Blueberries symbolize "home at last" for Superstorm Sandy evacuees

"I miss the beach, but I love the woods. We have blueberries growing wild in our new backyard!" That's how Natalie Gill sums her Superstorm Sandy story. Of course, a lot happened between fleeing the New Jersey Shore and finally finding home near the woods, in a new house constructed by O.C.E.A.N., Inc. in a partnership that included volunteer work from Brethren Disaster Ministries and the United Church of Christ Disaster Ministries.

Gill was one of tens of thousands of U.S. East Coast residents forced out of their homes by the October 2012 hurricane. A few hours before Sandy made landfall, she and her four children grabbed a few personal effects including two favorite chairs and left everything else behind in the condominium they rented in Seaside Heights, N.J.

Natalie Gill and her daughter Jahzara, 8, picking blueberries at the edge of the woods that surround their new home.

I never went back,” Gill said. “I couldn’t bear it. I kept moving. I couldn’t stay in one place.” After nearly three years of moving more than a dozen times in a struggle to survive, Gill is finally able to say, “I am home now.”

(Con’t on pages 8 & 9)
O.C.E.A.N., Inc. Provides Sandy Related Housing Counseling Outreach in Ocean County

O.C.E.A.N., Inc. staff participated at the NJDCA Outreach and Marketing event held at the Community Center for Seniors in Little Egg Harbor, (Southern Ocean County). Assistance was provided for those who were affected by Superstorm Sandy and required guidance with the Rental Assistance Program (RAP) and other Sandy-related programs. Another Information Session is scheduled for October at the Council Chambers located at 33 Washington Street in Toms River.

O.C.E.A.N., Inc. Sponsors USDA Summer Food Program

Larry Cadena, O.C.E.A.N., Inc. Housing Counselor assists a client with the NJDCA Rental Assistance Program. (RAP)

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For over 50 Years, O.C.E.A.N., Inc. has been making a difference in the lives of those it serves. Over the summer, the agency celebrated this milestone at the Clarion Hotel & Conference Center in the company of those who benefited from the services and from the community partners who assisted O.C.E.A.N., Inc. by funding the services that are in existence today.

In 1965 President Lyndon B. Johnson relayed that poverty exists throughout the world, and is continually growing. Its cure cannot be treated en-masse, for each case is individual as the individuals themselves and presents special problems that must be managed within the given area. Congress approved legislation and the War on Poverty began. Sergeant Shriver was appointed as Director to the Office of Economic Opportunity and the War on Poverty was brought to the home front. Local offices were established in cities and counties throughout the United States to combat poverty at the local level including Ocean County, New Jersey.

That same year, O.C.E.A.N., Inc. was awarded a grant in the amount of $102,968 from Program Development and Area Service Center Operation by the Office of Economic Development which began the battle against poverty in Ocean County. Since that time, O.C.E.A.N., Inc. “Community Action Agency” has been changing people’s lives one family at a time which embodies the spirit of hope, improves their quality of life and makes communities a better place to live. O.C.E.A.N., Inc. embraces all communities they serve, and are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.
Dear Mr. Gooding

Thank you so much for inviting our family to be part of O.C.E.A.N., Inc.’s 50th celebration. The years our children attended Head Start and the friendships made are unforgettable. The help, support and blessings we received through Head Start have had a long and lasting impact. Our oldest 3 children who attended Head Start all have gone to college. Alaina (25) graduated from Stevens in Hoboken and currently teaches at Lakewood High School. Ronnie (22) graduated from Cairn University with a Pastoral and Bible Degree and currently serves at his church and Nicole (20) is in her junior year at William Patterson, studying to be a psychologist. I still keep in touch with Joyce Brooks whose genuine care and love for our family was a blessing and key to the overall lasting benefits we received. Unfortunately schedules did not allow for us to be there that evening but I did want you to know how very much we appreciated the invite. Thank you for all you do to impact the lives of those needing to know they matter and someone cares. You may not always be able to measure the ripple effect it has to invest in others lives but rest assured, love and kindness lasts a lifetime. May God Bless you on your next 50 years.

Kim M. Spicer, Spicer Builders

Dear Nice People of Ocean, Inc.

Enclosed please find my necessary documents so I can continue receiving HEA and USF benefits for your inspection and approval. I do thank you for your time and trouble – honest – You always treat me with respect and your patience with me just blows me away.

Sincerely and with the utmost gratitude,
Barbara J Baiamonte

Dear O.C.E.A.N., Inc.

