grow these meetings in other areas If case mgrs. Have questions they can contact Anne Lopez at: [alopez@mhanj.org](mailto:alopez@mhanj.org).

**FEMA (Lori Ross)**

FEMA is being deployed for the Papal Visit . They are coordinating directly with HHJS. SBG for state extended thru 2017 but acknowledges that there is a need for more funding.

**ACI (Luke Koppisch)**

ACI is currently working in Somerset County on Emergency Management and is putting together an event on Nov. 20<sup>th</sup>. The event is called "Overnight Shelter".

**United Methodist Church Disaster Response Committee (Chris Miller)**

UMC has a reorganizational meeting on September 30<sup>th</sup>. UMC does preparation, planning, and mitigation and initial response. Currently they are divided into 9 districts and have asked the local churches to attend a local VOAD or COAD. Recovery partners' event is tentatively scheduled for September 29<sup>th</sup>.

**"Standing Firm in God's Breeze" Conference**

Conference to be held on Oct 16-17 sponsored by the Presbyterian Church and the Middlesex OEM for faith based communities to be of service to the community in a disaster. For more information contact Peter Hofstra: [pastorpete@fpcperthamboy.org](mailto:pastorpete@fpcperthamboy.org)

**Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on December 8<sup>th</sup>, in central NJ.