



Asian Americans for Equality

Progress Report for Grand Street Fire Fund

April 27, 2011

Grand Street Fire Fund: A Year in Review

This month marks the one-year anniversary of the seven-alarm Grand Street fire that blazed on April 11, 2010, destroying three apartment buildings and leaving hundreds of victims homeless.

Although a tragic blow for the city and the community, the area and its residents have managed to cope with adversity through assistance provided by organizations such as AAFE, Red Cross, Tzu Chi Foundation and local elected representatives who organized relief efforts for the victims.

Since the fire, AAFE has raised more than \$16,000 for the Grand

Street Fire Fund, which helped displaced tenants replace valuable identification and documentation during the immediate aftermaths of the fire. Funds have been subsequently used to provide legal assistance to tenants seeking compensation for fire-related damages.

The current legal cases are pending as attorneys help tenants submit claims to insurance companies and negotiate with landlords for damages suffered in the fire. Tenants have been asked to thoroughly account for all items that perished in the blaze. AAFE will continue to work with tenants and the attorneys representing them until the end of the legal cases.



Picture of 289 Grand St. building as it stands today. It is the only damaged building to survive the April 11, 2010 fire.

Reflections from a former tenant

Diana Huynh, a displaced tenant of 289 Grand Street, one of the buildings affected by the fire on April 11, 2010, talks about life after the fire.

What did you lose in the fire?

I didn't think the fire was going to reach my building that night, so I left with only my purse and what I was wearing that night. Everything else was destroyed by fire, smoke or water damage.

How were you able to adjust since then?

I consider myself very lucky. At the time of the fire, I had only been living there for eight months, so I lost very little compared to the other families in the building. Some of them have been living there for years and lost their entire lives. I think things returned to normal pretty quickly for me. AAFE played a huge role in this.

In what ways did you receive help?

AAFE offered an array of services, including replacing important documents. I am most grateful for its assistance in helping me find a new home. In addition, I was astounded by the support of residents and businesses in the community.

Is there anything you'd like to see done in the future for fire victims?

I think practicing standard fire safety could do wonders. Although the fire didn't originate in our building,

it is unsettling to think what could have happened had it occurred late in the night. Our building didn't have any fire alarms in the hallway; this is something I should have noticed before, but only realized as I was exiting the building that night.

Diana has since become a fierce advocate for tenant's rights. She expects to graduate from NYU's Wagner School of Public Service in May 2011.

April 11, 2010: Night of the fire.

April 13, 2010: Emergency Small Business Loan Fund established to provide low-interest loans to affected small business.

April 16, 2010: Grand Street Fire Fund established with the goal of raising support to help affected tenants rebuild their lives.

May 15, 2010: AAFE collects over \$10,000 within three weeks for the Grand Street Fire Fund.



(Left) AAFE Executive Director Chris Kui was on site when 289 Grand Street tenants return to their apartments on 10/21/2010 to retrieve personal items.

(Below) The space left over after the demolition of 283 and 285 Grand Street due to severe fire damage.



October 21, 2010: 289 Grand Street tenants allowed back into their apartments in two-hour time slots to salvage personal items.

To date, AAFE and retained attorneys continue to work with affected tenants on legal cases.

April 11, 2011: One-Year Anniversary

You can help by sending a check made payable to Asian Americans for Equality at 111 Division St., NY, NY 10002. Please indicate Grand Street Fire Fund in the memo line. Tax-exempt donations may also be made online by visiting www.aafe.org and clicking on the Donate Now button. Please type Grand Street Fire Fund in the dedication text field.