

One Historical Perspective of FEMA's *"Neighbor Helping Neighbor"* Program
A Tribute to Ms. Angeles Morrillo Thompson and the late Mr. Benard "Ben" Dew

Dr. Jacqueline McBride-Jones, CEM, CPM, CBI, CVA – Current Addition: NEMEA, NJCDRCC
June 2013 – Revised February 14, 2014

A resilient community requires first responders, community and emergency management officials, leaders, and managers to empower pre-existing networks to help their neighbors and communities. This concept was developed in the late 1990s by Ms. Angeles Morrilo Thompson, FEMA Region 2, former Community Relations (CR) Cadre Manager. In 2004, the late Mr. Bernard (Ben) Dew, FEMA Region 10, former Community Relations Cadre Manager founded the official *"Neighbor Helping Neighbor"* (NHN) program in response to the 2004 Florida hurricanes.

FEMA CR's empowerment mission includes developing and sustaining continued working relationships with Tribal and state programs, public and private sector, NGOs, and faith and community-based leaders before, during, and after catastrophic events. In particular, after the World Trade Center Incident (9-11), Ms. Thompson, former Region II CR Cadre Manager, in conjunction with Dr. Jacqueline McBride, Mr. LeRoy Flohr, and Ms. Betty Radwanski, implemented a program that partnered with FEMA VOLAG, U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the U. S. Department of Justice, the State of New York, and the City of New York. We effectively provided disaster assistance program information and materials to leaders of the faith and community-based organizations, social services and voluntary agencies, and educational and health care facilities for outreach strategies in their organizations and programs. While serving from 2001 – 2013, as Assistant External Affairs for CR, Dr. McBride continued to effectively implement this outreach strategy throughout the United States.

Originally a faith-based initiative, NHN began in the Florida Panhandle in 2004 when the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) CR Specialists found that many hurricane victims who had sought help were not following through to receive their money. To get help, one of the starting points for most families is the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) loan application. Only 13% of 140,000 SBA applications sent to victims of Florida's four hurricanes were completed and returned.

"Community Relations Specialists found that several factors were keeping thousands of hurricane victims from receiving appropriate help. Lack of trust for the government, fear of prosecution for a crime, or fear of being "found out" were common reasons offered. Sadly, other groups felt that the government had never helped them in the past and this time would be no different. Illiteracy stopped many people from completing the SBA application. And perhaps the biggest problem is that many folks felt that they were not a business or couldn't qualify for a loan, so they didn't fill out the important SBA application.

Once this crisis was identified, members of FEMA's Community Relations Task Force set in motion the volunteer program which has evolved into Neighbor Helping Neighbor. Today it is a key component of the relief and recovery effort after a disaster. Skilled volunteers from faith

communities, social organizations, individuals, and business organizations are trained to help disaster victims register for assistance, file insurance claims, submit important documents, complete the SBA loan application and plan for housing." (Source: 2005 brochures)



For many disaster survivors, Neighbor Helping Neighbor is the most important part of starting over and beginning the process towards recovery and healing.

During 2004, Dr. McBride, FEMA Disaster Recovery Center (DRC) Manager, became concerned about the frequent applicants' visits to the DRC; as well as being told to frequently return documents after documents. She developed a checklist listing all the pertinent documents required to help complete the applicant's application process. Also, she developed sample letters, for community and faith-based organizations, to use while helping applications respond to FEMA's request for additional information. Both documents are currently in use and have been revised to meet current policies.

During the 2005 response to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and while convening a *"Neighbor Helping Neighbor"* workshop on Dec. 10, 2005, at the south campus of Bethany World Prayer Center in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, an international faith-based organization's representative requested more than just a *"conversation"* and information/flyers; as had been the case during the implementation of the program in Florida. Immediately following the workshop, Mr. Dew and I conducted a meeting with the representative, who stated he would like to receive from FEMA something by which they could help their congregation. Mr. Dew requested that I review the request and develop a program that would meet their needs.

