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NJIT AND RECOVERY

Rallying in the wake of devastation left by Hurricane Sandy, the NJIT community is wholeheartedly helping residents, businesses and government officials with recovery efforts from Bergen to Cape May Counties. In April, NJIT volunteers joined students from more than 20 other colleges in and around the state for Alternative Spring Break 2013. Some 600 individuals registered for the week-long service project focused on hurricane recovery and restoration.

In Asbury Park, NJIT students moved larger pieces of a damaged boat that had washed ashore. What's left of the boat, used pre-Sandy for community events, will now sail upon a replenished sand dune as a reminder of the storm and resolute recovery.



PHOTO S: JED MEDINA

“The Alternative Spring Break represents a critical collaboration necessary for the successful revitalization of the Jersey Shore, the City of Newark and other cities and suburban towns affected by Hurricane Sandy,” said NJIT President Joel S. Bloom, who visited the Union Beach site where volunteers cleared debris from a lot where a house once stood. “As New Jersey’s Science and Technology University, NJIT is uniquely qualified to undertake the effort and provide a public service to the people of New Jersey.”

The Center for Resilient Design at NJIT’s College of Architecture and Design spearheaded the initiative in conjunction with NJIT’s Career Development Services Division

and Campus Center. Resilient Design Project Manager Thomas G. Dallessio personally observed many of the service efforts, which included painting lifeguard benches, planting dune grass, building fences and removing storm debris in areas impacted by the storm.

“It was impressive to watch NJIT students, faculty, staff and alumni collaborate with the Public Works staff in Asbury Park to make the city more attractive and resilient,” said Dallessio. “My most moving memory of the project was watching birds starting to make homes in the newly formed dunes, with discarded Christmas trees and fencing providing a new form of shelter.”

(RE)BUILDING NEW JERSEY STRONG

Members of NJIT's track and field team reorganized the interior space and repaired ceiling tiles at the headquarters of IHS Development Corporation in Newark, founded by Executive Director Cynthia DeSouza EMBA '99. The NJIT community has long partnered with IHS to help provide services and programs to enhance the quality of life for Newark residents.

Another group of students mentored by NJIT's Director of Strategic Initiatives Colette Santasieri worked with Future City Inc. to analyze the storm-damaged public waterfront areas in Elizabeth and Perth Amboy. They conducted a physical assessment of storm damage at designated waterfront areas, interviewed policymakers and constituents, and assessed available resources.

"At the outset, the Alternative Spring Break was conceived as a week-long community service project when hundreds of NJIT students, faculty and alumni would help residents, businesses and government officials rebuild in a resilient manner," said Bloom. "Having exceeded that goal, NJIT has left an indelible mark on areas hard-hit by Sandy."

RECLAIMING ROUTE 35

Immediately following the superstorm, Dan Yacovino '86, a project manager at Arora and Associates P.C., led a team that was called in by the New Jersey Department of Transportation to assess the damage to Route 35 in Mantoloking, which was breached by the storm surge in three locations. Dubbed "The Miracle on Route 35," the project has received the Alliance for Action's Distinguished Engineering Award and the 2013 Project of the Year Award from the Professional Engineers Society of Mercer County, as well as special recognition from the American Council of Engineering Companies of New Jersey (ACEC-NJ). ■

Center for Resilient Design:
<http://design.njit.edu/news/resilientdesign.php>

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Clockwise from top: Volunteers built fencing that will create new dunes and close off dunes in previously unprotected areas; Student volunteers planted dune grass on the beach in Asbury Park; Discarded Christmas trees were collected and moved to key locations to create sand dunes that will eventually be formed and shaped by the wind; Members of NJIT's track and field team performed minor carpentry repairs at IHS Development Corporation in Newark.