

NYCHA CHAIRMAN JOHN B. RHEA
ROCKAWAY PREPAREDNESS FESTIVAL
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2011 – 10:30 AM – 1:30 PM
444 BEACH 54 (BEHIND BLDG 22) FAR ROCKAWAY, QUEENS

Good morning, NYCHA; and thank you for that warm welcome and for being with us on this very special occasion.

Today, we celebrate not just the Far Rockaways, but all of NYCHA and all of New York City. Just two weeks ago, we came together as an organization and as a community to brave one of the worst hurricanes in American history. Through the foresight of Mayor Bloomberg and NYCHA's Environmental Coordinator Commissioner Margarita López—the diligence and dedication of our communities' leaders, colleagues and partners throughout the City; and the spirit and resolve of NYCHA residents we were ready and we took action that undoubtedly prevented a terrible storm from taking a much greater toll.

I want to thank Commissioner López for her tireless leadership. She has been one of New York's most vocal and important advocates for ensuring that families are prepared for hurricanes and other extreme weather events. Just yesterday, climate

scientists confirmed that in 2011 arctic ice is near the thinnest it's been in recorded history. And many of those scientists reaffirmed their fears that sea levels will continue to rise and, as important, extreme weather like we've seen throughout this year will only become stronger in the future, threatening coastal areas like the Far Rockaways.

I commit to you today that NYCHA and New York City are committed to meeting this challenge by ensuring that the work done in preparation for Irene will continue. We will continue to work together, training families and public servants and educating our communities so that we are prepared before storms arrive and ready to respond after the rains stop falling and the winds have died down.

I am grateful for the leadership of the Bloomberg Administration, from our friends on the City Council and in Albany for all they did to support NYCHA families before and after Hurricane Irene.

From transportation to translation services to going door-to-door

to alert residents and help move New Yorkers to safety, you were truly outstanding.

I also want to thank our partners throughout City government—including the Office of Emergency Management (OEM), the NYPD, FDNY, and NYC Service for standing shoulder-to-shoulder with NYCHA throughout our response to Hurricane Irene.

Thank you, as well to our friends at the American Red Cross, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation; and the US Coast Guard.

Finally, I want to say a very, very special thank you to NYCHA's employees. Property managers, engineers, Care Takers, secretaries, senior executives, housing assistants—employees from all across the Authority exemplified NYCHA at its finest, working tirelessly and selflessly, many volunteering their time, in the affected communities and in shelters to support residents in a time of great stress. I and the Board could not be prouder of our team for the tremendous heart and dedication they showed

throughout the week and weekend as Hurricane Irene approached and ultimately, made landfall, and we can't thank you enough.

Today, together, we are renewing our commitment to each other and pledging that we will practice the old proverb, "Each one, help one." Only by helping each other and working together can we conquer the challenges our communities face. Let's not wait for another hurricane or extreme storm to realize how much we need each other. The time for action is now. I'm ready, NYCHA is ready and together we can weather any storm.

On behalf of the families of the Far Rockaways and every NYCHA family—thank you.