The next day, as per Mr. Dew's request Disaster Recovery (DR) 1603-1607-LA CR Officer, and in conjunction with other Federal, state, and local agencies and FEMA CR team members, Dr. McBride, a CR Training Officer since 1999, developed FEMA's first "*Neighbor Helping Neighbor"* Toolkit and Train-the-Trainer Program and has annually revised the first edition. The

most recent PowerPoint Presentation, NHN Toolkit, and Train-the-Trainer Program were implemented in 2013.

Under the direction of Mr. Dew, Dr. McBride served as FEMA's CR Training Officer, External Affairs Officer/Liaison, NHN Task Force Leader, and Coordinator of the *"Neighbor Helping Neighbor*" Volunteer Train-the-Trainer Program from September 5, 2005, through March 1, 2006, and May 1, 2006, through June 10, 2006. This CR outreach initiative was presented to NGOs, faith and community-based organizations, and private sector organizations from Louisiana Texas, Mississippi, and Alabama'; the public sector, and several national organizations.

Also, she, and mentee, Dr. Cheryl Catchings, hosted internationally renowned leaders; as well as Dr. Gilbert and Mr. Cook, leaders of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (OFBCI) during their visit to Louisiana.



Bishop T. D. Jakes – NO – Lower 9th Ward
Photo by Dr. Jacqueline McBride

Under the direction of Task Force Leader, Dr. McBride, the FEMA CR "*Neighbor Helping Neighbor"* and Speakers Bureau Programs; FEMA Individual Assistance, ERO, Mitigation, Public Assistance programs; the US Small Business Administration; US Department of Justice; and the State of Louisiana united to serve over 500 NGOs, faith and community-based organizations, and private sector organizations and provided the volunteer training program with the capacity to reach approximately two million (2,000,000) volunteers and affected residents and businesses.



Baton Rouge, La., October 22, 2005 - Ben Dew, FEMA representative for Community Relations, speaks to a group of neighborhood leaders hoping to teach them to help each other and their neighbors about the application process to obtain relief aid available through various organizations. The Fellowship Tabernacle Life Center in Baton Rouge opened its doors to host this meeting and to serve the community. Robert Kaufmann/FEMA
Source: http://www.fema.gov/photolibrary/photo_details.do?id=17467



Photo date: October 22, 2005
Photographer: FEMA / Robert Kaufmann
Photo location: Baton Rouge LA
Categories: Community Relations, Hurricane/Tropical Storm
Ben Dew, FEMA's representative for Community Relations, speaks to a group of community leaders at the Fellowship Tabernacle Life Center in Baton Rouge. First on the left: Dr. Jacqueline (FEMA CR), Shemika (FEMA CR), Pastor Bates, and State and Federal Public Assistance Officials. The message was how faith-based organizations and community neighbors can help neighbors through the application process for hurricane relief aid through various organizations. Robert Kaufmann/FEMA

Read more: http://www.city-data.com/disaster-photos/17469.html#ixzz2SELR9Zfv

Louisiana Hurricane Katrina (DR-1603)



Baton Rouge, La., October 22, 2005 - Mr. Ben Dew, FEMA Community Relations Officer, speaks to Dr. Jacqueline McBride, External Affairs Liaison and Coordinator of FEMA's "Neighbor Helping Neighbor" Program immediately following the presentation of the "Neighbor Helping Neighbor" Program at Fellowship Tabernacle Life Center in Baton Rouge.
Source: http://www.fema.gov/photolibrary/photo_details.do?id=17466

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita; Baton Rouge, La., October 22, 2005

Original Caption (corrected version above): Ben Dew, FEMA Director for Community Relations, speaks to a resident at Fellowship Tabernacle Life Center in Baton Rouge. It is an ongoing effort to help communities help each other in times of disaster. Robert Kaufmann/FEMA

