

Speaker 1: [00:07](#) Hello, everyone. 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.

Speaker 1: [00:19](#) From the Emergency Management Department in the city that never sleeps, here are your hosts, Omar Bourne and Allison Pennisi.

Omar Bourne: [00:26](#) Hello, everyone. Thank you for listening. I am Omar Bourne.

Allison Pennisi: [00:29](#) And I'm Allison Pennisi. Thank you for joining us. We want you to come back as often as you can, so feel free to add "Prep Talk" to your favorite RSS feed. You can also follow us on social media.

Omar Bourne: [00:39](#) This episode, we're discussing donations. Now, for our listeners who may not know this, donations and emergency management do go hand in hand.

Allison Pennisi: [00:49](#) That's right, Omar. From hurricanes to fires, we see that New Yorkers want to pitch in and help, but what they may not know is that the City works very closely with other agencies and organizations to support communities with relief and recovery efforts.

Omar Bourne: [01:01](#) We have a panel of experts here to break it all down for us today and talk to us about what we call donations management. We have Ben Rose, who is the senior manager from the New York City Department of Sanitation's donateNYC program, and we have Zack Hodgson, who is the Director of Emergency Services for Greater New York at The Salvation Army. Guys, welcome.

Ben Rose: [01:26](#) Thanks.

Zack Hodgson: [01:26](#) Thanks.

Allison Pennisi: [01:28](#) Zack, Ben, the City has several emergency plans in place that focus on how the City and its partners manage donations. From your perspective, can you share with our listeners what that looks like?

Ben Rose: [01:41](#) Sure. Well, like most of New York City's plans, we seek to leverage the local community and infrastructure, which obviously operates year-round, 365 days a year. The same is true for donations management as well. One of the ways in

which we try to mobilize that infrastructure is by communicating to local residents, businesses, and community groups what the best way is to donate in disaster. There's lots of different avenues in which we do that. As you know, social media, online services are things that we try to provide, but we try to make it a part of people's everyday activities.

- Omar Bourne: [02:18](#) Now, guys, in regards to donations, what do you think are the biggest challenges that the City experiences? I see Ben pointing at Zack, for our listeners. I'm going to assume that Zack is going to take this one.
- Ben Rose: [02:31](#) [crosstalk 00:02:31] challenge.
- Zack Hodgson: [02:34](#) No, that's fine. I think the biggest challenge with donations is just getting the communication right, and that is probably a challenge of a lot of things, but people, for good impulses, want to donate stuff. They want to respond when they see need. That's right, but communicating how best to do that in the midst of a crowded-out news space when there's a disaster going on is always a challenge. The multitude of voices that are communicating different messages makes donations management, in particular, difficult sometimes.
- Ben Rose: [03:12](#) Yeah, and I would agree with that, and I would also add that donations management, like any other issue, with regards to just dealing with large operations in the city, much like the perspective of the average New Yorker, it really comes down to real estate, real estate, real estate. If you're looking at a large influx of unrequested material, material that ends up in all different types of public spaces, it really is an issue of space and making sure that the right stuff gets to the right area, because if it doesn't, it can just be a total mess and a real challenge for first responders.
- Allison Pennisi: [03:54](#) Yeah. I mean, we see this all the time. Following a disaster, people often ask, "How can I help my community? What can I do?" In recent years, we've noticed that the first things people want to do is they want to make a donation. They want to help. In Emergency Management and working very closely with partners like the donateNYC program and Salvation Army, we always say cash is best, but can you explain to our listeners why that's so important?
- Ben Rose: [04:19](#) Well, I think it may or may not go without saying that it's the fastest and most efficient way to get survivors the things they need most quickly. There are organizations like The Salvation

Army and other groups within the VOAD networks who provide services to people year-round. They already have the infrastructure to provide these resources, and often times, the products that they need are changing on a day-to-day basis. So, to give the flexibility, to our partners we encourage cash is best.

