Gap Foundation: Trying to recover from Sandy

November 7, 2012

Be a giver.

New York, NY (RPRN) 11/07/12 — Power outages and a hobbled transit system. Huge lines for gasoline. Simple life logistics – coping with a car swept away by the storm or a flooded home no longer livable – adds layers of complexity to the personal hardship.

On top of that, our store leaders on the East Coast have scrambled to reopen our stores under the most challenging of circumstances brought on by Hurricane Sandy. The busiest shopping period of the year, for better or worse, is here.

And another storm – with possible snow – is coming, set to arrive north of New Jersey on Wednesday evening.

“It's been devastating and chaotic. We've had big storms before, but this has hit us extremely hard,” said Tina Petallides-Markou, flagship HR manager for two of Banana Republic’s business stores – Rockefeller Center and 34th and Broadway.

For these two stores alone, that meant helping 400-plus employees get back to work safely and getting a clear picture of their unique personal challenges. One employee was dealing with a partially collapsed roof; another lost nearly all of his family’s personal belongings when his Coney Island basement flooded.

“Some people didn’t lose anything at all,” Tina said, “but we’re all feeling the weight of this together. And there are more things coming up – not only another storm and colder weather, but the lingering effects of Sandy, such as depression. On a positive note, it’s been amazing to see how supportive everyone is. Stores are doing bake sales to benefit the American Red Cross and local colleges are turning their gymnasiums into shelters.”

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Across these affected areas, many people are still coping without power. Warming centers are being set up ahead of the upcoming storm. If you have family members in the area, please share the updated warming center information from the City of New York and a hurricane response information page for New Jersey.

Our company continues to do its part to aid in the recovery. We announced Friday that we're donating more than $250,000 worth of clothing in hard-hit areas like New Jersey, as well as $750,000 in cash to the American Red Cross.

In a live taping in New York on Tuesday, "Anderson Live," Anderson Cooper's national talk show, reported on a clothing donation from Gap in which more than 1,000 families immediately benefited.

The producer, in response, wrote this to our company: "Thank you SO much! Still taping the show but we had a woman on the show who is blind and has been cooking and helping residents of Staten Island. After the announcement, she started crying and is beyond grateful. Thank you SO much for your help—so excited it worked out and we can really help those in need."

If you have not yet contacted your manager to confirm you are safe, please do so as soon as you are able. We are making sure that we stay in touch with employees and are able to account for each one. Employees are also urged to call the company's BCP Hotline number, 1-800-BCP-4GAP with any questions or concerns.

Support for employees

Our company has guidelines in place to provide relief and financial support to employees who have been impacted by any disaster. Depending on the severity of impact, support ranges from cash for basic necessities to short-term hotel stays for employees whose homes have been destroyed and/or are unlivable. If any of your team members have been affected or suffered hardship as a result of this storm, please encourage them to contact their HR representative to assess the impact and determine eligibility for these resources. If an employee is unable to reach their HR representative, he or she can contact the CSSC at 1 (866) 411-2772 Extension 20600, Options 1, 1, 5 to be directed to the right person.

How to help

For those interested in donating to relief efforts, Gap Foundation matches your contributions of $25 or more to nonprofit organizations, and is encouraging donations to the American Red Cross. Please consider making a donation today at bewhatspossible.com. If you're on the East Coast, United We Serve and New York Cares have listings of volunteer opportunities in impacted areas.

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https://gapweb.gap.com/gw/content/gweb/en/news/2012/November/110612_gn_sandyfollow.html

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