

# REGION 2 BI-WEEKLY

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## MORE PEOPLE AT THE TABLE

The Director of FEMA's Office of Disability Integration and Coordination came to town Wednesday, and the practice of emergency management was redefined.

Marcie Roth's mandate is to ensure persons with disabilities are integrated into every aspect of emergency management: grants, planning, response, recovery and mitigation. A Senior Advisor to Administrator Fugate – who has made “whole of community” planning the keystone of his agenda – Marcie's work was further facilitated by Regional Administrator

Lynn Canton, who set her up with one-on-one meetings with each of Region II's Division Directors, many of whom brought along their senior staffs. Canton noted that 21% of the US labor force is disabled. “So when we plan, we have to plan for all of us,” she said.

Two big changes are already in the works. FEMA has signed a MOU with the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL), a network of over 450 organizations that advances independent living and the rights of people with disabilities. NCIL will assist with locating local Centers for Independent Living in all FEMA's Disaster Recovery Centers. A second MOU with the National Disability Rights Network will give State Protection and Advocacy Centers a seat in every JFO. That agreement will be signed soon, Marcie reports.

Her 10-hour day included a meeting of local disability activists with Preparedness' Regional Catastrophic Preparedness Grants (RCPG) leadership, see above, in which assistive technologies – such as those used to evacuate people with mobility disabilities from high-rise buildings – were discussed. “Future grant guidance must be inclusive of these types of technologies,” Marcie said.

But perhaps the most vivid image of the future of emergency management was provided by the Progressive Center for Independent Living of New



Jersey, a NCIL member. Founded by Colleen Fraser an activist who died aboard United #93 on 9-11, the group's senior leadership is made up of former first responders who not only provide emergency preparedness training to individuals with disabilities but also instruct first responders and other direct service providers on how to best assist people with disabilities.

Their *Spokesperson Program* consists of 11 persons with disabilities, the majority of whom are former First Responders with acquired disabilities. They have trained 76 persons with disabilities in emergency preparedness, as well as over 400 first responders, and conducted over 14 emergency preparedness workshops. Among these were CERT programs in Bergen and Mercer counties, NJ. Now each county has a CERT team, which manned the communications desk for the NJ State Police during the 2009 floods. These teams will be integrate into those counties' existing CERT infrastructure, to align with FEMA's efforts to integrate whole communities into the emergency management process, rather than continue as separate initiatives.

Their mission statement concludes with “The Progressive Center believes that people with disabilities must be proactive participants and not passive receivers in the planning, response and recovery process for emergencies and disasters.” “Now that's what I'm talking about,” Marcie said.

# **'IF YOU SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING' ....ABOUT FLOOD INSURANCE**



The country's first *Port Security Awareness* event took place in Puerto Rico this week, and CAD Director Alejandro De La Campa, left, and CAD Mitigation staff joined in to spread the word on emergency preparedness, flood mitigation and the NFIP.

Sponsored by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and Puerto Rico Ports Authority, the day-long event of seminars and demonstrations promoted the kick-off of DHS's campaign "*If you see something, say something.*" The event sought to dramatize the joint federal and state commitment to both personal security, and that of the airport community as a whole. The community of Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport, Puerto Rico's main airport, includes 10,000+employees and contractors.

The event had the participation of all the DHS component agencies, the PR Ports Authority, PR Dept of Justice, PR Police Dept, PR Department of the Family, PR Mental Health and Addiction Services Administration (ASSMCA), the US Department of Agriculture, local law enforcement, and air carrier's employees

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## **DR-1943 JFO WINDING DOWN**

Region II had ten presidentially declared disasters in 2011. (Actually 11, when you consider DR-1869 was declared Dec. 31, 2009.) It's seventh — DR-1943 — was a Public Assistance response prompted by severe storms and a tornado that touched down in Queens in September, right.

