

Catastrophe Site, Resources Offered by Middle Country PL

The Middle Country Public Library (MCPL), Centereach, NY, has launched a Catastrophe Readiness Clearinghouse, "Readiness Begins with Me," with a \$50,000 grant from the Allstate Foundation. This first-of-its-kind program includes a web site (www.catastrophereadinessclearinghouse.org), a multimedia resource collection, and a series of educational programs and training opportunities for families, businesses, and not-for-profit organizations to be held throughout the year. The insurance giant approached the library with the idea, assistant director of community

relations and special projects Barbara Jordan told *Library Hotline*. MCPL is located in the eastern half of Long Island, an area susceptible to hurricanes.

The web site includes both local and national information on preparedness and contingency planning, including trainings and other events. It directs users to resources based on personal or business roles and offers information on such topics as home and pet safety, finances, insurance, and sample disaster plans.

MCPL and Allstate are brainstorming additional ideas, said Jordan, for "expansion in subsequent years." They already have a history of cooperation; Allstate earlier funded a portion of a commercial resources database developed by MCPL that listed preparedness and response agencies. The company considers the public library a great place to house this kind of information, noted Jordan.