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SOCIAL NETWORKING WITH SOUL DURING HURRICANE SANDY

After every storm comes some bright blue sky and perhaps also a new way of thinking about the world.

During Hurricane Sandy, while some social networks provided a way for people to sell generators and rationed fuel at usurious prices, there was one **New York based online community, Quentin's Friends,** that went into high gear as the go-to place for members' appeals for help and offers of assistance... today it's overwhelmed with thanks for *friends* who came to the rescue of storm victims.

- There's "deepest gratitude" from the nine month pregnant mum made homeless along with her husband and two year old toddler. "I was quite overwhelmed by offers of shelter."
- Member Elizabeth Tomboulian posted: "Thanks to all who responded so beautifully for housing FEMA friends in town from Nashville. This is such a lovely community".
- A storm evacuation center appealed for musicians and entertainers to help time pass easier for the children there. Quentin's Friends member Alexis Levenson's group, Cherub Improv immediately stepped up.
- With contributions from fellow members, fired-up entrepreneur Jennifer Lee of ClosetDash Shop, delivered a whole truck-load of food and supplies to Staten Island.
- As one member asked: 'Where else would you find a community where people feel comfortable inviting people they don't know into their homes'. (Additional examples below).

What these volunteers also bring, of course, is a big New York heart and a very practical approach to solving daunting problems. "This community is amazing. We've had so many Quentin's Friends come out today to donate food, clothes and water for victims of Sandy."

Quentin's Friends Founder Quentin English, himself a 'zone A evacuee' (still waiting to return to his home along with his wife, seven year old daughter and 5 month old baby boy), observed: 'This is village-style 'online community' vs. the possibly more self-serving 'social networking' we see today – it's people actively seeking to help each other - 'I'm here for you today and I know you'll be there for me tomorrow'.

Quentin's Friends (<u>www.quentinsfriends.com</u>) is: a private, invitation-only online community where members connect at events, and via the website around their practical, social, professional and cultural interests and needs. Based on the principle that our **friends** are people with whom we share certain **values**, all the members have made a commitment that, in all dealings with fellow members, they will respect and uphold the community's core founding values: honesty, integrity, courtesy, respect, generosity, gratitude, positivity, open-mindedness, fun and a sense of humor(!).

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Additional Examples:

- One of the latest posts offers a "narrow sofa" for a non-smoking woman waiting to return home after the storm. "I have a Midtown apartment not in great shape, but it is warm and there is electricity ... also a cup of tea and a hot shower!"
- A cat adoption center which lost power successfully sought foster homes for stranded kitties
- A Belle Harbor couple appealed for help to clean up their hurricane-ravaged home. "Bring work gloves, boots and a hat."
- Multiple member posts shared valuable information on resources for those in need and volunteer opportunities for those with seeking to help out their communities.