- Ben Rose: [04:49](#) On the efficiency side, there's been a ton of research about the impact of donating unsolicited stuff. I think the USAID says that for one six pack of bottled water, if you ship that to a disaster, it's going to cost those local agencies over \$200 just to be able to distribute that, store it, and put it into places that they need it. That, I would say, is one of the biggest pieces, is just it's not very efficient.
- Ben Rose: [05:17](#) I would say, on the worst side of the spectrum, that's part of the reasons why the Department of Sanitation has an involvement in this, is that if products like perishable foods or organic products like clothing are not managed properly, those things are placed in facilities that are not secure or secured from the elements, that stuff does have the potential of becoming solid waste. We absolutely do not want to see stuff that was intended for survivors from a disaster to end up in the back of a garbage truck.
- Omar Bourne: [05:44](#) And you've seen ... Not to cut you off, Ben, but we've seen those pictures where right after an emergency, people donate tons of clothing, canned foods and whatnot, and then you see the pictures of them just everywhere and not in boxes. They're just thrown in the streets or left in parks, for example. That's not what we're looking for when it comes to those donations, and they become waste almost.
- Ben Rose: [06:19](#) They actually are waste.
- Omar Bourne: [06:21](#) Yeah.
- Ben Rose: [06:22](#) Once any sort of clothing or textile-
- Omar Bourne: [06:26](#) Right.
- Ben Rose: [06:26](#) ... or any food becomes exposed to the elements, it's not fit for human use or consumption, so then it becomes incorporated into what we would consider disaster debris. There's no facility to wash and clean all of these products, and you also have to realize ... You guys do realize that this is just one piece of a very large operation that's going on. To divert any resources away from regular disaster operations is just such a burden, and it's

just so much more cost effective to make sure that that stuff is managed with debris, because groups like The Salvation Army aren't going to be able to utilize it.

- Zack Hodgson: [07:05](#) I'd also add on the question of cash, cash is necessary for the economic recovery of the disaster-impacted area. Outside of a New York City context, I was in Port-au-Prince and saw what planeloads of 50-pound bags of rice did to the rice market in that country.
- Omar Bourne: [07:26](#) Right.
- Zack Hodgson: [07:27](#) The cash is necessary to have an influx into the local economy so that it can recover quickly.
- Omar Bourne: [07:35](#) Recover quickly, yeah. Yeah. For those people who are not going to listen to us when we say, "Cash is best," are there ways for them to donate these items other than monetarily?
- Zack Hodgson: [07:51](#) I would say you can donate them to organizations like The Salvation Army.
- Omar Bourne: [07:55](#) Right.
- Zack Hodgson: [07:55](#) I try to say that without bias, but because those items will be used in our social services programming, that, to me, become part of disaster response. The Salvation Army, in the midst of a disaster, responds. All we are really doing is scaling up what we do year-round. Right? If you are donating to those programs, you're helping that scaling process. I would also say that if you donate them for that year-round work, we see that year-round work as mitigation. If we are helping people who are living below the poverty line to get out of that situation in life, they are more resilient, less vulnerable to the impacts of whatever the next disaster is. So, all of those items are useful to us outside of the disaster to help us support people build their own capacity.
- Omar Bourne: [08:54](#) I like that point because I think a lot of people just think of donating as, "There's an emergency. This huge emergency just happened. I have to donate," but that's not the case. They can do this year-round, on a daily basis.
- Zack Hodgson: [09:09](#) That's right.
- Ben Rose: [09:09](#) Yeah. I would second that. For us, at Sanitation, New Yorkers are throwing six million tons of waste every single year. So

much of that could be donated and reused. Just like in a disaster, it's an issue of making sure that we inform the public of these venues so that they know that there are faith-based organizations and community groups and groups that speak to their personal/emotional interests year-round that are providing services. Last year alone, 1.4 million New Yorkers were provided with health and human services solely based on revenue generated from donated goods, donated clothing.

Allison Pennisi: [09:51](#)

Wow.

Ben Rose: [09:52](#)

That's an infrastructure that exists here every single day, that we are literally providing food and shelter on discarded things that people no longer want. That has a tremendous impact, and it's something that we absolutely want to leverage in a disaster, because it is so critical and both the people in need and the people donating are already familiar with these groups because they're fixtures within their local community. If we can support that, promote that, and augment that in a disaster, it's just going to make sure that the right stuff gets to the right people in need.

