



## The Meatball Hero: After Sandy, Michael Chernow Gives Back to the City that Gave Him Everything

By Mallory Stuchin Fri., Dec. 7 2012 at 9:00 AM

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23



11



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[Continued from page 1](#)

### On volunteering:

"On the Saturday before Thanksgiving, we brought out meals for 1,000 people and set up shop at PS 197. Eddie arranged to have a DJ and face painters at the event. All the families we'd met in the preceding days came to the school with their kids and picked up supplies and ate warm food. The experience was incredible for everyone, but it was also greater than the day itself. People caught a glimpse of things starting to turn around, they felt the small sea change. To see the happy, smiling faces of the children who'd been impacted so deeply - - with their homes gone, their belongings destroyed and their schools closed -- was like a ray of light guiding us towards better days ahead."

### On what's still needed:

"We're trying to figure out what to do next now that there are businesses opening and things starting to turn around. The donations have been incredible and many people do know where to turn for supplies. But now the efforts need to be directed towards the higher price tag items- generators, heaters, hand and foot warmers- those things are still desperately needed. Many people have electricity but some are still living without it. Smaller homes and buildings have largely been left out to dry. I know many people will knock the Red Cross, but I'm not going to be that guy. People are helping in any way that they can and, at the end of the day, the government is doing incredibly good work. Nobody can prepare for a disaster like this one. Unfortunately, this is a crash course in what to do when it happens again. At the same time, it's inspiring to see the wealth of New Yorkers that are ready, willing and able to lend a hand to people whose lives have been drastically altered by a storm."

### On giving thanks:

"This is my hometown and I'm forever humbled by the business that I've created. Initially, I said to my business partner, Daniel Holzman, *hey man, I want to do this work and I'm sorry that the business could probably use me right now*. But he, and the rest of the great people I work with at [The Meatball Shop](#), have been supportive and understanding of my change in job description for the last month. I don't really know how to explain what I felt -- this personal call to help -- but I wanted to do this work. I just sort of had to."