

Speaker 1 ([00:04](#)):

Welcome to Prep Talk, the Emergency Management podcast. Find out what you need to know about preparedness. Get all the latest tips from experts in the field, and learn what to do before the next disaster strikes. From the Emergency Management Department in the city that never sleeps. Here are your hosts.

Allison Pennisi ([00:24](#)):

Hello, everyone. Thank you for listening. I'm Allison Pennisi.

Brian Fagnoli ([00:29](#)):

I'm Brian Fagnoli, and you are our listeners. As always, we thank you for joining us. We want you to come back as often as you can, so feel free to listen to 'Prep Talk' on your favorite podcast provider. You can also follow us on social media on our Twitter @nycemergencymgt, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and much more.

Allison Pennisi ([00:55](#)):

In recognition of National Volunteer Month, we are joined by two special guests who will share how volunteers have and continue to be a vital part of New York City's communities. Please welcome Moriah Washington, Director of Community Engagement at New York City Emergency Management, and Laura Rog, acting Chief Service Officer at NYC Service. Thank you both for joining us. Let's get started. Can you each describe your role and what led you to your current role? Moriah, let's start with you.

Moriah Washington ([01:26](#)):

Thank you, Allison. My current role as director of community engagement allows me to lead a team in engaging our community in faith-based networks, organizations, throughout the five boroughs of New York City. We naturally are helping communities prepare, respond, and recover from emergencies, so we use our awesome community emergency planning toolkit to really guide our training to equip partners to really know how to prepare. Let's organize ourselves. How do we organize ourselves? All right, let's create a map. Let's see where our resources are. What are our resource guides? How do we communicate with each other? We outline all those elements for our partners so that when, not if, the emergency happens, they truly are able to stand and rise for their community in the midst of that emergency.

Moriah Washington ([02:16](#)):

Coming to Emergency Management, I came with a lot of experience. AmeriCorps, with City Year, with Citizen Schools, Peace Corps in Costa Rica, and working with young people, and parents, and community organizers throughout the nation. Really, just always building community. Always being a resource and connecting people to resources. For me, it was a nice fit coming to Emergency Management, because I get to connect. I get to connect organizations and leaders to resources. I get to connect their knowledge and their best practices to other organizations who may be emerging. A common thread within my life's work is connecting with others, serving with others, and being a resource.

Allison Pennisi ([02:58](#)):

Wonderful. Laura, what about you?

Laura Rog ([03:00](#)):

Thanks so much, Allison. So glad to be here with everybody today. For listeners, if you don't know, NYC Service is a division of the Mayor's Office. We really do a wide range of work to build partnerships and resources to expand volunteering and service throughout the city. In my day to day now as acting chief service officer, I get to lead a really fantastic staff, where we drive strategy and programs to support the city and address its greatest needs through volunteering and service ... A pretty large part of our staff works in AmeriCorps programs and placing AmeriCorps members. We also staff who really work on nonprofits, and supporting nonprofits and communities. Corporate partners and corporate volunteering in businesses, as well as just so much other great work that's really going on, especially in youth development and those pieces.

Laura Rog ([03:52](#)):

My experience, I've worked now under three chief service officers at NYC Service. A lot of the work that I've personally done has been to help develop strategy around engagement, including emergency response, which is why obviously I think I'm probably here today and can talk more about that. Also, youth leadership, community support, and coordinating research around engagement that I'll talk about a little bit today. I started my career very similar to Moriah, I was an AmeriCorps Vista now almost 20 years ago, which seems like a lifetime ago. It really led me to a career that has revolved around youth service and service learning, so doing things we're really looking to expand, especially youth and family opportunities that nonprofits are offering for people to serve. Just doing a lot of work around the country on those types of things.

Laura Rog ([04:45](#)):

I was pretty fortunate that years ago I actually managed AmeriCorps members from one of our programs from our Civic Corps program. That's how I had really connected to NYC Service, and really jumped at the chance to join the team when they were looking at different things in what was, at that point, the new administration almost eight years ago.

Brian Fagnoli ([05:07](#)):

Thank you both for highlighting how you got here and some of the amazing work you guys are doing. One thing we often discuss on 'Prep Talk' is involving the whole community in preparedness and resilience. Can you talk to us about how your teams are achieving this with volunteers?