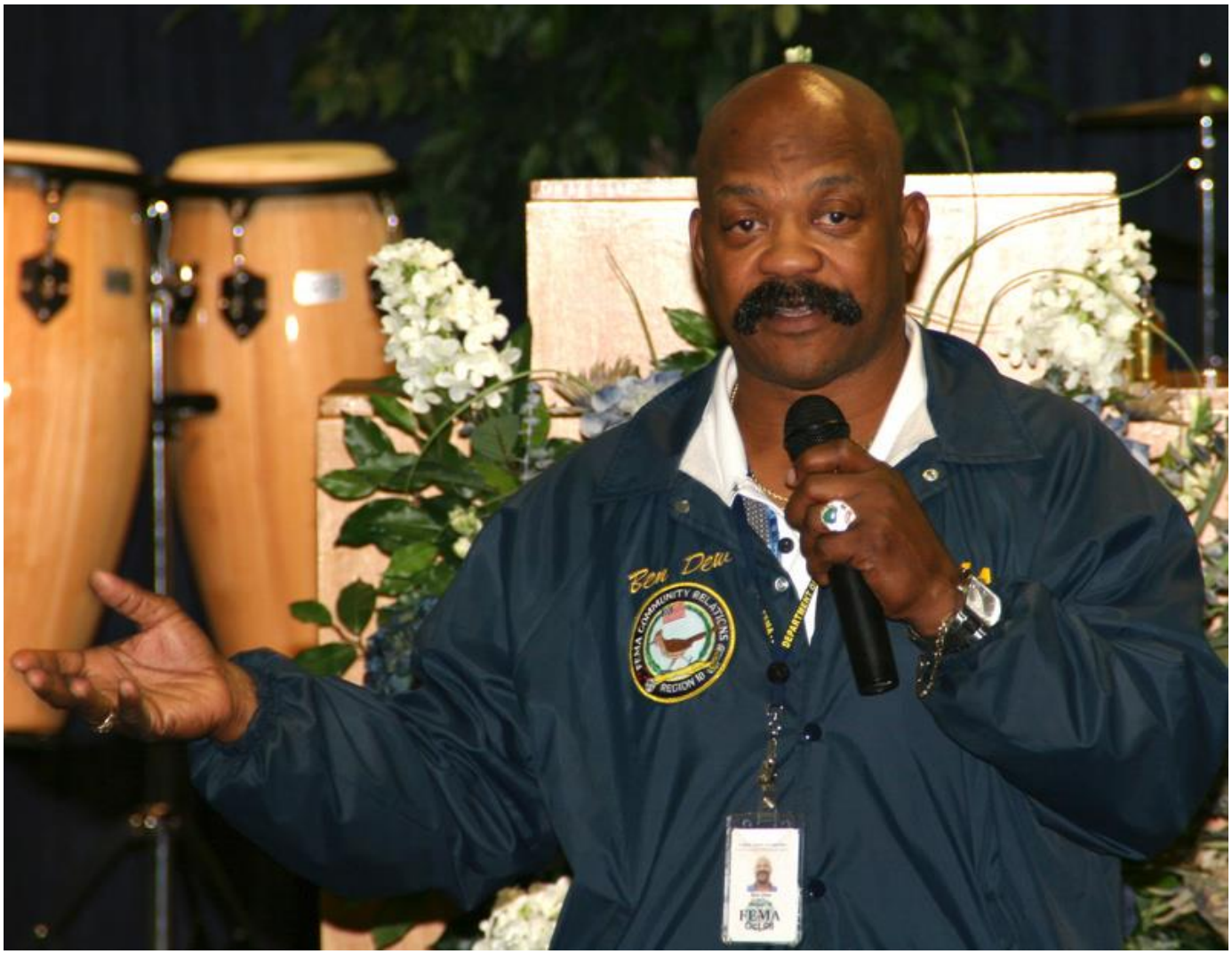


Photo date: October 22, 2005
Photographer: FEMA / Robert Kaufmann
Photo location: Baton Rouge LA
Categories: Community Relations, Hurricane/Tropical Storm

