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EDUCATION PROFILE

September is National Preparedness Month

Although the intense rain and powerful, destructive winds from Hurricane Dorian have ceased, we know from experience that the hurricane season is not over yet.

Hurricane season, which starts on June 1, normally peaks around this time in September with back-to-back storms forming quickly. The thought of it takes me back to two years ago when we were hit by Hurricane Irma, with Hurricane Maria following on its heels. The homes, roads, major infrastructures and people in their paths in Florida, the Bahamas, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, U.S. Virgin Islands, and Dominica were shattered. Many of the places hit by Hurricanes Irma and Maria have still not fully recovered. Seeing such need, Governor Cuomo launched the NY Stands with Puerto Rico Recovery and Rebuild-

ing Initiative to send SUNY and CUNY students to help with rebuilding efforts on the island. I was fortunate to be a part of this work this summer as I worked alongside CUNY Service Corp students to help clear land of the debris of fallen trees in order for it to be inhabitable for farming. I was reminded, as I helped to clear trees, of the similar post hurricane experiences in the Virgin Islands.

I also remember October 2012 when Superstorm Sandy wreaked havoc across our city and along the Jersey shore. Sandy claimed many lives and caused about \$70 billion in damages, making it the fourth-costliest storm in U.S. history behind Katrina, Harvey and Maria. Although I was not the president of Kingsborough Community College (KCC) at that time, I know that several areas and buildings on the campus sustained



Kingsborough president Dr. Claudia V. Schrader clearing trees in Puerto Rico as part of CUNY Service Corp's support of rebuilding efforts on the island.

major damage. When the storm hit, KCC's emergency preparedness team went right to work, getting electricity and hot water up and running on the campus. KCC also opened its doors to the students and anyone in the community in need

of food, water, ice, clothes, toiletries and emergency supplies trucked in by the New York Food Bank, the American Red Cross, and the faculty and staff.

As we approach October, weather forecasters are actively watching other disturbances developing in the Atlantic. It is important that we are prepared. September is National Preparedness Month, a time where we promote family and community disaster and emergency planning. In the event of an emergency, natural or otherwise, it is important to have an emergency kit, emergency supplies and medication, and a plan of action for yourself at home or on the job, and for your family, pets and elderly or physically challenged neighbors. If you are uncertain about how to prepare for a crisis, emergency readiness courses, workshops and brochures are offered by NYC Emer-

gency Management (Ready New York), the American Red Cross, Community Emergency Response Team (NYC CERT) and local organizations. Sign up for FREE information from the city's official emergency notification system by visiting NYC.gov/notifynyc, call 311 or follow @notifyNYC.

As we take time to prepare this month, let us also take time to recognize our incredible service men and women of the FDNY, NYPD, EMS, and hospitals—who serve our communities and who are always prepared to help.

Dr. Claudia V. Schrader is president of Kingsborough Community College located in beautiful Manhattan Beach, Brooklyn. The college offers a degree and certificate in Emergency Medical Services for preparation to become a paramedic and proud first responder. Visit <https://www.kbcc.cuny.edu/ems> or call 718-368-4600.