Laura Rog ([05:24](#)):

Yeah. I can go ahead and get started with NYC Service, because really this has been absolutely the entirety of our last year in COVID response. I think that we've really seen residents have stepped up in so many ways throughout the pandemic and beyond. Seeing things like the outpouring of support around things for food access, social supports. Finding vaccine appointments is really big right now. I've also seen so much in the last few weeks about serving as partners for people to walk to the subway and provide safety, especially with kind of the wave of violence happening right now, and supporting the Asian-American community.

Laura Rog ([06:02](#)):

All of these things, and including into that, I think, resilience also with Black Lives Matter. A lot of the things that have been going on over the last year or so, and really come to a head in the last year or so,

that we just see constantly resilience is inherent in our communities. After every disaster the city has seen, it's ultimately been our residents who are banding together to support each other in New York City communities.

Laura Rog ([06:30](#)):

I think what we really see at NYC Service is that our work is to leverage this, and to help people find opportunities to get involved in different ways if they're not able to find them on their own. Then, also, just going out to really support this resilience in the communities itself through funding, and resources, and trainings, and other supports.

Moriah Washington ([06:50](#)):

With our New York City Emergency Management community engagement team, we often see within our communities people rising and shining. I always say, "If you see a need, fill a need." That is the power of community organizers. Our hyper-local level community organizations and faith-based groups are standing in the gap. If they are at vaccine pod sites and helping their older adults register, and they see that there's a language access gap, they're filling that gap in the meanwhile, and they're also reaching back to us and saying, "Hey, just so you know, we're experiencing this challenge at the pod site." We're trickling that information up, so we're tapping into our relationships with our community partners as they fill in the needs within their community.

Moriah Washington ([07:33](#)):

We also recognize that there have been several different just emerging groups. Mutual aids have been standing in the gap in phenomenal ways, and then linking themselves up with other existing emergency networks and COADs, Community Organizations Active in Disasters, throughout the city. On our end, we count it as success when we're in communication and we have relationship with these organizations who are saying, "Hey, we're responding. We've gathered some supplies, some PPE, and we're getting it together. We have a cell spreadsheet tracking the hours of who's coming, and when they're coming, and who they're representing." For us, it's really awesome to see in works. Before, emergencies were often providing trainings and encouraging people, "Hey, get it together now, so when the emergency happens, it's easy just to fill in the blanks."

Moriah Washington ([08:21](#)):

When we see our local groups in East Harlem, South Bronx, Southern Brooklyn, and Staten Island, when we see them rise and shine, it really allows us to keep going and making sure that we are polishing our trainings and our services. More importantly, that we're that linchpin between the city and the local organization, so that if they see a need and they're filling part of that need, they can also communicate back with us what needs to be done and what's missing.

Allison Pennisi ([08:48](#)):

I love hearing this, that there is so much coordination that is happening between City government and these volunteer groups and these organizations, so thank you both for sharing. I want to turn my next question to Laura. NYC Service is celebrating its anniversary. It's been operating for the past 12 years. Among its many accomplishments, NYC Service has worked to unite New Yorkers in service to advance lifelong civic engagement for a more equitable and inclusive city. Can you explain to our listeners how NYC Service has achieved this vision?

Laura Rog ([09:24](#)):

Definitely. I think that's such an important question and something that we think about on a very regular basis. For us, it's really been shifting the focus in this administration to reaching communities with resources, as I've talked about before, and helping people to build capacity. I think what was really fundamental for us was a door to door survey we did in 2017, that we were able to go out and talk to over 850 residents and to have them complete a survey on volunteering and civic behaviors. We also ran 14 focus groups and talked to, I think, over 80 people in that. What we found through that survey, because I think traditional research always says that New Yorkers aren't as high in comparison to other cities where people are volunteering. We always looked around and knew people do this all the time in New York City, so how do we explain this? For us, that survey really is important because we found that residents were engaging in really important ways. We did a couple things where we just used kind of questions that had been already used on a national level, added in a couple more about being involved in school based things for your children.

Laura Rog ([10:41](#)):

Then, also, the really critical one was whether or not people had been engaged in activities with faith-based communities, so their house of worship, a faith-based organization in the neighborhood that they worked with. That alone tripled what the traditional kind of research was showing. For us, I think it was particularly important to see, number one, that this is how even in systems that are designed to quote unquote help people, that there still are these institutional racism pieces in there embedded in how we look at the ways people are engaging. Volunteering in traditional ways is looked at as something that somebody does in their spare time after work. There's a lot of, I think, privileges associated with that.

