

bymnews.com :: USA. Allstate Foundation awards \$50,000 grant to create Catastrophe Readiness Clearinghouse

Environmental news:

A \$50,000 grant from the Allstate Foundation created a landmark disaster preparedness resource called the Catastrophe Readiness Clearinghouse, which was unveiled earlier this month at the Middle Country Public Library on Long Island. The Clearinghouse, a unique, single-stop collection of disaster preparedness data and support, is available to anyone who visits the library and includes a complete disaster preparedness information-portal Web site that is available to people everywhere.

"Readiness Begins With Me(TM)" is the primary message and philosophy behind the creation of the Catastrophe Readiness Clearinghouse and its Web site. Additionally, the Middle Country Public Library /Allstate Foundation partnership includes parent-and-child workshops, small business contingency seminars, a multimedia resource collection, and more.

"We are taking positive action in advance of an emergency," said New York Corporate Relations Manager Krista Conte. "The Catastrophe Readiness Clearinghouse and its associated information portal Web site certainly elevate public awareness about personal safety before, during, and after a catastrophe."

The key elements to www.catastrophereadinessclearinghouse.com include:

An inviting and easy-to-navigate design

Informative content that effectively delivers the message

A collection of information from reliable sources at a single Web location

Critical listings that provide preparedness and contingency planning information both locally and nationally.

A home page that immediately directs users to select one of two areas of interest: MY HOME or MY WORKPLACE, which is a reflection of the library's dual role as a resource for the individual as well as businesses

A wide selection of links for parents, children or business owners that offer vital information on such topics as pet safety, home safety, finances and insurance, and sample disaster plans.

According to the American Library Association, there are 117,000 libraries in America that were visited more than 1.3 billion times last year. The Middle Country Public Library serves more than 60,000 patrons who reside in central Suffolk County on Long Island.

"In most communities across America, libraries are a central hub. By reaching people through a source they trust---their public library, we are helping them to better prepare for disasters," said Conte.

"We are honored that the Allstate Foundation has awarded us this very timely and important grant. Our area, as well as coastal areas nationwide, is susceptible to the kind of hurricane-related catastrophes we observed in the South last fall. The development of this Clearinghouse is an opportunity to provide information that empowers families and businesses to take the steps needed in order to prepare in advance of a potential catastrophe," said Director of Middle Country Public

Library Sandra Feinberg. "Ultimately the goal is stronger, safer, and more resilient families and communities. We thank the Allstate Foundation for recognizing the importance of ensuring we are all as prepared as possible."

The partners are already discussing a repeat commitment from the Allstate Foundation in 2007 in order to expand the programming, refine the Web site, and further develop the Clearinghouse locally and statewide.