Allison Pennisi: [10:26](#)

Ben, you had mentioned before VOAD, which, for our listeners, is Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster. There is both a national level and also local level. We have several partners in New York City that participate in this, including The Salvation Army. Would you recommend to New Yorkers that those are places to go to, to find out more of ways to get involved to donate, whether it's monetarily or to provide goods and services that way?

Ben Rose: [10:53](#)

Yeah, absolutely. I mean, sort of piggybacking on what we'd said before is that this should be a process that people incorporate into their daily lives year-round, the same way with preparing for disasters.

Omar Bourne: [11:07](#)

Right.

Ben Rose: [11:08](#)

Everybody has things that they want to get rid of. Everybody wants to help out, but that's not something that we should necessarily only think about during disasters, particularly in a city such as New York that already has a tremendous amount of need to begin with. So, making that a part of people's regular routine is something we would absolutely encourage, and coordinating and connecting with an organization that works towards a cause that you feel strongly about. That's really the responsibility of the individual resident. If their interest is in ...

whether it be veteran's affairs or animal care or what have you, I can guarantee you there's an organization that is looking for volunteers and looking for donations year-round, and that same group will be impacted and will definitely be looking for support in a disaster. If they connect with either any of the groups through the VOAD website or through donateNYC, they can locate groups that would speak to their own interests and passions as a New Yorker and develop those connections well before disaster takes place as part of their disaster preparedness.

- Zack Hodgson: [12:11](#) Yeah. I mean, I certainly would recommend that people research whether the organization they're giving to is associated with VOAD because it implies some level of collaboration with the nonprofit community that's responding to the disaster. It implies some level of quality control, if I can put it that way.
- Allison Pennisi: [12:32](#) Yeah.
- Zack Hodgson: [12:34](#) They would call them points of consensus. It's really a code of conduct that any organization that is a member of VOAD agrees to operate in a certain way that doesn't cause any additional harm, to use that phrase. I would certainly recommend ... If you're researching who you want to give to, I would research whether that group is associated with a VOAD.
- Allison Pennisi: [12:57](#) I mean, I think I've gotten involved with donations management in my own way, on a personal level. For example, one of the things that I like to do each year is I like to donate any gently used clothing, but what I do is I actually organize it with a particular organization, and I schedule a pick up. It's not like I'm just dropping them in the middle of the street as a way to do that. I've also donated blood throughout the year as a way ... That's my contribution to things, too. I think it's important that New Yorkers find that delicate balance of wanting to help but taking a step back and saying, "Okay. If this were me, what is it that I would want, and what are the best resources that are out there?" I just think it's really important for people to know that we work very closely with City agencies, with nonprofit organizations and nongovernmental organizations to get our job done.
- Omar Bourne: [13:50](#) How much do you think ... or how closely do you guys work with houses of worship? Because I know, for me, I like to donate clothing to my church, and in turn, I want to say that they work closely with you guys as well to make sure that they're donating

the clothing and those materials. How closely do you guys work with the faith leaders and the houses of worship with donations management?

- Ben Rose: [14:21](#) Yeah. Well, I'll just say that one of the resources that we developed after Hurricane Sandy was an online mobile app that New Yorkers can download whenever. It's called donateNYC. What that does is it allows residents to enter their zip code, what they want to donate, and it'll locate the nearest organization-
- Omar Bourne: [14:45](#) Okay.
- Ben Rose: [14:46](#) ... or entity within their neighborhood.
- Omar Bourne: [14:47](#) Wonderful.
- Ben Rose: [14:48](#) We absolutely encourage not just the faith-based organizations but the networks of those faith-based organizations to let their constituents know. It also allows us a window to see what organizations are in an area so that if there is an area that's impacted, we know that there's a local church or a synagogue or an entity that has generally had a clothing drive-
- Omar Bourne: [15:10](#) Right.
- Ben Rose: [15:11](#) ... so that we can inform our partners at Emergency Management and our local VOAD partners that this is somebody who has been operating in the past and they may be engaging in a donations operation. So that would be, on our side, how we would support that.
- Omar Bourne: [15:25](#) Yeah.
- Zack Hodgson: [15:27](#) Yeah. As you know, The Salvation Army is itself a faith-based organization.
- Omar Bourne: [15:31](#) Yeah.
- Zack Hodgson: [15:34](#) In New York City, we have 19, what we call, corps. They're community centers. They are houses of worship. Like any community house of worship, they coordinate with the other faith-based organizations in their community, hopefully. Yeah. We certainly support that network, through the 19 communities and the surrounding communities, throughout the year.

