ARE YOU READY FOR A RUCKUS?
The City is responsible for making sure we have the infrastructure in place to respond to an emergency. Even before disaster strikes, public and private organizations, like the Fire Department, NYPD, FEMA, and Con Edison need to work together to make sure everyone knows what to do when something happens.

What Individual is responsible for making sure they have a "Go Bag" supplied with batteries, a flashlight, a radio, a first aid kit, and important documents like copies of their lease, bank account information, and proof of insurance. They should also make plans with their family on how to get out of the city and where to meet in case of an emergency.

What is a disaster? A disaster is something that can harm you, like a flood, a hurricane, or a fire. — Christy Chavez, student

Before a disaster happens, you have to have the right insurance to cover your house after the disaster. — Desa Melenciano, student

The City writes the city’s plans to help prepare the city and respond to emergencies. — Justin Land, OEM

But, what about the Community? where you live or work or where you? What is the community responsible for and how can they start making a plan in case of an emergency?

Special Thanks to our Interiewers: Jeanne Schoeters, Alysa Scheepers, Kylene Shaw, Fred Butz, Fred Shaw, and James Shaw.

Imagine we had to prepare a community for a disaster. What is a community? There is not one definition of how big or small a community is, or what the boundaries are. It can be the neighborhood you live in, the city you live in, or the house of worship where you pray.

"People who are really well-educated, or who feel their power, are always the ones that control the discussion. You need to be able to train folks that are grassroots so they have the tools and can own their voice. Then, when they’re in a meeting with an agency, they can articulate what the problems are, what the challenges are, and what they need. – Elizabeth Yeampierre, UPROSE"

In many communities, there are people who are leaders, and those leaders can play an important role in helping to prepare for a disaster. They can start a leadership team to kick off a planning process for your community. They usually know a lot of people in the neighborhood and are really good at spreading the word to get more community members involved. For example, in religious leaders can set up workshops with congregants on disaster planning. A landlord or co-op board can organize their tenants. Everyone has some skill to bring to the table.
**When Disaster Strikes**

**Please Evacuate!!**

**Can Your Community Get Out?**

Imagine your community is faced with an emergency and a lot of people need to evacuate at once. Can everyone in your neighborhood find a way out? Do you know which streets might be dangerous or which ones are evacuation routes? Are there buses or subways close by, or will you be caught up in a traffic jam? Do you know the areas where it’s safer to evacuate, or does everyone need to find a way out? You can find that out at [nyc.gov/evac].

If a disaster strikes, an unplanned evacuation can lead to chaos and lots of other mini-disasters along the way. An important part of planning is to make sure the community is prepared ahead of time. A community plan will ensure your community is getting what it needs from the city: more signs, more transportation routes, or safe shelter. Trying to figure it out when disaster strikes is too late.

"The people that are poorest and have the least resources are the most affected. If you don’t have money to get out of town, you’re stuck. The poorer you are, the more you rely on the government, the more the government’s decisions affect you."

- Eddie Bautista, NYCEJA
IS IT IMPORTANT TO STAY IN TOUCH?

Hey girl! How are you?

Fine, just staying in Nevada, until the disaster calms down.

The storm has passed, but now it’s time to fix the neighborhood up.

What is the community up to?

Fixing the library, schools and the stores. Oh, remember that park we grew up in? They took it down to build another building there.

What?! Where are our children going to play now?

I don’t know. They had some meetings about how the community is changing and what we should be building, but a lot of people haven’t come back and they’re making decisions without them.

Hold on! Can’t we all get people together online to say what they think should happen back home?

Sounds good! I’ll make a Facebook Page.

We know that we don’t have all the funding for rebuilding. The goal is for the community to at least have a plan everybody’s bought into, so that when funding becomes available it will be used in a way that the community wants. If the community is not saying anything, it’s very hard.

- Sam Benson, FEMA

So what happens after you’ve evacuated? Staying in touch with your community is an important piece to being involved with how your neighborhood might recover, and how it might change. Setting up a Facebook page or a Meetup Group could help everyone stay connected even when they’re in different places. Maybe community members can follow real-time updates on Twitter. There are many ways to stay connected, but knowing how to be important. How would your community stay in touch with its neighbors?

During Irene, we had a whole community destroyed. It’s a difficult decision: do we rebuild? It’s not a decision that the federal government makes; it’s a decision that the community makes.

- Sean Waters, FEMA
1. "Have you ever thought what would happen if a hurricane hit YOUR neighborhood? Does your neighborhood have a specific situation that could put community members at risk?"
   - Edith Bautista, NYC IA

2. "If we had a flood it would be a DOUBLE DISASTER! Not only would we have to worry about the storm, we’d also be swimming in toxic stuff!"

3. "What could we do to prevent that? How could we protect people from the chemicals? How would we even start changing stuff like this in my neighborhood?"

4. In most neighborhoods, there’s at least one community-based organization where community members can get involved. Individuals or organizations can also go to public hearings to have their say.
   "Look! There’s a public meeting!"

5. These hearings are an opportunity for community members to show up and share their ideas. Different neighborhoods have different risks depending on where they are and what’s close by. These risks all have to be part of the city’s disaster preparedness plans.

6. "You have to try by getting active because that’s how you’re going to make change in your community. It’s hard to do it by yourself. It’s only the people who show up that make a difference."
   - Edith Bautista, NYC IA
The Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP) uses the power of design and art to improve civic engagement. CUP collaborates with designers, educators, advocates, students, and communities to make educational tools that demystify complex policy and planning issues. We believe that increasing understanding of how these systems work is the first step to better, more equitable, and more diverse community participation.

Urban Investigations are CUP’s project-based afterschool programs in which high school students explore fundamental questions about how the city works. Students collaborate with CUP and teaching artists to create multimedia teaching tools that reach audiences in the arts and social justice.

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College Now is a free City University of New York program designed to prepare NYC’s public high school students for success in college. By taking part in College Now, students get acquainted with the demands of college life and work before they get there. College Now offers college-credit courses, college-preparatory courses and activities, and experiential-based summer programs.

collegenow.cuny.edu

This project was made possible by the CUNY College Now program. Additional support was provided by public funds from the National Endowment for the Arts and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council; the Bay and Paul Foundations; and the Henry Luce Foundation.