Thank you for all you do for the students. Your Friend, Jazzy and Stephanie Lugo

Dear Mr. Theodore Gooding

I wanted to write this letter to you in regards to your employee Debbie Bellas and your wonderful Housing Program. First, I want to tell you that Debbie is a great, wonderful person and a hard worker. I do believe that if it wasn’t for her, I wouldn’t be a tenant of O.C.E.A.N., Inc. (because of my service dog) When my home burnt down, I was homeless and Debbie worked very hard and very fast on my application for housing and thanks to her and all the other people that worked on my application, I was approved and signed a lease within 30 days. It is people like Debbie and your organization that really do help people’s lives. Your organization does so much good things for the people of New Jersey and I am very thankful for that. Again, I am very grateful of what your organization does and very thankful of people like Debbie and yourself that work hard for people like me.

Sincerely, Brian Christy

Dear Mr. Gooding

In June, a crew of hard working men came to weatherize my trailer home. It was very hot and humid and they all did a wonderful job. Mike Hussey reassured me that everybody was doing their job very well in spite of the heat and crawl space. God bless them! Thank you so much for all this and safety measures inside also.

Regina Hickman, Whiting

Manchester Head Start

Manchester Head Start is a big blessing to have this program to help families with low income. I don’t have words to explain how this program helps us. I appreciate all that you do for us. Thank you.

Sincerely, The Cruz Family
O.C.E.A.N., Inc Head Start is accepting applications for the 2015 – 2016 school year

Head Start offers a FREE comprehensive pre-school program at all O.C.E.A.N., Inc. locations throughout the county. The program provides a developmentally appropriate curriculum, child health screenings, family services, accepts special needs children, provides meals and snacks, and transportation-half day only. Program services children ages 3 to 5; children need to be 3 years by October 1, 2015. Requirements for eligibility:

- Birth Certificate
- Proof of Income – Documentation must be from the past twelve months or calendar year
- Health Documentation – physical, dental, immunizations, H&H/lead screenings

For more information, please call 732-244-9114.

Letters of Appreciation, (Con’t)

Dear O.C.E.A.N., Inc.

Thank you so much for the energy assistance paid to NJ Natural Gas! I am very grateful. It has been a hard winter. Thanks again for your help, much appreciated.

Eileen Pellecchia

Dear Mr. Gooding

It is with my best regards to thank you for such generosity and kindness to grant me your scholarship. With that sort of help, I am now more equipped with the proper tools to successfully handle most of my college concerns. My mother and I cannot thank you enough for your decision in me as one of the recipients of such an award. I am truly blessed and more than pleased to accept your scholarship, and I promise that your kindness will not be worthless. Every penny will be earned over the next four years as I strive to fulfill my life purpose in this world and I have you to thank and look forward to as support and motivation. Again, my family and I can’t thank you enough. This means the world to us all and we wish to make you as happy as you’ve made us someday. Thank you.

With deep regards, Rashid Marrow Jr.

O.C.E.A.N., Inc., Annual Board Training

The Ocean Inc. Board of Trustees Training was held on August 13, 2015. At this Annual Board Training, the agency Board of Trustees, the President/CEO and Senior Management and the Delegate Board Members discussed long-range agency planning, strengthening education services, CSBG-ROMA Goals and Organizational Standards used to measure the success of Community Action within all agency divisions of O.C.E.A.N., Inc.
Community Gardens in Atlantic and Cape May Counties

Pastor Smith tends to his garden on New York Avenue in Atlantic City.

Upper Right Photo: Participating youth tend to another section of the Community Gardens in Pleasantville, Atlantic County.

Ms. Deborah Washington, the Director of The Pleasantville Department maintains the Community Gardens over the summer.

Youth and Seniors throughout Atlantic and Cape May Counties constructed, planted and maintained the O.C.E.A.N., Inc. Community Gardens consisting of a large variety of vegetables. The program which ran from March to October provided nutritional food to income-eligible families and individuals throughout both Counties. As a result of this program and through an abundant harvest, these recipients received an adequate supply of nutritious food to prevent hunger as a result of this program.
Employee Appreciation at the Monthly General Staff Meeting

Clockwise: O.C.E.A.N., Inc. Employees Monique Goncalves (5 Yrs), Paul Baumgarten (5 Yrs) and Michelle Guker (5 Yrs) received their Certificates of Appreciation at the monthly General Staff Meeting.

Monique Goncalves, Site Supervisor at the Brick Head Start Center

Paul Baumgarten, Head Start Transportation Manager

Michelle Guker, Teacher at OCC
On July 1, Natalie Gill and her family moved into one of six new three-bedroom houses on a quiet, wooded block in Berkeley Township, N.J. The family’s two favorite chairs have a place of honor on the front porch.