Ben Dew of FEMA's Community Relations Team speaks before neighborhood leaders at a meeting held in Baton Rouge at the Fellowship Tabernacle Life Center. The gathering was to show neighbors how to help each other during the application process for relief aid from various agencies in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and Rita. Robert Kaufmann/FEMA

Read more: http://www.city-data.com/disaster-photos/17468.html#ixzz2SJGxTI7T



The Original Team during the Hurricane Katrina Response, first row: Julius, BJ, Ben; second row, Task Force Leader and Coordinator Dr. Jacqueline, Ebony, Shemika, and Alisa

Excerpts from the 5/10/2006 Brochure: *"Imagine, if you can, hundreds of thousands of displaced Katrina and Rita survivors struggling to find safe, private and comfortable homes, beginning to see some sense of normalcy return to their lives. Imagine the widespread dissemination of information concerning comfortable solutions for families working to recover from these hurricanes. Now imagine your organization working together with the community to improve the quality of life for thousands of evacuees.*

The Neighbor Helping Neighbor Initiative is an extension of the Community Relations function founded on the time-honored philosophy of individual and community empowerment. It is an acknowledgment of the creative power within the disaster community to actively forge a new quality of life through the efforts of individuals who extend a hand to others. It honors the wealth of skill, knowledge, experience, and concern within the community, specifically within the religious congregations, by actively employing it in the recovery process of the disadvantaged."

Joint Information Center
Joint Field Office
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

FEMA

Dec. 02, 2005

Dear Community Leader:

In a joint effort to provide vital assistance to the citizens who were affected in Louisiana during the 2005 hurricane season, the U. S. Small Business Administration (SBA), U. S. Department of Justice (DOJ), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the State of Louisiana would like to cordially invite you and your organization to participate in one of the Neighbor Helping Neighbor Through Faith Workshops that will be held throughout the State of Louisiana. The purpose of the workshop is to train volunteers, who will assist in providing guidance to individuals and groups affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and to encourage community leaders and trouble-shooting committees to work with Long-Term Recovery Teams and Committees.

Imagine if you can hundreds of thousands of displaced Katrina and Rita survivors struggling to find safe, private and comfortable homes, beginning to see some sense of normalcy return to their lives. Imagine the widespread dissemination of information concerning comfortable solutions for families working to recover from these hurricanes. Now imagine your organization working together with the community to improve the quality of life for thousands of evacuees.

As we anticipate the holiday season of joy, hope and peace, let us embrace those who were affected by the two devastating hurricanes. The holiday season for most of us is a time of renewing and refreshing our mind, body and spirit with the anticipation of a new year and new beginning. By sharing our exuberant holiday spirit, we can actively engage in healing not only those affected immediately by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, but also our nation that is suffering the direct impact of Katrina and Rita.

If your organization is willing to participate, please forward your organizations' contact persons information so we can keep you informed on the training dates, times and locations. Our tentative dates are: December 10, December 17, January 7, January 21, February 11, and February 25. Please include the name of your organization, contact person, address, phone number, and email address, and forward this information to Alisa.Monroe@dhs.gov and Ebony.Turner@dhs.gov or fax to (225) 334-9034.

For additional information, please contact Jacqueline McBride, Ph.D., Community Relations Liaison Officer at (337) 281-5972 or Alisa Monroe, Community Liaison at (832) 588-0078.

With kind regards,

Ben Dew

FEMA Community Relations Officer

cc Cindy Montz, State CRO
Johnny Anderson, Office of the Governor
LeRoy Flohr, Deputy CRO
Carmelita Pope-Freeman, US DOJ
Richard Jenkins, US SBA
Pamela Mack, FEMA ERO



Friday, May 11, 2007, Faith and Community Based Organizations, Emergency Preparedness and Relief Services' Recognition Day

A ***Circle of Compassion***, members of the United States Department of Justice; United States Department of Homeland Security/Federal Emergency Management Agency; the State of Louisiana; the City of New Orleans; Fellowship Tabernacle; Love, Peace and Prosperity International, Inc. and Epiphany Entertainment, have partnered to recognize, honor and pay tribute to faith and community-based leaders and officials who have tirelessly serve the residents of New Orleans, the parishes throughout the State of Louisiana, states within the Gulf Coast Region: Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas; as well as residents who have relocated throughout the United States and its territories. Many of these organizations supported and received the FEMA-Community Relations' *Neighbor Helping Neighbor* (NHN) Volunteer and Tool Kit Training and participated in the NHN Workshops.