Laura Rog ([11:29](#)):

I think when we pursued this research it really helped us to see that these networks are so embedded in communities already. This is wisdom I think probably anybody who's very involved in their community it's not a surprise to them, that engagement is already embedded in our community. It's not us as the City coming in and dropping in with programs. It's us going in and just really supporting those resources, and those structures, and those things that are there already.

Laura Rog ([11:57](#)):

I think the ways that we've really looked at this, and the ways that we've worked on it, we've really united New Yorkers with our Civic Impact Funding. We went through this funding source. We're going in to communities that already have ties to their communities. We're in our second round now. We were able to give out, in our first round, \$200,000 to 20 different organizations across all five boroughs. Those organizations engaged over 2,100 volunteers that then, in turn, distributed 145,000 units of food to 50,000 households. That support was huge. For us, in doing that, the City was then able to get funding and food access that was more culturally responsive. That was in areas and with people that the City doesn't already have a relationship with. It was really a way for us as we get into this idea of equitable and inclusive city. Those are the ways that it's really just magnifying what's already out there. I think that those have been, I think, some of the most important work that we've done around those areas.

Allison Pennisi ([13:07](#)):

It's incredible when you are able to apply this type of research and actually discover that this is in fact going on, and it's something. Like you said before, sometimes that metric you know in your heart of

hearts that you don't know the City is working together to help each other to be resilient. Thank you for sharing that. That sounds like a really incredible undertaking that NYC Service has done.

Allison Pennisi ([13:33](#)):

Moriah, New York City Emergency Management has programs like the Community Emergency Response Team volunteer program, where volunteers participate in community preparedness and support first responders during disaster response activities. The agency also has created several resources that are designed to support community-based and faith-based organizations before, during, and after emergencies. You actually just mentioned earlier the community emergency planning toolkit, so tell us more about that.

Moriah Washington ([14:02](#)):

Thank you. With our community emergency planning toolkit, we break it down into three sections. What do you need to do as a network to plan before the emergency? What can you anticipate in your action steps during the emergency, and then considerations after? Planning before, you're organizing and you're documenting. We always tell our partners, "Document it. Don't keep the information in your head. Don't be a hoarder of information. If you were removed, and your second in command was removed, can someone pick up a document and see which resources are available in the community?" We take our community, and all of New Yorkers who attend, through a process where they are able to document what their resources are. They're able to list out those resources, list out their point of contacts information, and share it within their networks.

Moriah Washington ([14:57](#)):

Also, just creating a plan in terms of how are you going to manage donations and volunteers. We've seen it a couple of years ago. There was a major fire in the Bronx, and there were tons of clothes that were donated that filled a gymnasium in the Bronx. That was an abundance of people saying, "Hey, I'm going to give back." Really having a plan so that when people say, "I want to give some clothes." "Actually, we're not accepting clothes right now. We're accepting more funds, personal essentials like diapers, baby wipes, deodorant, feminine products." Really having that structure before, so that when the emergency happens you don't have this emergency amnesia of, "I don't remember anything." We take people through that journey.

Moriah Washington ([15:40](#)):

This past September, during National Preparedness Month, we did a series. We broke up that planning toolkit up into a training for each week. Traditionally, we do two half-days for organizations. Even right now, Allison, we have a phenomenal opportunity in which we're engaging nine very hyper-local networks throughout New York City. We're calling it strengthening communities through recovery, and we're taking them deliverable by deliverable. What's a need assessment? What does that look and feel like? Why is that important? What's a resource guide in community mapping? What's the so what behind that? What is a communication strategy? What does it look and feel like to have a communication strategy? What does it look and feel like to be able to organize and know what your plan is for donations and volunteer management?

