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Nonprofit partners with volunteers to provide hurricane prep kits

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1 of 5



Volunteers brought 100 hurricane preparedness kits to the Roosevelt Harris Jr. Senior Center in Brunswick as part of an ongoing initiative led the Partnership for Southern Equity.

Provided photo

A recent partnership between numerous local organizations resulted in the creation of 250 hurricane preparation kits that will benefit some of Glynn County's most vulnerable residents.

The Partnership for Southern Equity collaborated with local volunteers from the business community, nonprofits, church and government to pack and begin distributing the kits last week.

“We had folks to come in from all across our community,” said Dominique Mack, a senior manager on the climate justice and energy equity team for PSE, a nonprofit that advances policies and institutional actions to promote racial equity.



The first 100 kits were packed and given out at the Roosevelt Harris Jr. Senior Center in Brunswick.

PSE applied earlier this year for a grant from the Southern Climate & Energy Network (SCEN) earlier and used the \$10,000 award to fund the purchase of disaster preparedness kits and related supplies. The Coastal Georgia Hazard Mitigation and Disaster Relief Program will benefit Glynn and Chatham counties.

Locally, the kits were created in partnership with Community Church, city of Brunswick, Salvation Army, America's Second Harvest of Coastal Georgia, United Way of Coastal Georgia, Glynn County Emergency Management and Glynn Environmental Coalition.

Mack said she has been talking with local leaders, including Rachael Thompson at the Glynn Environmental Coalition, for several years about organizing an effort to bring tangible resources like this to residents and to build connections that will help residents advocate for themselves on emergency response policies.

“The reason that we all came together is because oftentimes we react to a situation with disaster,” Mack said. “This time we’re trying to prepare ahead of time because we’re in the thick of hurricane season right now and beyond hurricanes we just never know what could happen.”

Hurricanes and other emergency situations impact some residents more significantly than others. Among the most vulnerable is the elderly.

“All of us out in the community wanted to make sure that we’re serving the people that are going to be hardest hit and most vulnerable, and oftentimes that is our seniors because they’re left alone often and don’t know what to do when disaster strikes,” Mack said. “This is a part of building climate resiliency in our area and to create more ecosystems of care.”

The kits, packaged in plastic orange buckets, include nonperishable food items donated by America's Second Harvest of Coastal Georgia and the Salvation Army, as well as cleanup supplies, toiletry items and first aid kits.



“It’s all packaged inside of a bucket that they can use as a go-kit,” Mack said.

Vital documents or other important information resources can also be kept in the kit, she added.

The first 100 of 500 kits were distributed last week. A total of 250 will be given out in Glynn County, and the other 250 will be distributed in Chatham County. The supplies purchased for the kits amounted to around \$15,000, Mack said.

Glynn County residents have experienced firsthand the challenges a big weather event like a hurricane or tropical storm can create. The community suffered back-to-back major storms in 2016 and 2017, when hurricanes Matthew and Irma brought tropical-storm force winds, rain and flooding to the area.

The storms impact low-income residents in long-lasting ways, and often some citizens find themselves unable to evacuate due to lack of information or resources.

“We wanted to do our part in making sure that folks who may not be able to leave have something that’s readily available to them where they can keep themselves safe, make sure that they have ready assistance in regards to what’s in the kit,” Mack said.

Information like how to sign up for emergency alerts and access shelters information is also readily available through the kits, she said.

The remaining kits for Glynn County residents will be distributed through local NPA meetings.

“We are thankful that the Community Church has agreed to store them and let us use that as a space we can pack and pick them up when we need to,” Mack said.

Anyone who wishes to support this effort can email Mack at dmack@psequity.org. She also encouraged residents to be on the lookout this fall for information sessions on how residents can prepare for emergency situations and get engaged in local policies regarding these issues.

To learn more, visit <https://psequity.org/>.



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