On May 11, 2007, faith and community-based organizations joined our circle of compassion: IES, Trinity Christian Community, Habitat for Humanity, Archdiocese-Catholic Charities, National Church Empowerment Consortium, National Church Empowerment Consortium, Household of Faith, Concordia LLC; The Episcopal Diocese - Disaster Response, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the City of New Orleans-Citizens with Disabilities, Greater Light Ministries, and Katrina Aid Today-Catholic Charities.

We also lit candles in memory and those *who are still missing and deceased loved ones; residents who lost life and property, who are homeless and displaced to states and territories; employees without jobs; business owners with loss of business and support to employees, and leaders of faith and community-based organizations whose programs are reinventing and returning to serve.*

Participants expressed that the most cherished gift received from the breakfast was ***HOPE***: ***Helping Hands, Opportunities, Prepared and Encouraged,*** which was facilitated by Ms. Carmelita Pope-Freeman, Region IV Director, United States Department of Justice, Community Relations Service, who also provided a follow-up report.

Email from Ms. Pope Freeman to Dr. Jacqueline Bride sharing a message from a faith-based leader:

Here's the feedback I mentioned to you. This is from May 12, 2006
Lafayette Neighbor Helping Neighbor workshop

Carmelita Pope Freeman
Southwest Regional Director
Department of Justice
Community Relations Service

-----Original Message-----
From: dmiller@nuvoice.org [mailto:dmiller@nuvoice.org]
Sent: Tuesday, May 16, 2006, 9:00 AM
To: Freeman, Carmelita
Subject: Last Friday Workshop

Good morning, Ms (Dr?) Freeman,

This is a quick Thank You for your time and efforts shared with us last Friday. In 40+ years of ministry, I have attended hundreds of seminars and workshops but found last Friday's meeting one of the most informative and helpful that I have EVER attended. For that, I am most grateful!

I look forward to working together in the future (near not distant). I would be very interested in attending a meeting where the Grant Managers from the various agencies would be present. Willing to travel wherever for that conference. Thank you for offering to attempt to make that happen. Please keep me informed of any/all of these sorts of workshops. I may not attend every one, but someone from our organization might if I cannot.

Again, many, many, thanks,

Duane A Miller
Executive Director
NuVOICE Ministries, Inc.

"It Takes A Village" Breakfast

Friday, August 17, 2007

Atlantic County, New Jersey

A ***Circle of Compassion***, member of the United States House of Representative – Second District, New Jersey; Governor of the State of New Jersey; County Executive, County of Atlantic; Atlantic County Office of Emergency Preparedness; the Atlantic County Women's Center; Love, Peace and Prosperity International, Inc. WXXY Broadcasting and Epiphany Entertainment, have partnered to recognize, honor and pay tribute to faith and community-based leaders and officials who have tirelessly served to the residents of New Jersey and surrounding states, the counties throughout the State of New Jersey, and states along the East Coast: New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware. Many of these organizations supported and provide disaster relief within the Gulf Coast from the devastating effects of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and the World Trade Center – 9-11 disaster.

On Friday, August 17, 2007, officials and faith and community-based organizations joined our circle of compassion: U. S. Department of Justice-Community Relations, U. S. Small Business Administration, State of New Jersey, City of Atlantic City, County of Atlantic, New Jersey State Police-Office of Emergency Management, Spanish Community Center, Praise Tabernacle, Jean Webster Kitchen, Atlantic County Board of Freeholders, United Way of Atlantic County, Shiloh Baptist Church, MaryKay Products, American Red Cross, The Salvation Army, In His Presence Worship Center, Atkins Temple Church of Love, Atlantic County Government-Animal Shelter, Covenant House of New Jersey, Morning Star Church, and AtlanticCare Health Systems.