Moriah Washington ([16:25](#)):

Then, ultimately, we're leading them to this path that they can have a super phenomenal emergency plan for their community. That means that when the emergency hits, whether it be a major fire, a pipe

explosion, anything, that they're able to respond and say, "Hey, we know who lives in this building. We have a WhatsApp group, and we're able to contact 250 of the residents immediately. Do you have any specific information that we can share with them before we onboard them? By the way, we know that there's three languages spoken in this building." Success, for us, means that organizations, networks, throughout the communities really know how to rise and shine. We're not asking them to be emergency managers. We're asking them to be prepared within their leadership roles. Many of them are already active and they're leaders, whether it's anti-violence groups, whether they're a housing association. We're saying, "Hey, you're already organized. What are your considerations around preparing for emergencies and having these tools ready, so that when the next emergency happens you're ready?"

Brian Fagnoli ([17:28](#)):

Moriah, that was really a wonderful explanation of the toolkit and its capabilities. I've gotten to see your unit do those trainings in person, and it's really been awesome to watch how much communities know about what their needs are, and then be able to put that into action. That's really been a great thing to watch. You're both involved in the City's Volunteer Coordination Taskforce, which includes members of the Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, or VOAD. The taskforce also includes City government agencies. Can you share with our listeners the importance of coordinating volunteer efforts, and how this group has worked together during emergencies?

Laura Rog ([18:12](#)):

Yeah. I'm happy to talk a little bit about that, Brian. I think Moriah is going to have an awful lot to add as well. It was, I think, such a big effort for all of us this year. The Volunteer Coordination Taskforce was really developed in response after Hurricane Sandy. Really seeing that there's always an outpouring of people who want to help, and that can actually inhibit and overwhelm the systems that are trying to help. How do we really take this outpouring of support and ensure people are being directed into ways that are really valuable in terms of the response efforts?

Laura Rog ([18:48](#)):

I think, what happened during COVID, that this was the first time that we had been planning for years. We had all of our systems, had developed them, but this was the first time it was actually being tested in a real situation. A lot of the work is that we get so many requests in from City agency partners of needs that they're seeing in communities that they themselves are having. Our group really tries to find ways to make sure that we're getting volunteers to all of these needs as safely and as quickly as possible. I think what we saw this time was there was so much around. Food access was huge. I'd say, informally, probably 90% of our projects and the needs that we saw were really around food access. How do we manage and get people there?

Laura Rog ([19:38](#)):

There were also really big things like social support, so calling seniors. Helping families who were doing virtual learning and trying to figure out iPads from the DOE for the first time. There was a lot that also went around those pieces. A lot of what the group does is just we take in needs like that, and then figure out how do we get volunteers there. We've got really great partners with New York Cares, that they are able to really manage a lot of this outpouring and get people in, registered, trained, and then really systematically provide opportunities. As well as New York Cares also is able to take in a lot of nonprofit partners who need volunteers to help them with the volunteer management process and bringing these volunteers in.

Laura Rog ([20:21](#)):

Moriah, I know there's so much that we've been doing. Things that you would add or things that we really were able to do this last year especially.

Moriah Washington ([20:32](#)):

Yeah. It's not exciting to see an emergency happen, but it is exciting to see years of preparation and planning come together in a very fruitful way. I love analogies. I just think without coordination, you get a mess. Think about a pizza, a pizza that's for everyone. You're going to get cheese pizza because you don't know everyone's restrictions. You can put an extra handful of cheese. That could either make the pizza very cheesy and like, "Oh, I can't taste the sauce. There's not a nice balance," or it might fill in the gaps. With our Volunteer Coordination Taskforce, it's really us looking at the pizza and looking at the spots where there's extra sauce and not enough cheese, and us spreading it out to really be equitable but also strategic, like Laura has mentioned, in terms of, "Let's fill this need."

Moriah Washington ([21:22](#)):

Because I wouldn't want to imagine what it looks and feels like to have 15 volunteers show up at a storefront pantry that can only accommodate five volunteers. Now you have 10 volunteers who are frustrated. They want to give up their time, and they can't do that. "You want me to go to where? I'm in the Bronx. You want me to go to Manhattan? Absolutely not." That's the power of us making the coordination. Reaching out to partners as well. New York Cares does a phenomenal job on the hyper-local level, listening to our partners often wanting supplies like, "Hey, we need PPE. We need this." Oftentimes, us just providing resources.

