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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **NYDIS Coordinating Clean-Up Efforts of Bay Ridge Tornado**

*8/8 Tornado and Storm Damaged Homes, in Brooklyn, Queens & Staten Island*

#### **Faith-Based Volunteers from the Northeast Arrive to Offer Aid in Debris Removal** *Working in coalition with the NYC Office of Emergency Management*

August 13, 2007, New York, NY... On Wednesday, August 8, 2007, the Brooklyn section of Bay Ridge was hit hard by a category F2 tornado. Winds gusting at 110 to 135 miles an hour forced many residents from their homes, causing damage such as torn roofs, shattered windows, and ripped trees. Parts of Staten Island and Maspeth, Queens also experienced extensive damage and flooding.

NYDIS, in coordination with the New York City Office of Emergency Management (OEM), is reaching out to the residents of this impacted area with information on how to access free debris removal as well as other recovery resources. NYDIS has opened its Call Center today to answer questions about tree and debris removal, as well as to provide intake and referrals to residents seeking agencies to provide these free services. To register for Debris Removal call 212.669.6100.

“We are deploying our volunteers to provide outreach to homeowners so that they are correctly informed on what they are entitled to, and to give them information on how to register for free debris/tree removal or home repair,” says NYDIS Executive Director Peter Gudaitis.

Two teams of volunteers from the Mennonite Disaster Services (MDS) arrived on Monday, August 13 from the Lake District in Upstate New York and Eastern Pennsylvania. They are staying at the Bay Ridge Baptist Church on 4<sup>th</sup> Street. The Baptist Convention of New York is organizing teams from across the Southern Baptist Convention who will arrive on Wednesday, August 15 to assess the damage and begin clean-up efforts.

In order to prepare for and respond to such disasters in New York City, NYDIS works throughout the year, together with our members and partner organizations, to better prepare our citizens for such occurrences. Because we have a volunteer system in place, we are able to get

volunteers to impacted areas quickly and in coordination with other efforts taking place in the City.

Gudaitis adds, “We appreciate all our members’ and partners’ efforts. In order to get as much help to this affected area, anyone interested in supporting our efforts may send their contributions to [www.nydis.org](http://www.nydis.org) and click onto the ‘Donate Now’ tab, or call our office at 212.669.6100.”

#### About NYDIS

*New York Disaster Interfaith Services (NYDIS) is a 501(c)(3) faith-based federation of disaster service organizations and philanthropies that work in partnership to provide disaster readiness, response, and recovery services for New York City. NYDIS’ mission is to coordinate, develop, and support these disaster services to mitigate, prepare for, and respond to all hazards – both natural and human-caused. NYDIS and its members provide secular disaster human services to faith communities and individuals alike, regardless of membership or religious affiliation. In times of crisis, NYDIS convenes its leadership with government agencies and local, state, and national disaster management organizations. These partnerships facilitate the delivery of services, resources, and information to religious communities, under-served victims, and impacted communities.*

*NYDIS regularly partners with the American Red Cross, the Human Services Council and the Office of Emergency Management ( OEM) to communicate with its membership and interested religious communities on emergency management matters and to coordinate disaster advocacy, disaster chaplaincy, mitigation education, preparedness training of religious leaders, and relief and recovery programs. It is through this faith-based, cooperative initiative that our member and participating faith communities can prepare themselves and the public at a grass-roots level.*

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