Ben Rose: [16:00](#) I would also say that increasingly, just within the last year, food has become a major area of focus-

Zack Hodgson: [16:09](#) Right.

Ben Rose: [16:09](#) ... particularly from City Council and from our commissioner's office about dealing with unwanted food. There was a recent law, local law 176, that was just recently passed about providing support to local businesses to connect with charitable organizations, soup kitchens, and pantries that do exist in faith-based organizations. We're going to be looking towards developing a portfolio of services particularly related to unwanted food items and obviously working with the Office of Emergency Management to make sure that that's cohesive to emergency planning as well.

Allison Pennisi: [16:44](#) Zack, is there anything you'd like to add about The Salvation Army and its role in donations management?

Zack Hodgson: [16:50](#) Sure. In all of this conversation, there is an element that people have a right to life with dignity. It's an actual right. This isn't charity. In this work, whenever you're donating, it's just something to consider. If you were the disaster survivor, would you want to be riffling through used clothing that may or may not be right for you, that's laid out on a table in some community center somewhere? In The Salvation Army, we try to consider that. We try to consider that in the way we deliver the services we deliver. Does it recognize, does it respect the dignity of everyone we are attempting to support as they go through this trauma?

Allison Pennisi: [17:40](#) Wow.

Omar Bourne: [17:41](#) Anything else from you, Ben?

Ben Rose: [17:45](#) Once again, I would second what Zack said. We talked briefly before this on some of the different types of organizations that do respect that, a life with dignity, and particularly groups such as The Refoundry and Career Gear and Bottomless Closet, which provide avenues for men and women who either were previously incarcerated or have been affected by homelessness or other issues throughout their lives. Many of these organizations have defined their models based on providing this life with dignity, providing either a store setting or a workforce development setting that allows people who are facing times in need, whether it be in disaster or just in their regular lives, with an avenue to not feel as though they're a victim, but feel as

though they're a survivor. Donations management, in particular, does as Zack said, play a critical role in defining that person's circumstance.

- Omar Bourne: [18:43](#) Wonderful. Thank you guys very much. We're talking to Ben Rose, Senior Manager at New York City Department of Sanitation's donateNYC program, and Zack Hodgson, the Director of Emergency Services for Greater New York at The Salvation Army. For our listeners, donate responsibly and remember that you not only can donate during or after an emergency, but you can donate year-round. I encourage everyone to get out there.
- Omar Bourne: [19:12](#) We have more to come here, on this show. Next, we have New York City Emergency Management's own Herman Schaffer, Jonathan Jenkins, and Diandra Hayban, and they're going to be talking about the plans that the City puts in place to make sure that we are covering everything that deals with donations, so stay tuned. Ben, Zack, thank you guys very much for being here.
- Ben Rose: [19:39](#) Thank you.
- Omar Bourne: [19:50](#) Okay.
- Allison Pennisi: [19:50](#) Welcome back. We're here speaking with a panel of experts on donations management, as well as ways New Yorkers can help those in need during times of a disaster. We've spoken with Ben Rose and Zack Hodgson from the New York City Department of Sanitation, as well as The Salvation Army. Here to speak with us again are New York City Emergency Management's own. Please welcome Jonathan Jenkins, Dee Hayban, and Herman Schaffer.
- J. Jenkins: [20:13](#) Hello.
- Diandra Hayban: [20:13](#) Hi.
- Herman Schaffer: [20:14](#) Hey.
- Allison Pennisi: [20:16](#) Now, the City has several emergency plans in place that focus on how the city and its partners manage donations. Can you share with our listeners what those plans look like?
- J. Jenkins: [20:25](#) Sure. In terms of the donations coordination plan, we have a plan and a playbook that outlines the strategies for the City agencies and our nonprofit partners to handle donations management. Part of that is everything from convening a donations coordination team, which are the key agencies when

an event starts, to looking at things like where we'll warehouse, who's going to help staff the operation, any other needed supplies to handle the donations.