Moriah Washington ([22:01](#)):

With our Help Now NYC page, the communications team at Emergency Management. Was able to create a button where you click, "I'm an individual and I need help, or I want help." For our organizations, we have the button of, "I want to help." Just providing them with tips. We wanted to remind volunteers of the self-care that was necessary when they were volunteering. Letting them know, "Hey, we can't ensure that you may not get COVID from serving others. What does that look and feel like?" Providing resources and reminding people self-care is really important. Fatigue is also very real in that volunteer burnout. We see it often, the same all-stars rising and shining. You don't want people to be martyrs in terms of giving themselves so much that they fall ill, or they're so exhausted that they can't be that leader in the community. For us, coordinating all these efforts really helped to just spread it all out to really have amazing cheese pizza with no saucy spots without the cheese.

Laura Rog ([23:06](#)):

I love that analogy so much, Moriah. I think that is how I'm going to explain this forevermore. Definitely. I think just to add to what you were saying, too. The other thing that I want to make sure we highlight is New York City VOAD was always really involved in the taskforce as well. To Moriah's point, because they bring together so many organizations working on disaster and emergency response, that they really brought a lot of these concerns to us, and things that they were seeing from their organizations and their collective, so that we were able to anticipate a lot of what was going on and help with that.

Laura Rog ([23:42](#)):

To Moriah's point, that we were able to offer and build out at NYC Service through our partnership with Thrive NYC. We actually had trainings on mental health midway through the pandemic for volunteers themselves, and then people who were managing volunteers. A lot of this just helps us to appreciate what's going on all over the place, and centralize a lot of the resources and support.

Moriah Washington ([24:05](#)):

I just want to throw in there, Laura, one of the reasons why the volunteer coordination taskforce was smoother than we could've expected was because of the preexisting relationships. I want to echo it because this is something that's important. If you are listening as a community leader, as a faith-based leader, and you're saying, "Hey, we wanted to have a better role in supporting our community during the emergency, and we didn't have the slightest idea." You have relationships. It's really the power in leveraging your relationships to really make those connections to resource. Also, remembering that as a human being you are very much a resource.

Moriah Washington ([24:47](#)):

We had so many organizations serve as word of mouth educators like, "All right, we're going to table right here in front of the public housing, and we're going to educate folks on how to take some natural steps and keeping their immune system boosted, but also letting them know what the City resources are if they need food, or if they need mental health support." Without relationships, none of this can be completed. You won't be able to organize efforts without relationships. It's with those relationships that we're able to communicate and unify with a single vision, because we already have these ongoing relationships.

Moriah Washington ([25:24](#)):

Literally, Laura and the team and I were meeting a year prior faithfully just trying to polish up this volunteer coordination taskforce. To me, it just seemed like something fictitious, because it's like, "When are we going to use it?" Then we didn't have to dust it off, because we had studying and reviewing it so often that we shook it off. The relationships with the New York City VOAD, the relationships with the local COADs, and the other partners that we have with New York Cares, we got to bring them to the table. That's something that's not easy if you don't have relationship. I just really want to echo out there. If you want to know where can you even begin to start, start with your relationships and documenting what each person brings to the table. It comes back to that resource guide, but it's something that really can serve you well.

Allison Pennisi ([26:11](#)):

So many excellent points brought here. For our listeners, if you want to learn more about this coordination that is being done between NYC Service, New York City Emergency Management, the volunteer organizations active in disaster, and so many other partners that help us with our volunteer efforts before, during, and after emergencies, you can visit [NYC.gov/helpnow](http://NYC.gov/helpnow).

Brian Fagnoli ([26:38](#)):

Both of you have been involved in a wide range of community and civic engagement efforts and emergency responses. Can you share one of the biggest successes, challenges, and the lessons learned? Moriah, let's start with you.

Moriah Washington ([26:52](#)):



Thank you. One of the biggest successes for me definitely was an organization called South Bronx Emergency Network. They're located in District Three of the Bronx. They just began their organization and network in September of 2019. They said, "Hey, could you come in and do some training? We want to educate the other member organizations on the importance of emergency planning. Can you do it?" "Absolutely." October of 2019, we began to do the work with them using that community emergency planning toolkit. We remained in relationship. Me attending those meetings biweekly, monthly, weekly, whatever it was. Me showing up and just being a listening ear as they were forming and strengthening their organization.