Resources for greater community service impact – "Where do we go from here?" were provided by officials and members of the faith and community-based organizations. Topics covered included: Preparedness Culture, Partnership and Capacity Building, Faith-Based Initiatives, and a Peace Summit.

There were several portable documents and recommendations presented by the attendees:

Documents:

- The Atlantic County Special Needs Registry – A joint effort by the County of Atlantic and the City of Atlantic City to identify persons who may need special assistance to evacuate in the event of a disaster or emergency.
- Praise Tabernacle shared their *72-hour Emergency Preparedness Kit* Booklet that was distributed to church members.
- WXXY shares information on the importance of including a radio in our disaster kits.

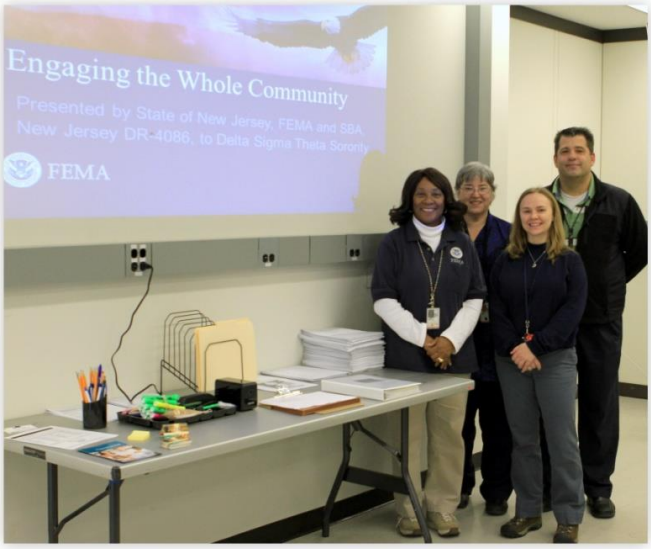
Recommendation:

- Promote A Preparedness Culture – "the more you know the better equipped you will be and not become frustrated in the event of a disaster".
    - Prepared for natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and nuclear incidents
        - The use of duct tape
        - Generators for life support
        - Wrist tags for children and elderly (name, contact phone number, and special medications)
    - How to become a member of CERT, Citizens Corp, and/or N. J. Disaster Reservist
    - Develop a disaster plan and kit for family members (including children and special populations - disabled), neighbors, and pets
        - Medications, important documents, toys for children, ability to be self-sustaining for 2 weeks and/or up to 6 months.
    - Develop a call-down list and test it.
    - Prepare for an "in place" shelter or being a guest at a host shelter
    - Serve as a host shelter
    - Evacuate when requested.
        - "How far will gas, food, diapers…take me?"
        - Protect your assets and property
    - Insert the letters ***ICE*** in mobile phones – 3 critical calls to make in the event of a disaster

- Rebirth of the Atlantic County Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD)
    - The United Way of Atlantic County has volunteered to support the Atlantic County Office of Emergency Preparedness's mission on partnership building before, during, and after a disaster and serve as the lead organization. The Department of Homeland Security/Federal Emergency Management Agency VOLAG volunteered to support the mission and participate in forthcoming meetings.

2012 - *"With less than 30 days away, the State of New Jersey, the U. S. Small Business Administration, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency implements a Strategic Community Outreach Strategy Program in conjunction with National, Regional and State leaders of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated.*

The 'Communities Helping Communities; Neighbors 2 Neighbors' webinar and accompanying toolkit's mission was to help educate, equip, and empower New Jersey's community leaders and organizations to provide general registration and disaster recovery assistance information to eligible applicants through their existing community networks." FEMA official press release



FEMA Community Relations Manager Dr. Jacqueline McBride, Kathy Cook of the U. S. Small Business Administration, and the State of New Jersey host a Disaster Assistance webinar for the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority. Also pictured here are FEMA Training Specialist Richard Sexton and Digital Communications Specialist Elaine Kelley. Photo: Chanda Scott, FEMA NJ-DR-4086

During FEMA's response to Super Storm/Hurricane Sandy (2012-2013), and in support of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Dr. Jacqueline McBride, FEMA's Disaster Survivor Assistance Branch Manager, revised the program, to include a community-wide concept: FEMA's *Communities Helping Communities; Neighbors 2 Neighbors"* Train-the-Trainer Program; which includes a PowerPoint Presentation and Toolkit.