- Diandra Hayban: [20:51](#) This plan is unique in the sense that we lean very heavily on our nonprofit partners. They're the ones that are working with donations every day, so we try to bring them to the table as quickly as we can to get their input on something that we really just do during disasters. We're about to reopen this plan and rewrite it, like we do with all of our plans. We reopen them. We looked at best practices that have occurred from past disasters recently, and we try to create new strategies that can be more helpful in the future. That's exactly what we're about to do with this plan.
- Omar Bourne: [21:21](#) I like that, and we're going to touch on that a little bit later in this show, but as you guys heard earlier, for our listeners, Ben and Zack, they kind of talked about cash is best. I know that after an emergency, after a disaster, people, they're excited and they want to donate. They want to give stuff, but the city has also adopted the mantra of cash is best. Why is that?
- Herman Schaffer: [21:52](#) Yeah, and I think this goes to sort of how communities react to emergencies. It could be a small emergency that affects a very local community. It could be something that affects the entire city. But I think people want to feel connected to this. It's a time of activity in their communities. It's a time of interest. It's a time of, often times, great sorrow or disruption, and people feel the need to be able to provide something or get involved in some way. I think people see the only way of doing that is to be able to go out and buy something and give something.
- Omar Bourne: [22:22](#) Right. Something tangible.
- Herman Schaffer: [22:25](#) Something tangible.
- Omar Bourne: [22:26](#) Right.
- Herman Schaffer: [22:26](#) They want to be physically doing something, and cash doesn't have that same level of tactile or you can't see a look on someone's face when you give them something. As they said very nicely, people don't see how that affects the emergency and those people, and I think the idea of living a life with dignity comes into this very closely in the fact that you really want to be able to give someone something dignified and also very appropriate. So, cash is best because over course of time, what people need changes, what organizations need to be able to do

their job, whether it's case management or some of the supportive services that are provided, change. Therefore, if you're giving something that's needed now, in three weeks it may still be there and it's not needed, and it turns into something that could be a problem for us, our nonprofit partners, and also for the community that you're trying to help.

Omar Bourne: [23:24](#)

Right.

Allison Pennisi: [23:24](#)

Now, we were talking about this before, about improving our emergency plans as it relates to donations. How is the City working with that? I know we spoke about the nonprofit partners we work with. We've obviously interviewed The Salvation Army and the donateNYC program, which is a City program, but nevertheless also works with local nonprofit organizations like the Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster.

J. Jenkins: [23:51](#)

Yeah. I think from the logistics standpoint, we've been trying to take into account lately some of the recent disasters that affected New York City, but also looking nationwide. There is a national framework for donations management that comes out of FEMA, but that's not necessarily the way that the states and locals always operate. You're as good as your local organizations, whether that be the government side or the nonprofit side. I think what we're trying to do at this point is take a look at a third group, the triad so to speak, and really how can we leverage the private sector, corporations, groups that are willing to donate time or goods? We understand, as Herman mentioned, that folks still want to have that tactile offer to help their brothers and sister, but sometimes that's not necessarily the best use of time or money, but if we could leverage some of these big organizations on the corporate side that can donate truckloads of water or truckloads of meals, that's a little more conducive to a large-scale response.

Omar Bourne: [24:57](#)

Interesting.

Herman Schaffer: [24:57](#)

I think also on that a little bit is that I also cover volunteers in my work as well. If your community feels like they want to get involved, time is also something you can donate. As we set up these centers, as maybe Jonathan is able to get those truckloads of goods, you can get that feeling of being able to help someone and being able to work with someone by donating your time with some of the recovery efforts that are going on by donating your time. You don't always have to donate goods.

