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Contact: Inez Birbiglia
Allstate Foundation
Phone: (631) 233-6047
Fax: (631) 233-6092
ibirb@allstate.com

Contact: Deanna Morton
InfiniTech, LLC
Phone: 516.829.5502
Cell: 516.732.6414
deemorton@aol.com

ALLSTATE FOUNDATION AWARDS MIDDLE COUNTRY LIBRARY GRANT TO DEVELOP CATASTROPHE READINESS CLEARINGHOUSE

"Readiness Begins with Me™" Project Initiates a Call to Action

Great Neck, New York – June 1, 2006 – The Allstate Foundation announced that it has awarded a \$50,000 catastrophe preparedness grant to the Middle Country Library Foundation. Funding will be used to create a Catastrophe Readiness Clearinghouse, *"Readiness Begins with Me™"*, which will provide the tools to empower individuals, families and businesses to plan for potentially catastrophic events by taking positive action in advance of an emergency. This first-of-its kind initiative will include an interactive website, multimedia resource collection, and a series of educational programs and training opportunities to be scheduled throughout the year. Government officials, business leaders and the community will celebrate the launch of the Catastrophe Readiness Clearinghouse and Website, www.catastrophereadinessclearinghouse.org at a Town Hall Meeting and Ribbon Cutting on August 10, 2006 at 10:00am at the Middle Country Public Library in Centereach.

"It is likely that we will see a major disaster on Long Island within our lifetime," said Allstate Regional Counsel Brian Pozzi. "Our current system leaves too many unprepared and unprotected and we are all at risk. When we partner with forward thinking organizations like Middle Country Library we progressively can create a better public awareness about personal safety before, during, and after a manmade or natural catastrophe."

Middle Country Public Library has been nationally recognized for its innovative responses to the changing needs of the community and its leadership in developing family support services, community coalitions, and collaborative partnerships with the health, human service and business communities. The Library's regional network of Family Place LI libraries, its Miller Business Resource Center partnerships, Distinguished Speakers' Series and other training venues will be utilized to extend the project's activities across Long Island.

Commenting on the grant award, Sandra Feinberg, Director of Middle Country Public Library, stated, "We are honored that the Allstate Foundation has awarded us this very timely and important grant. Given Long Island's susceptibility to the kind of hurricane-related catastrophes we observed in the South last fall, we see the development of this Clearinghouse as an opportunity to provide the information that will empower Long Island families and businesses to take the steps they need to prepare in advance of a potential catastrophe. Ultimately the goal is stronger, safer, and more resilient Long Island families and communities. We thank the Allstate Foundation for recognizing the importance of ensuring that Long Islanders be as prepared as possible."

The initiative will include:

- ❑ A **Catastrophe Readiness Information Collection** with materials on catastrophe preparedness and contingency planning for businesses, families, and individuals, sample "go kits" and disaster plans.
- ❑ An **Interactive Website** linking users to online resources for parents, children, businesses and not-for-profits; programs, conferences, workshops, and events related to disaster preparedness and contingency planning; important websites devoted to disaster preparedness and response information and best practices; fast access to local information on disaster preparedness and response services on Long Island.
- ❑ A **Town Meeting** with key legislators and community leaders to discuss the state of disaster preparedness on Long Island.
- ❑ A series of **community education, business, civic and family programs and trainings** on strategies and planning tips for disaster preparedness and response.

About The Allstate Foundation: *The Allstate Foundation is an independent, charitable organization made possible by the Allstate Corporation. Allstate and the Allstate Foundation sponsor community initiatives to promote "safe and vital communities," "tolerance, inclusion and diversity," and "economic empowerment." The Allstate Foundation believes in the financial potential of every individual and in helping America's families achieve their American dream.*

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