Moriah Washington ([27:36](#)):

The successful moment was seeing them fill in a need. Now, volunteering is a passion. It's exciting, but it's also people's calling, and it's also a need oftentimes. Seeing them say, "Hey, we're short supplies. We're going to reach out to our elected official, our district manager, and community board three. He's going to help us in getting that," and they didn't stop there. "We're going to table. We're going to table in front of these housing developments. We're going to provide the PPE, and also just do mini clips. Can you provide this for us? Do you have any booklets that you can provide for us? Do you have any pamphlets that we can print out? Let us know." Seeing them continue to push and advocate for resources, them attaining those resources, and then them proactively pushing it out to the vulnerable parts of the Bronx that were getting hit really hard during COVID. They did this work while they were losing their own best friends and loved ones, and they kept going. They continue to do the work now. The success is just seeing them fill that need, and onboard other people, and support other organizations as they try to form a collective network in the Northeast part of the Bronx as well.

Moriah Washington ([28:50](#)):

Is that my success? I won't dare claim it, but it's definitely a success within the city, because several entities had their hand in supporting South Bronx Emergency Network. That's one of the groups that comes to mind as success in that. They're not about perfection. They're about progression, and they're about, "Let's not talk about it. Let's be about it. Let's do the work. Hey, this is what we need. What can you do? Okay, thank you," and keeping it moving forward. That's something that's really important during emergencies.

Laura Rog ([29:20](#)):

Yeah. Moriah, that's such a great story. It's probably because it's just so fresh on the brain, but I honestly think standing up the volunteer coordination taskforce in this last year. I think it's probably one of the biggest things that I've been involved in, in terms of emergency response. I think, as we were talking before, we had a lot of plans in place. This was the opportunity to really test them. I think it took so much work, but it ultimately allowed us to figure things out in real time and see how much we depend on each other within even city agencies and our nonprofit partners, and how we all really come together in those times.

Laura Rog ([30:03](#)):

I think because there were so many challenges with it that any type of large scale response, as you can imagine, every day is something new. It was always really just keeping up with the demands. Not letting things slip through the cracks, because that has real implications if you forget about a need that's been flagged or anything like that. I think the challenges were always just how do we all come together, keep up on this. I think the biggest lesson that I really learned in all of that that I say to myself all the time, but

it became really apparent in this moment, is all you can do some days is just keeping putting one foot in front of the other. I think it was all of us in this commitment to just keep putting one foot in front of the other that got us through it. That we continually came together and had conversations until we worked out a solution. We tried out solutions. If they weren't working, we pivoted and tried something else. It was just a group where we ended up really coming together to figure out these seemingly impossible things, and breaking them down into steps where we ended up really, I think, doing some key and important coordination and work in the city.

Allison Pennisi ([31:13](#)):

I love these points. It's not about perfection, but progression, and to commit to come together in the city's darkest times, and even during blue sky times or nonemergency time. Thank you both for sharing.

Allison Pennisi ([31:29](#)):

Laura, NYC Service recently kicked off its annual NYC Volunteers Count Survey. Tell us more about that, and why New Yorkers and organizations should be getting involved.

Laura Rog ([31:41](#)):

Yeah. That's such a great thing to bring up now in National Volunteer Month. This is the annual survey that we put out into New York City to nonprofits, City agencies. This year we're also really putting a focus on a lot of these more informal groups. Moriah had mentioned earlier in the podcast about mutual aid groups, I think, were so huge in the last 12, 15 months. They were important before that, but I think really their impact was very much magnified, and the power of them was magnified in the last year.

Laura Rog ([32:15](#)):

What we've done this year, as I said before, it's an annual survey. It's asking for very basic information. Essentially, "How many volunteers did you engage in 2020?" If you engaged volunteers in one way or another, we want you to complete this survey. You don't need to be a formal 501(c)(3), a formal nonprofit. It can be a volunteer-led group that you got together in your community. It could be you got together with your neighbors as a group and went out and did things. What we really want is for people to tell us how many people, but then also share. There's three or four different opportunities in there to also share your stories.

Laura Rog ([32:54](#)):

I think this year is really important, and the report will track 2020, which was just an unprecedented year in so many ways. I think how we saw it is traditional volunteering, and so many of the ways that people were volunteering before. It was halted just because of social distancing, and different regulations, and quarantine, and all of these different things. At the same time, people came together in unprecedented ways and were really able to meet local needs in ways that big systems struggle with.