Omar Bourne: [25:29](#) To that point of donating time, I think this comes in perfectly, especially with houses of worship and faith leaders, because ... and we spoke about this earlier with The Salvation Army ... people love to get involved. For those who are worshipers, they love to get involved in their church and in their congregation, and we know that houses of worship usually, especially after disasters, they open up and they have drives as well. I know you guys, here at Emergency Management, work closely with the houses of worships and are building those relationships, so that's another way that we can tap into ... and people can tap into donating and giving their time.

Herman Schaffer: [26:17](#) I think that goes to the point that you connect with an organization and you ask the question, "What do you need, and how can you use it?"

Omar Bourne: [26:23](#) Right.

Herman Schaffer: [26:24](#) There are organizations out there that do do donations year-round and may need the items that you're looking for, but we sort of think of an emergency ... A lot of people think of the emergency as when it's in the news. That could be even like a couple days it's in the news, but for that community, that disaster is going on during the recovery as well, which it's a very long time in a lot of ways. You start even to see ... Post Sandy, for years afterwards, people were receiving donated goods.

Omar Bourne: [26:56](#) Right.

Herman Schaffer: [26:57](#) But they were requested. There were things that people said, "Hey. We are looking for this specifically," and therefore you knew that was going to the right place because they had a plan to use it. I think looking at that from that perspective, you want to go to the local communities. The houses of worship, we have found, during a time of emergency, is two things. It's where people turn. It's where people turn for help. They look for information, but they also look for assistance, like the ones that we're talking about right here, to replace items or other things like that. It's a sense of community there, but also they serve as the backbone of the community. They've been there for so long. They've witnessed and they've been through so many emergencies they know how to do this.

Omar Bourne: [27:38](#) Right.

Herman Schaffer: [27:39](#) I think that's so important for us to understand that and work with houses of worship on donations, and part of it is

communications, working with donations and saying, "Hey. Tell your parishioners, 'Don't donate everything right now. Here's how you do it. This is the best way to do that,'" and making sure that that message gets down to every person as possible.

- J. Jenkins: [28:02](#) To touch on Herman's point about faith-based and other nonprofits in the community, they really do know best. One of the other initiatives that would fall under donations would be our Share Your Space Survey. That's on our Emergency Management website, and that's an opportunity for community organizations, churches, synagogues, whatever, to enter in some basic information, and we'd send out a team to see if we could partner with you in some way.
- Omar Bourne: [28:27](#) NYC.gov/emergencymanagement is the website.
- Allison Pennisi: [28:32](#) I think that's a great point. Herman, you've said this before, that an emergency can happen within a matter of moments, but the recovery lasts a long time. For our listeners, the City and its partners launched another website called Help Now NYC, which provides guidance as to what are the best ways to get involved in your community after a disaster, including donations as well. Tell us why this website was such an important step.
- Herman Schaffer: [28:59](#) This website's an important step for a couple of different reasons. I mean, the biggest thing is it's a communal website. We have the VOADs, Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters, who are a part of this. We have Sanitation. We have Salvation Army, who we've been talking to here, but also us, and it's a great messaging tool. Messaging is often key in emergencies, and what this website gives us is one central place where people can go, and it covers both donations. It also covers volunteerism. So if you're looking to help, that's why it's named Help Now NYC. You go here to figure out how to help, because it's really important to be able to understand what to do, but it's really hard. It's hard to do that research, and people may not have the time to understand how emergencies work.
- Herman Schaffer: [29:47](#) If they go here, in an instant, they'll know where to go, who's the biggest players, what are they working on, and how to donate effectively during a time of emergency. A lot of the points we're talking about here are on there. It's a one centralized stop, and it's something that's relatively new. It's a new concept for us because it takes legitimately every single partner, it puts them in one spot, both City and also nonprofit partners, and it gives us that overview, but for every person, it gives them a sense of, "Okay. Now I have some control. Now I

have some knowledge. Now I know what to do, and I can give my time and my money and my donated goods most effectively."

