

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES: CHOOSING BUSINESS OVER HEALTH

From the very beginning, the government focused on damage control instead of cleaning up the toxic air. Much of the 9/11 disaster funding did not reach those with the most serious health and financial needs. Based on improper geographic boundaries and eligibility requirements, the government denied benefits to thousands of workers and residents and excluded them from health studies.

Workers and residents are now coming forward to talk about their health problems and uncover government wrongs. For instance, although the federal government has spent \$2.7 billion to subsidize Lower Manhattan corporations and \$150 million to help move in high-end retail shops, it wasn't until over six years after 9/11 that President Bush finally put \$108 million toward 9/11 health programs including residents and workers.

Years after 9/11, illness and the resulting inability to work are plaguing individuals, families, and communities. Many of those suffering from 9/11-related conditions and illnesses have reduced income but increased medical expenses. They are living out the results of government neglect, forced to choose between paying the rent and purchasing their children's asthma medication.



9/11/2007 :: Members and supporters of BGZ gather in Lower Manhattan to remember lives lost and fight for the health of those still living.

COMING TOGETHER, FIGHTING FOR OUR RIGHTS

Since early 2002, BGZ has fought to bring light to the health and economic problems of residents and workers beyond the government-designated Ground Zero area.

In 2003, BGZ partnered with Bellevue Hospital to create the only treatment and study program for residents and workers affected by 9/11. Now expanded to Elmhurst and Gouverneur Hospitals, the "World Trade Center Environmental Health Center" has gained such prominence that Mayor Bloomberg recently committed \$33 million to support its efforts in serving the ever-increasing number of affected persons.

Together, we demand the following from the federal government:

- 1) A long-term treatment and study program including all affected persons;
- 2) Health insurance covering all affected persons;
- 3) Monetary and social reparations for those suffering permanent health damage; and
- 4) Timely and just workers' compensation benefits for affected workers.

BGZ organizes residents and workers seeking medical assistance and health care and advocates for workers' compensation to cover 9/11 illnesses. BGZ holds workers' compensation assistance sessions for post-9/11 cleanup workers and hosts an injured workers network to provide support to workers on their cases.

Still, we have barely scratched the surface of this public health crisis. Doctors are still unable to fully understand our 9/11-related health problems; our workers' compensation cases are being delayed or unjustly closed; and our health and financial burdens are growing. Now is our time to obtain the government's commitment to long-term health programs.

JOIN US & GET INVOLVED

Join us in this important struggle by:

- + Endorsing BGZ's demands;
- + Volunteering to help with BGZ's efforts;
- + Supporting our advocacy around the WTC Environmental Health Center;
- + Reaching out to affected workers and residents;
- + Participating in our community documentation project;
- + Writing to Congress about 9/11 health issues; and
- + Traveling with us to Washington, D.C. to demand government accountability for this health crisis.

OUR STORIES, OUR LIVES

yolanda



"I never had asthma before. Now I also have a sound in my lung, my throat is rough, I have acid reflux, I have a hernia . . . and I had a liver transplant in 2003. . . . My life is not the same. I go up the stairs and I'm out of breath. . . . A lot of people around me are sick. My granddaughter has asthma. Lots of people have skin problems. . . . With us poor people, workers and residents, you never hear about it when we die. They only recognize the people who were working right there at Ground Zero."

"On 9/11 I was a senior at Stuyvesant High School. . . . I was told the school was cleaned up and everything was taken care of. . . . I'm not an expert on clean up so I just deferred to the expert opinion and moved on with my life. . . . I was diagnosed with Hodgkin's Lymphoma in 2006 . . . I read that [it] can be caused by environment[al] factors . . . [and] not too long after I was diagnosed I began to hear about lawsuits filed by recovery workers with all kinds of blood cancers . . . maybe there's a pattern here."

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"My life, especially my health, has drastically been affected after 9/11. I grew up with a mild form of psoriasis. After exposure to the dust and debris from 9/11, my psoriasis worsened and spread throughout my entire body. . . . [also] I eventually discovered that I had polyps and lesions in my cervix and uterus, . . . [and] [a] few months later, I developed bronchitis. . . . The government needs to take responsibility for our lives, our health and our future. After all, we residents and workers did our part to get the city back together after 9/11. Now it's time for the government to step up."