Two other Sandy-displaced families moved into their new homes on the same day. This is an unusual housing development in several ways. It is rental housing specifically for renters who are still displaced almost three years post-Sandy. Rents are on a sliding scale based on family income. The houses are the first of an eventual 12 for Sandy-displaced renters to be constructed by the not-for-profit agency O.C.E.A.N., Inc., based in Toms River, N.J.

At a ribbon-cutting ceremony Aug. 26 to celebrate the new development, UCC Disaster Ministries Executive Zach Wolgemuth explained that after a disaster, renters get much less help than do homeowners.

“For example, FEMA helps renters replace their possessions, but not their housing,” he said. “Typically, at least some rental housing damaged or destroyed in a disaster is not replaced, and often rents on available units go up, squeezing out low- to moderate-income tenants.

“But it’s a dilemma how to help disaster-displaced renters without lining the pockets of greedy landlords,” Wolgemuth said, “unless you can find a local housing partner like O.C.E.A.N., Inc.”

Since 1965, O.C.E.A.N., Inc., has been delivering programs designed to help families achieve self-sufficiency. The agency became a registered builder in New Jersey in 1999 and has constructed, acquired and rehabilitated 146 affordable rental units in Ocean, Atlantic and Monmouth counties.

When Superstorm Sandy made landfall in New Jersey, Ocean County was “ground zero,” with 55,000 residents – including 10,000 renters, displaced by the hurricane. O.C.E.A.N., Inc., set out to assist Sandy-affected renters. Many years ago, Berkeley Township provided O.C.E.A.N., Inc., with the land to develop. The agency undertook construction of the first six homes. It raised funds, including $50,000 from UCC Disaster Ministries, for construction materials. Brethren Disaster Ministries work teams “did everything except cement, plumbing and electrical work,” said O.C.E.A.N., Inc.’s President and CEO Ted Gooding. O.C.E.A.N., Inc. will break ground soon on the remaining six houses, on the next block over from the first six. “Twelve houses might not sound like many, but they make a dent and I am so excited to make a dent,” said Gooding. (Next Page)
For Natalie Gill’s part, her new house is making more than a dent in her life. She said she and her children didn’t get moved in a moment too soon.

“When you live in shelters, you get used to that lifestyle,” she said, “but at the last motel we were in, there were drug addicts, loud parties, knocks on the door at 3 a.m., fights. I got scared for my kids,” she said. “I started panicking. After I applied at O.C.E.A.N., Inc., for this house, I couldn’t wait. I kept calling, pushing, saying, ‘You have to get me out of here!’

“Now that we are in the house, it means my kids are stable. I love it. The kids love it.” The day of the ribbon cutting, Natalie’s 12-year-old son and 8-year-old daughter were exploring the edges of the woods that surround the house, picking blueberries, counting mushrooms and collecting pine cones for a craft project. (Gill also has a 16- and a 21-year-old son.)

“As for me, I love my house, the woods, the moon in the trees,” said Gill, who is in college studying graphic design. “We belong to a community. We have something again.” ♦
O.C.E.A.N., Inc. Employee (Human Resources) Profile

Hometown:
Terri: Whiting, New Jersey
Leslie: Lakewood
Sherrie: Chino Hills, California

What would surprise people about you?
Terri: I am the founding member of the Open Door Pregnancy Center.
Leslie: Nothing really, what you see is what you get.
Sherrie: I am SUPER competitive and have a shoe addiction.

Your first job was?
Terri: A dog walker at age 11.
Leslie: Cashier at Shoprite.
Sherrie: I was a sales clerk for Kinney’s Shoes making $4.25 an hour. I never made my sales goals, thus no commission.

What is your favorite pastime?
Terri: Spending time with my very large family.
Leslie: I like going to the beach by myself.
Sherrie: Besides shopping, I enjoy family road trips and reading. I am currently reading “The lost hero.” with my son.

Who is your greatest influence? Explain Why
Terri: My faith is my greatest influence.
Leslie: My mother because she is strong, confident and determined. She has a heart of gold and always does it with a smile.
Sherrie: My mother and father are my greatest influence.

What made you decide to follow a career in Human Resources?
Terri: I like to work with people and making a positive impact on others.
Leslie: I love working with people and problem solving.
Sherrie: My bread and butter for years was fringe benefits whether on the insurance carrier side or on the agent side. After that it was suggested that I try HR. It was a fit!

What was your all-time favorite vacation/adventure?
Terri: Cape Hatteras, NC - Two summers ago.
Leslie: Visiting Disney with my family.
Sherrie: Summer vacations with my parents visiting a different state each year.

Who is your favorite cartoon character?
Terri: The Tasmanian Devil
Leslie: Woody Woodpecker
Sherrie: Buzz Light Year - To Infinity and beyond!