Laura Rog ([33:28](#)):

Kind of in summary of all of this, we just are really looking for these groups that came together to report in. Sharing it with us, because we want to make sure all of this is documented and on City record, that these reports every year are essentially City record. I think, most importantly, to tell these stories in our annual report. I think that it's just so critical. I think a lot of what we've been talking about on this is

people see these big things and they're afraid to move forward, or don't know how to move forward. We really want to break down these stories to share that there's just ways people come together in their local community, and in ways that feel manageable, and in ways that are so critically important.

Laura Rog ([34:09](#)):

With that, if anybody's interested, you can just go to our website which is [nyc.gov/service](https://nyc.gov/service). There's a feature block there, kind of one of those scrolling things on our website, that you click on and you can go to the survey. You can see the questions that are asked ahead of time to gather all the information. Really, it's probably about a 10 minute survey. 10, 15 minute survey once you've gathered all your information. We'd love to hear from as many groups as possible across the city. Also want to put a shout out to faith-based groups, houses of worship. They certainly can also complete the survey. I think those are really the ways in which I think we're really going to see the depth and breadth across the city from this last year.

Brian Fagnoli ([34:52](#)):

Laura, thank you so much for that, and for providing our listeners with a way to learn more about NYC Service. You've actually taken the next question right out of my mouth. I'm going to point to Moriah and say, how can listeners learn more about getting involved during National Volunteer Month and beyond with some of Emergency Management's programming?

Moriah Washington ([35:14](#)):

With Emergency Management, I definitely encourage you to come to our website and look up CERT. CERT is made up of a very robust network of adults throughout our five boroughs who complete a very thorough training. They are able to be on the ground and helping first responders during emergencies, whether it be a multi building fire, whether it be helping at some of the vaccine pod sites, and helping be in customer service. When we had big pallets of food flooding in, they were part of those initiatives as well.

Moriah Washington ([35:48](#)):

I often think about the beyond. Volunteering is something that can be a lifelong commitment. It was something that, when I finished City Year New Hampshire in 2006, I made the commitment of I always want service to be in my life. I always want to make sure I'm giving back to others. Knowing that volunteerism shows up in so many ways, whether you're mentoring an undergrad student, or mentoring someone in your profession. It may be that you are going to your local synagogue or church, and you are serving at a pantry. It may be that you are a licensed therapist, and you want to pro-bono give five hours a month to someone in your community. Really recognize that you are a resource as a human being. It's a matter of sometimes linking up to an organization that's already doing something. Sometimes it's a matter of within your organization say, "Hey, this is a need. We want to increase the literacy rate in our community. We're starting a book club, and here's what it looks and feels like. I need three more volunteers."

Moriah Washington ([36:49](#)):

With the volunteerism beyond just this month, it's really just having that commitment and following it through. It may be a lifelong commitment. It might be too much and overwhelming, so maybe you have a spring commitment. You say, "Hey, in the spring I want to volunteer five hours throughout my community," so you jump on to NYC Service and see what organizations they're highlighting, or New

York Cares, and you register with them. Whatever it may be, or you go to your local organizations that you either were a client with or that you maybe used to work with. You say, "Hey, I want to give back. What do you have available?"

Brian Fagnoli ([37:25](#)):

That's really such helpful advice for any of us who want to get involved in their local community. With that, are there any final thoughts either of you would like to share before we go into Rapid Response? Laura?

Laura Rog ([37:38](#)):

I think the final parting thought I'd say is, NYC Service, we are here for our New York City communities. If you're an individual looking to get engaged, we have things for you on our website to look up. If you are a nonprofit, or a small group, a mutual aid group that's trying to figure out how to manage volunteers, we have resources to help you. We have trainings to help you, so definitely check us out, and definitely reach out. We are always very happy to connect with new partners in New York City, just really to provide the resources and supports that we have to help you with your volunteer efforts.

Brian Fagnoli ([38:15](#)):

Moriah, anything else you'd like to highlight?

Moriah Washington ([38:17](#)):

I have to echo with New York City Emergency Management. We also have our CERT volunteer programming, but we also do a lot of work with community and faith based organizations and networks. It's really just to reach out and touch us. Reach out and let us know that you're interested, and we can arrange trainings for your organization specifically. We can invite you to what's going on. We have a weekly newsletter that happens every Wednesday that provides updates of what's happening throughout the city.

