

## HARLEMITES DISTRESSED BY WATER MAIN BREAK AIDED BY HCCI

Thousands of Harlem residents have gone without cooking gas or hotwater, due to a water-main break last Friday. Con Ed officials said 7,745 customers were without service as crews rushed to get customers back online. According to news reports, some residents could be without gas for weeks because technicians must go door-to-door to make sure individual lines are purged of water before restoring service.

In times like these communities must pull-together, pool resources, and rely on local agencies to help address their needs. Harlem Congregations for Community Improvement, Inc. (HCCI) is such an agency. Nearly 700 HCCI households were affected by the water-main break. In wake of this calamity, HCCI community coordinators went door-to-door to ensure that residents were okay.

Many residents complained about the slow response from the City, but were pleased by the assistance they received from HCCI. Ms. Supp, a

local elder said "HCCI has been responsive. HCCI put letters under the door to inform people [of the water-main break]."

"Con Edison estimated that it could take three weeks to resolve the issue," said Malcolm Punter, HCCI Director of Real Estate Development. "Our biggest concern was the elderly resident. We need to make sure that the elderly have hot meals."

So they called Citymeals-on-Wheels. This non-profit partnered with HCCI to provide 2,100 emergency meals to needy Harlem residents, including elderly and children who reside in buildings that are expected to be without gas for up to six weeks. The agency arrived at HCCI with 700 boxes - each containing three shelf-stable meals. If the gas outage persists, this may be the first of several deliveries.

HCCI Board Member Dr. Joan O. Dawson was on hand to assist with the food distribution, "We are thankful to Citymeals for responding very quickly with boxes of food," she said.

"Thank God for the blessing of HCCI" said Dashaun Neal, a Harlem resident with four children and a grandchild she cares for. She picked up "6 boxes [of food] and I am thankful for them," she said.

Dr. Dawson stated, "We are hoping for a quick resolution. And in the meantime, our building managers are making sure that people know they can contact HCCI for further assistance."

HCCI is a Harlem-based non-profit community development corporation committed to the holistic revitalization of Harlem. HCCI has made a substantial impact on the social and living conditions prevalent in Harlem by developing low to moderate income housing; creating supportive health and human service facilities and programs; providing commercial development opportunities to local businesses; and expanding cultural programs. For more information visit [www.hcci.org](http://www.hcci.org) [4] or call 212-281-4887 [5].



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