If you could change one thing in the world, what would it be?
Terri: Children suffering in the hands of abusers.
Leslie: If everyone could see the world through the eyes of a child.
Sherrie: If each person communicated with kindness to one another. We are consumed with what is happening in our own world that we often do not stop to listen to the next person.

What other activities are you involved in?
Terri: Biking, swimming and participating in events that raise dollars and awareness for autism, cancer and diabetes.
Leslie: PTO, I like doing crafts with friends.
Sherrie: Bargain shopping is so much fun and my absolute favorite! Most times I am supporting my children in basketball, football, swimming and any other sport elected.

What do you enjoy most about your job?
Terri: Helping to meet the needs of employees.
Leslie: I love interacting with the employees and being a friendly face to all of our new hires.
Sherrie: I enjoy assisting others and daily challenges.

What are you most grateful for?
Terri: My family, health and my faith.
Leslie: I am grateful for my family.
Sherrie: I am most grateful for family and friends.
The best part of achieving success within the community is telling others about it and sharing success stories with the community partners who were instrumental in achieving that success. Throughout the celebration, O.C.E.A.N., Inc’s Board of Trustee and staff celebrated the agency’s rich history through the recognition of members of the community who provided testimonials of success stories showcasing how services received by O.C.E.A.N., Inc. impacted their lives and others throughout all communities.

The Community Partners in attendance who were recognized were as follows: OceanFirst Foundation, Ocean County Board of Chosen Freeholders-Planning, Wells Fargo, PNC Bank, New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, The Horizon Foundation, the Ocean County Health Department, New Jersey Natural Gas and the Lakewood Blue Claws.

More than 23,759 unduplicated individuals were served last year as a result of the services provided. O.C.E.A.N., Inc. continues to be committed to making communities stronger.....one family at a time.......

Theodore Gooding, President/CEO reminisced about the history of O.C.E.A.N., Inc. and provided heartfelt appreciation to the Community Partners.

Guests heard many testimonials from residents including some who were close to homelessness and were assisted by O.C.E.A.N., Inc.

O.C.E.A.N., Inc. Head Start children recited the Pledge of Allegiance and sang the “Hello” song for the guests.
## DIRECTORY OF O.C.E.A.N., INC. SERVICE LOCATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corporate Office</th>
<th>Branch Offices Home Energy/Weatherization</th>
<th>Atlantic/Cape Office</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P.O Box 1029</td>
<td>P.O. Box 1029</td>
<td>Galloway Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toms River, NJ 08754</td>
<td>Toms River, NJ 08754</td>
<td>76 W Jimmy Leeds Rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>732-244-5333</td>
<td>732-244-2351</td>
<td>Galloway, NJ 08205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax: 732-349-4227</td>
<td>732-244-9041</td>
<td>(609) 677-6801</td>
</tr>
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### O.C.E.A.N., Inc. Kids-Head Start Centers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barnegat</th>
<th>Berkeley Township</th>
<th>Brick Township</th>
<th>New Home Energy Location</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Ocean Ave.</td>
<td>264 First Ave.</td>
<td>503 Adamston Rd.</td>
<td>1125 Atlantic Avenue 6th Fl, Ste 624</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barnegat, NJ 08005</td>
<td>South Toms River, NJ 08757</td>
<td>Brick, NJ 08723</td>
<td>Atlantic City, NJ 08401-4806</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel: 609-660-9101</td>
<td>Tel: 732-341-7557</td>
<td>Tel: 732-477-1155</td>
<td>Phone: (609) 345-1359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax: 609-660-9768</td>
<td>Fax: 732-341-5492</td>
<td>Fax: 732-477-6513</td>
<td>Fax: (609) 345-1365</td>
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### Manchester

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>O.C.E.A.N., Inc. Kids at Toms River</th>
<th>Delegate Agency</th>
<th>Housing Counseling—Ocean</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2950 Wilbur Avenue</td>
<td>One College Drive</td>
<td>S&amp;F Plaza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manchester, NJ 08733</td>
<td>at Ocean County College</td>
<td>2008 Rt. 37 East Suite 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel: 732-657-8076</td>
<td>Toms River, NJ 08753</td>
<td>Toms River, NJ 08753</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax: 732-657-2456</td>
<td>Tel: 732-864-1401</td>
<td>Phone: (732) 288-2614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fax: 732-864-1407</td>
<td>Fax: 288-2619</td>
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## OCEAN TIDES

### O.C.E.A.N., Inc.

**P.O. Box 1029**

Toms River, NJ 08754

732-244-5333 (Tel)

732-349-4227 (Fax)