The JFO was located at 290 Broadway, DEAs were selected from the Region and there were many local hires, keeping administrative costs down. Nevertheless, so far more than \$27 million has been obligated for urban clean-up, repair and debris removal.



# PASSAGES...



## Hezekiah “Sammy” Samuel 1952-2011

I met Hezekiah in a deployment in Indiana in 1997, where he was working with Community Relations, along with Angie Thompson, and Michele Feliciano. After that, we met on different disasters in Puerto Rico and the States, and we always had a great time. Hezekiah knew how to serve the community while listening to them. He had a profound sense of friendship, a contagious joy for life and a unique soul. He was a character, who always tried to retain his “style” – it didn’t matter where he was. Michele remembers an exception to this “style” rule once occurred during a New York City deployment in 1996, when he had to rush to the store to buy socks, since it was too cold to walk around without them. I am still adjusting to the idea that he is not with us anymore, but I will always remember him with a huge welcoming smile. — Delyris Acquino-Santiago

*Sammy was always a gentleman, and always looked out for his coworkers.* — Maria Rodriguez



*Editor’s Note: The Region lost two of its own this month: Hezekiah “Sammy” Samuel, near left, pictured with FCO Jaime Forero last year on DR-1869, and above left with Angel Santiago.*

*Sammy, 59, was a long-time DAE in Individual Assistance, as well as a veteran Community Relations Specialist. He was based out of St. Thomas, USVI, and was interred there earlier this month. Left are remembrances.*

### And

*Arnold Davis, a pillar of Region II, likewise passed this month. Arnold is pictured below left at his retirement party in November 2009 with Rebecca Thomson. More photos and remembrances of Arnold follow on the next page.*



# PASSAGES...

## ARNOLD'S 'GOING HOME'

By Pat Lipp



A friend is never a coincidence in your life, they are meant to enter your life, and to bring you joy and laughter. I will always treasure the friendship we had. Words seem inadequate to express the sadness I feel and cannot even begin to express my sorrow. I miss you so very much. — Richard Carswell, pictured above left, with Arnold at his retirement party.

Family and friends gathered last weekend to say goodbye to Arnold Davis, 60, one of FEMA's original employees and a mainstay of Region II, even after his retirement in November 2009.

The funeral service was led by Arnold's brother, Pastor David Jerome Davis, Sr., who insisted it was not a day to mourn, but rather one to celebrate a life well-lived. Another brother, Carl Lawrence Davis, shared stories from when he and Arnold were growing up, and laughter filled the room as everyone recognized Arnold's personality shining through even as a very young child.

His sister Darlene told attendees how proud Arnold had been of his 30+plus years of government service, which started with his first job at a Post Office in Harlem, continued through the four years he served in the US Air Force, and culminated with his 30-year commitment to FEMA.

As a Systems Specialist in communications, and one of the agency's original hires, Arnold literally help build Region II, laying the wires, and ultimately overseeing its online infrastructure. Administrator Fugate paid tribute to Arnold in a personal email that was distributed to All-Hands agency-wide.

Arnold is survived by his mother, wife Irene and sons, Arnold, Jr., and Lance, as well as his three brothers and two sisters, a host of aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, cousins, grandchildren and innumerable friends.

Although he retired over a year ago, Arnold maintained close ties to his FEMA family: Three people in the Region report speaking with him just hours before he passed. A self-described "people person," Arnold had a genuine gift for friendship, enriching all those he bestowed it on. He will be missed by all.



From my first day at Region II, Arnold was the one who took the time to get to know me. He was a genuine person. He always had compassion for people. And Arnold knew everybody who was anybody. I will forever remember his laugh and light hearted stories. — Lashonne Bruce

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When I first heard the news, I was shocked and sad, and flooded with memories. Arnold was always happy and sat down with us almost every morning to chat. Arnold knew so many people and also the latest. He was gentle and kind, a nice man. I just spoke to him the day before he passed. I still can't believe it. Life is too short and we should enjoy it while we can. — Ana Fusco