

# Local volunteer finds silver lining after storm



Marie Huntley, kneeling center, with neighborhood seniors and volunteers at a free barbecue during hurricane recovery. (Courtesy)

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Fort Lauderdale volunteer finds silver lining in storm

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**W**hile most **Broward County** residents were scrambling to secure their property ahead of the storms this hurricane season, Marie Huntley was walking door-to-door to help the elderly.

As a member of CERT, the county's Community Emergency Response Team, Huntley was concerned for the safety of those in her **Fort Lauderdale** Sistrunk neighborhood.

The longtime community advocate is well acquainted with the needs of the residents there.

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ie Beautiful Park Civic Association. She's also  
Through her nonprofit On-Call Leadership, she

mentors teenagers - all while employed as a community health worker for the YMCA of South Florida.

Following a storm, Huntley would hit the streets to help report damages. After Irma for instance, she found her entire community without power.

"It was bigger than I thought. I needed some help," said Huntley.

Her first call went to the Housing Authority of the City of Fort Lauderdale. Scott Strawbridge, director of development and facilities, and his crew immediately started delivering ice and water to the homebound.

"We're that 'it takes a village' kind of place," Strawbridge said.

In the community, "neighbors started being neighbors again and coming out and helping people," Huntley said.

The YMCA notified its agency partners and all types of donations poured in, said Emilia Solano, YMCA director of health equity and community impact.

Relief also came in the form of food from Publix. Feeding South Florida brought in 4,000 fresh sandwiches and wraps. Meals on Wheels delivered 300 dinners. Humana gave \$3,500 which supported a community barbeque that served more than 500 in multiple meals.

"We had so much positive activity going on... people out socializing and sharing food and water, and asking each other if they needed help," Strawbridge said. "Ms. Peaches was the glue that pulled it together."

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