Moriah Washington ([38:44](#)):

Something, Brian, that really stands out, for me, it's just a reminder of really make sure that you are willing to collaborate, communicate, and connect with others. That is the common theme and the thread of what we've been able to do when partnering with NYC Service, and New York Cares, and the VOADs, the COADs, and the local organizations, is that we're leveraging relationships, but we're also willing to collaborate, connect, and communicate. Use those skillsets in order to really get yourselves organized. I always say there's unity in community, literally when you spell it out. Knowing that when we work together, we're able to accomplish more.

Allison Pennisi ([39:23](#)):

When we work together, we are able to accomplish more. Moriah, thank you for that. Speaking with Moriah Washington and Laura Rog about volunteering during National Volunteer Month and beyond. It is Rapid Response time. If you are a first time listener, it's simple. 'Prep Talk' will ask questions, and our guests will give the first answer that comes to mind. Before we go into Rapid Response, here is a message from Notify NYC.

Notify NYC ([39:49](#)):

This transcript was exported on Jun 11, 2021 - view latest version [here](#).

New Yorkers love to be the first to know ... That's why the City of New York has Notify NYC, so you can be the first to know when an emergency happens. If there's a fire in your neighborhood, or the weather takes a turn a for the worse, stay informed with Notify NYC. Get the free app today for your Apple or Android device. You can also visit [NYC.gov/notifynyc](http://NYC.gov/notifynyc), call 311, or follow Notify NYC on Twitter. Because a notified New Yorker is a prepared New Yorker.

Speaker 7 ([40:30](#)):

It's time for 'Prep Talk' Rapid Response.

Allison Pennisi ([40:40](#)):

What is one emergency item that you cannot live without? Laura, let's start with you.

Laura Rog ([40:46](#)):

Does anybody say anything other than duct tape? I think that that's certainly it. It fixes everything.

Allison Pennisi ([40:53](#)):

That is a 'Prep Talk' first. We have never had anybody say duct tape.

Laura Rog ([40:57](#)):

Get out!

Allison Pennisi ([40:58](#)):

Never.

Laura Rog ([40:58](#)):

I just feel like everybody would've said it. That is hysterical. Well, good, I'm glad to be the first.

Allison Pennisi ([41:04](#)):

My late grandfather would love that answer. Moriah, what about you?

Moriah Washington ([41:07](#)):

Flashlight so you can see.

Brian Fagnoli ([41:09](#)):

Great answers right there. Moriah, what is the best advice you have received?

Moriah Washington ([41:14](#)):

Never settle.

Brian Fagnoli ([41:15](#)):

Perfect. Laura?

Laura Rog ([41:18](#)):

This transcript was exported on Jun 11, 2021 - view latest version [here](#).

I learned this under the first chief service officer I worked for. "When you're not sure what to say, tell the truth."

Brian Fagnoli ([41:24](#)):

Always good advice. Laura, what is on your playlist?

Laura Rog ([41:28](#)):

Robin. Pretty much all the time.

Brian Fagnoli ([41:32](#)):

Great. Moriah?

Moriah Washington ([41:34](#)):

I've been rocking out to Jazmine Sullivan.

Allison Pennisi ([41:37](#)):

Both great answers. I'm definitely going to have to play that after we wrap. Last but not least, sum up the work you do in one word. Laura?

Laura Rog ([41:45](#)):

Oh my gosh. Probably complex. I think that definitely sums everything up in one.

Allison Pennisi ([41:51](#)):

Fair point. Moriah?

Moriah Washington ([41:52](#)):

Connect.

Allison Pennisi ([41:53](#)):

Wonderful. Speaking with Moriah Washington and Laura Rog about volunteering. Volunteering is a passion. It's a calling, and it's a part of life. It's important to collaborate, connect, and communicate. You can get involved now and throughout the year. You can visit [NYC.gov/service](https://nyc.gov/service), [NYC.gov/emergencymanagement](https://nyc.gov/emergencymanagement), or [NYC.gov/helpnow](https://nyc.gov/helpnow) to get involved in your community today.

Speaker 1 ([42:26](#)):

That's this episode of 'Prep Talk.' If you like what you heard, you can listen any time online, or through your favorite RSS feed. Until next time, stay safe and prepared.