

# Local churches join together in musical fundraiser

BY BRYAN WASSEL

*Staff Writer*

A trio of local churches will host a Superstorm Sandy Benefit Relief Concert on Saturday, Dec. 1 at Central Unitarian Church in Paramus to benefit local charities.

The newly formed Bergen Unitarian Universalist Relief Group (BUURG) was created when Mark Meding of the Unitarian Society of Ridgewood was looking into holding a concert for victims of Hurricane Sandy. While he initially had trouble finding an open date, he discovered that Central Unitarian Church and the Palisades Unitarian Universalist Society were planning to hold similar fundraisers, and the three congregations came together.

The group's purpose is to focus the time, talent and money of their congregations to those in Bergen County who have suffered as a result of Sandy. All proceeds of the concert will benefit the Moonachie/Little Ferry Relief Fund, Center for Food Action of Bergen County and the Compassion Fund of the United Way.

"We were looking at the larger beneficiaries, and we were kind of turned off when we did some digging," Meding said. "For some of the larger ones, only percentages of the money actually go to the people, so we wanted a more homegrown approach. We started to look into some of our neighbors, the people right in our backyard who need help," particularly the residents in Moonachie and

Little Ferry.

The concert will feature nine acts, Meding said. Musicians from a variety of genres will play, including a jazz quartet, a blues singer, and an alt-rock band. Meding, who has put together concerts for the Ridgewood congregation before, handled the production side while others used their talents for other aspects of the fundraiser.

"It's a multi-genre style music festival," Meding said. "We have a little bit of everything, a little bit of folk, a little bit of blues, a little bit of singer-songwriters."

The performing artists are largely from Bergen County and include the James Carroll Band, John Freund of Bigger Than Breadbox, Tim O' Donohue and the TMU Band, Spook Handy, Nikki Armstrong, Mark Gross, Rave Tesar, Cynthia Summers and John Moroski.

BUURG members are already working closely with the Moonachie/Little Ferry Relief Fund to provide "feet on the street" in both affected towns, helping out directly. The fund's money is donated to people who need to rebuild their homes and help their families, with emphasis given to those with the greatest need.

The Center for Food Action of Bergen County is continuing to provide emergency food and utility assistance to tens of thousands of individuals and families living in northern New Jersey, including

those affected by the storm.

Compassion Fund of the United Way assists individuals and families with basic needs during short-term emergencies. The fund has already been helping hurricane victims, particularly residents of Little Ferry, but also aids a number of low-income families who have been unable to replace the food they lost during the power outage.

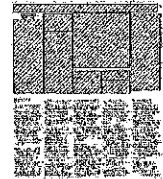
The concert will also feature a special collection, and concertgoers are asked to bring a new, unwrapped toy for a child between the ages 2 and 17. BUURG will distribute the collected toys to families who have lost their homes and belongings.

While this is the first event hosted by BUURG, it will not be the last, organizers said.

"It's really a nice event to do with two of the other Bergen County organizations," Meding said. "Everyone's head was in the right place, and it took off from there."

For more information on the concert and its performers, email Meding at [m.meding@att.net](mailto:m.meding@att.net). For more information about BUURG, visit [uridgewood.org](http://uridgewood.org) or call the Rev. Kathleen Green at 201-444-6225.

Seats for the concert are \$30 for regular seating and \$100 for premium seating. Doors open at 7 p.m., with music starting at 8 p.m. Central Unitarian Church is located at 156 Forest Ave., Paramus.



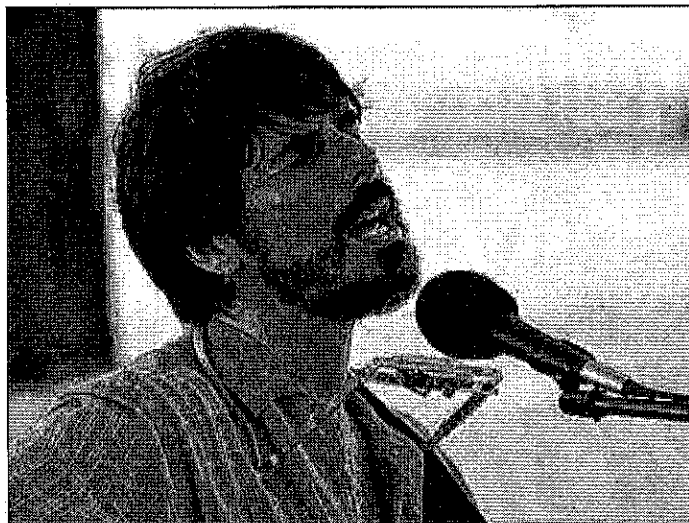


PHOTO BY ECONOSMITH COURTESY OF SPOOK HANDY

Spook Handy, above at the Clearwater Festival, will be among the performers at the Superstorm Sandy Benefit Relief Concert on Saturday in Paramus.