Many regional CR programs have adopted this program; which is currently presented in neighbors and communities through this nation. It may be called *"People Helping People", "Neighbors for Neighbors"* or *"Neighbors Helping Neighbors";* however, its root is firmly grounded by the efforts and leadership of Angeles M. Thompson and Ben Dew. Angie and Ben affectionately passed the baton to Dr. Jacqueline McBride, who has recruited, mentored, and shared the journey with Dr. Cheryl Catchings and many other CR members.

From 2005 to – present, Dr. McBride has trained and mentored hundreds of Community Relations personnel in conducting the NHN outreach strategy. She has also presented this program to hundreds of faith-based organizations while serving in her official FEMA position and, when not deployed with FEMA, continues to voluntarily support and promote the initiative in various communities.

The International Network of Women in Emergency Management
2013 Special Honors Awards
to
Ms. Angeles Morillo Thompson



and
the late Benard "Ben" Dew
Community Relations Cadre Managers with FEMA Regions II and X, respectively
Submitted by Dr. Jacqueline McBride, CEM, CPM, CBI, CVA; inWEM Founder and President and FEMA DSA Branch Director



Photo date: October 22, 2005
Photographer: FEMA / Robert Kaufmann

November 1, 2013

The International Network of Women in Emergency Management (inWEM) hosted its annual "International Women in Homeland Security and Emergency Management Hall of Fame" Gala Reception & Induction Ceremony on the occasion of the 61st annual International Association of Emergency Managers Conference & EMEX in Reno, Nevada, on Saturday, October 26, 2013.

During the 2013 gala, inWEM recognized former Community Relations (CR) Cadre Managers Angeles Morillo Thompson, FEMA Region II, and the late Benard "Ben" Dew, FEMA Region X. Everyone has the phase used, *"Neighbors Helping Neighbors";* but never really knew where the title or phrase originated. Inaugurated in July 2013, and in honor of Angie and Ben, the *"Neighbors Who Make A Difference"* annual award pays tribute to a nominee's contribution to empowering neighbors and communities in the spirit of "Neighbors Helping Neighbors."

A resilient community requires first responders, emergency management officials, private sector representatives, and community leaders to empower existing networks that create a culture of preparedness. This concept was nurtured in the late 1990s by Ms. Thompson, and in 2004, the late Mr. Dew, founded the official *"Neighbor Helping Neighbor"* program in response to the 2004 Florida hurricanes. Their vision continues to this day.

The *"Neighbors Who Make a Difference"* Annual Award is presented to those individuals and organizations whose leadership has provided a *" haven"* and recovery resources for our individuals, families, and communities during the long-term recovery phase. Neighbors across many geographical boundaries; neighborhoods, communities, villages, tribal nations, cities, states, nations, and countries.

FEMA Weekly Bulletin - October 28, 2013

FEMA Employees Recognized for Making a Difference

During the 2013 gala, inWEM will recognize former Community Relations Cadre Managers Angeles Morillo Thompson, FEMA Region II, and the late Benard "Ben" Dew, FEMA Region X. Read the full employee recognition article



October 26, 2013
Tribute and Honorable Mention: *"Neighbors Who Make a Difference"* Award
Presenting the award is Dr. Jacqueline McBride and
accepting the award is Ms. Chalice Dew-Johnson, Daughter of the late, Mr. Bernard "Ben" Dew,
former Community Relations Cadre Manager FEMA Regions X