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5,000 Energy Bars Donated to Kids in Storm-Wrecked Far Rockaway
A gift all the way from Montana

Far Rockaway, NY—After weeks of displacement, freezing apartments, no cooking fuel, and ration meals distributed by the National Guard, elementary and middle school students at a beloved after-school program are trying to return to normal life after their school had been closed for two weeks due to flooding.

An unlikely gift arrived to help the process of rebuilding. Hammer Nutrition, a small privately held company based in Montana, donated 5,000 energy bars, valued at \$12,000, providing both nutritious fuel and kindness to the children and their families.

“It meant a lot to kids and families to know people care,” said Jacqueline Gutierrez, director of the after school program, which is run by The Child Center of NY, a nonprofit agency that serves hundreds of young people at its Far Rockaway location. “That message went a long way. Also, it was a sweet treat, and those have been very hard to come by here.”

Hammer Bars are all-natural, organic products that provide easily digestible nutrients to athletes needing to refuel or anyone looking for a healthful meal replacement. Child Center supporter Amy Rappaport—who is an accomplished Ironman and USA Triathlon competitor sponsored by Hammer Nutrition—thought these bars would be beneficial and introduced The Child Center to a few contacts at Hammer.

The after-school program is located at PS/MS 43 in Far Rockaway, a block away from the ocean’s ravaged waterfront. It is part of The Child Center’s Beacon community center, which serves 1,000 young people, their parents, and other members of this community, not only during after school hours but on evenings and weekends. Services include homework help, tutoring, sports teams, arts enrichment, and much more. Many students are still staying in hotels or on floors and couches at relatives’ houses.

“Our Far Rockaway program is vital to the kids in this community—now more than ever as everyone rebuilds. We are helping kids catch up on missed schoolwork, reconnect with friends and mentors, and get back to a normal life routine. For many of our kids, we provide a home away from home,” said Sandra Hagan, executive director of The Child Center. “We are very appreciative to Hammer Nutrition for its generosity.”

In addition to helping students get back to their normal routines, The Child Center has also collected and distributed donations of water, coats, and other supplies from staff and friends. Over the next six months, The Child Center will also be providing mental health and advocacy services to help displaced children and youth cope with what has happened to them.

In the meantime, the process has started. The after-school children have filled a wall with quilts made of paper. Each tells a story, with art and words, about experiences of the storm. The images tell of flooded homes, and the surging sea, clean up crews, and the kindness of the community—that now extends all the way to Montana.

Story Angles: *Kindness shown to a community in need*
Generosity from Montana reaches hurricane struck Queens community
Spirits lifted from surprise gift

Founded in 1953, The Child Center of NY is a leading nonprofit children's agency that serves 17,000 children each year with early childhood education, mental health counseling, child abuse prevention, and a wide array of youth services. Its mission is to help at-risk children and youth succeed in life. To learn more, please visit www.childcenterny.org