- Allison Pennisi: [30:34](#) Yeah. I think it's important that everyone ... People may not realize this, but New York City absolutely has a sense of community no matter where you go. We were talking about congregations and houses of worship. We talk about neighborhoods that sometimes are affected by ... even if it's a localized emergency, that people band together and they try to help one another out, but it's also important for our listeners and for all New Yorkers to know that the best way to get involved, whether it's through donations or donating your time, it's always before a disaster strikes. I think it's really important that we've had all of you here today to emphasize these points and to really shed light on what the city does, even having our nonprofit partners here today to also speak about how there is a collaborative effort, that everyone does speak to one another, and there is that sense of coordination and community.
- Omar Bourne: [31:24](#) That's key because I don't think that people understand and they don't sometimes think that the City is looking at something as simple, as we say, as donations and actually having a plan and an infrastructure in place where it is well coordinated. This is key because we need to have the preparation in place prior to an emergency so that we're not scrambling at the last minute, and it's good to see that the City works with the nonprofits and its VOADs to ensure that we're sitting, we're talking about this so that, unfortunately, if a disaster were to strike, the plans are in place and the wheels can be in movement seamlessly.
- Herman Schaffer: [32:17](#) I think it's also important to note that partnerships are in place, because the City can't do this without our nonprofit partners. It's integral to how this system works.
- Omar Bourne: [32:27](#) Right.
- Herman Schaffer: [32:27](#) I think, ultimately, if it's done right, the nonprofit partners benefit from this coordination. I think it's really important that this is in place, and I think you're right. Most people wouldn't think that donations are a big issue after emergencies.
- Omar Bourne: [32:42](#) Right.
- Herman Schaffer: [32:42](#) But it's one of the first things that people think of. It's some of the first messaging that we try to put out, is some donations messaging, and if you're looking to donate, this is how to go,

and that some of the stuff that we are trying to consider at first because, as Ben said, you can accrue a lot of donations very quickly.

Omar Bourne: [33:02](#)

Very, very quickly. We've seen that.

Herman Schaffer: [33:05](#)

It happens in an instant, but it takes a lot longer to be able to respectfully put those into the hands of people who need it the most. The last thing we want to do is see donated goods, people's thoughts and what they're looking to be able to provide to this emergency misused or destroyed because they were just no longer usable. That's some of the stuff that we're putting out there, and I think that is so important that this partnership exists, and that goes to the coordination and the planning.

Diandra Hayban: [33:39](#)

Just agree with Herman. I think many of the public don't realize how many resources we actually put into donations management. There's a lot of trucking. There's a lot of staff and a lot of manpower that goes into really running a donations drive, sorting through donations and getting it into the hands of those that need it. We really can, with poor planning, create a secondary emergency that nobody wants to see happen.

Allison Pennisi: [34:00](#)

That's a great point.

Omar Bourne: [34:01](#)

Yeah, that's a great point, Dee.

Diandra Hayban: [34:02](#)

I think it's really important when you give, take pause and listen to the guidance that Herman kind of mentioned, the different vehicles that we use to put it out there, the different websites and social media, but really listen to the things ... If we are asking for stuff, only give that stuff, but again, the general rule is cash is king, because we're doing the planning and the operations behind the scenes so that we can really focus our resources in the place that it's needed the most, and we don't want to use donations inappropriately or inefficiently.

J. Jenkins: [34:35](#)

I think that leads to better training across the board, not only with the folks involved in the donations plan, but also our elected officials because they have a stake in this operation as well. So, I think what you'll see ... We have these good relationships with the elected officials anyway, but I think as you see us update our plan even more, there's going to be a wider cast of characters involved in training, a wider cast of characters involved in a central public message, and we want to make sure that that transcends everyone.

Allison Pennisi: [35:04](#) Absolutely. For our listeners, again, the websites that you can visit to find out how you can effectively donate, you could visit NYC.gov/emergencymanagement or the Help Now NYC website, which is NYC.gov/helpnow.

Allison Pennisi: [35:18](#) That's this edition 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.