

The University of New Haven Responds to Hurricane Sandy

BY JEFF SESSINE AND BRENT RUDELL

HURRICANE SANDY HIT THE UNITED STATES ON OCTOBER 29, causing devastation throughout the northeast and affecting approximately 24 states. Before landfall in Connecticut, the University of New Haven's (UNH) Emergency Management Team kicked into action, canceling Monday and Tuesday classes to encourage the campus community to seek safer ground.

The plan worked, as fewer than 500 of the customary 2,600 student residents remained on campus by the morning of the 29th. As a result, the University was equipped to house all of the remaining students in the two campus facilities with a built-in back-up generator: Beckerman Recreation Center and Soundview Residence Hall.

Cots were immediately ordered, while Sodexo — the University's campus dining supplier — obtained and loaded a refrigerated truck with enough food to sustain students for several days. The University then facilitated the students' relocation into the makeshift shelters, timing the action before the storm and during the daytime to ensure the safest possible transition.

"The support staff that took on the responsibility of preparing for, moving, and housing nearly 500 students in Beckerman and Soundview was nothing short of spectacular," says Mike Schneider, UNH's director of Campus Recreation and a member of the Emergency Management Team.

At Beckerman, for example, 281 students and 15 staff/police/security personnel spent the night in the facility. To help keep students fed, entertained, and at ease, Campus Recreation worked closely with Residential Life and Campus Police to hand out the food from Sodexo's truck, while also playing a movie and making the track and other indoor activity areas fully accessible before turning the lights off at 11:00 P.M.

In preparing for one of the worst natural disasters in U.S. history, UNH rose to the occasion at every turn. Using forward thinking and a campus-wide spirit of cooperation, the University kept its students out of harm's way, thereby offering a blueprint for overcoming future severe encounters with Mother Nature. [CPM](#)



PHOTO COURTESY OF JEFF RYDER, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF CAMPUS RECREATION, UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAVEN

SHELTER IN PLACE. In a post-Sandy letter posted to its website, the University of New Haven thanked its students for contributing in a significant way to helping the University keep the campus community safe and expressed pride in how everyone on campus conducted themselves in support of emergency efforts.

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