

## **Sunset Park Flooding and Climate Change Stories**

Transcript in original language (English)

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**Participant: Litzy Angel, 39 years old, female (SPP\_AL01)**

Interviewer: Tania Goicoechea (NYU T.G.)

Interview conducted in English on 6/6/23

Site: Participant's home

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**NYU T.G.:** Like I told you, this interview is to learn more about the stories of the people who lived through Superstorm Sandy during October 22nd to 29th of 2012. And so we're going to go through the days before the storm, the days during the storm and after the storm and how you feel now, too, about what happened. Obviously, you [can] tell me whatever you want to tell me and whatever you remember. [...] If you don't want to tell me something, you don't have to. Right? So let's start first with situating ourselves. Where in Sunset Park did you live and for how long did your family live there? And, you know, just kind of tell me a little bit [about that].

**SPP\_AL01:** Okay. I lived on 61st Street between Second and Third Avenue. We basically lived there since I was small, when I was one year old.

**NYU T.G.:** And [what] was your building like? What floor did you live on?

**SPP\_AL01:** There's only two floors and there's two apartments on each floor. I lived on the first floor.

**NYU T.G.:** Could you describe your block and your neighbors? Did you know them?

**SPP\_AL01:** Yeah, almost everyone in that block. We all know each other. We always, like, hang out. We always talk. And it was mostly calm there. It was more calm than other places around.

**NYU T.G.:** So moving on to the storm. The days before the storm. Do you remember anything from the days before?

**SPP\_AL01:** Uh, yeah. We would always go out to play, like, with our neighbors around the same age as us. And once we started to hear about the storm, my parents wouldn't let us go out as much. We were always locked inside the house. We were mostly bored.

**NYU T.G.:** Did you hear from your parents about the storm or at school?

**SPP\_AL01:** Uh, first at school and then I asked my parents, and we started to see mostly the news about what's been happening.

**NYU T.G.:** Do you remember how you prepared for the storm or [if] you prepared [at all]?

**SPP\_AL01:** From what I remember, I don't think we did prepared as much. I remember also going to the grocery store and there wasn't much stuff.

**NYU T.G.:** Everybody was going to the grocery store and things were out...

**SPP\_AL01:** I think like everyone was panicking about that. I also remember the waters, there was barely any water. I remember that we had to rush to the gas station also for gas with my grandpa. There were huge lines just waiting to go there and they had limited [gas].

**NYU T.G.:** Do you remember how you felt?

**SPP\_AL01:** Well, I didn't understand much at the time, because they didn't explain much, but I was scared, like seeing how everyone was panicking. And I remember I had asked my parents because we lived near the, um, the bay. I had asked them, I'm like, is it going to be worse for us or are we going to be okay? Are we going to be safe?

**NYU T.G.:** And how do you think your parents like? Were they scared too?

**SPP\_AL01:** They never showed that they were scared, so I believe that they weren't. They were mostly calm at that time. I'm assuming not to scare us since we were four.

**NYU T.G.:** You have three siblings, then? So it's four of you and your parents?

**SPP\_AL01:** Yes.

**NYU T.G.:** What? Where in the siblings are you? Are you the oldest?

**SPP\_AL01:** The second.

**NYU T.G.:** Did you talk with your siblings about it?

**SPP\_AL01:** Yes, I remember when it would be really stormy, we would hug each other when we would get scared. Me and my younger sister would be scared of the lightning and the thunder.

**NYU T.G.:** So anything else that you remember from before the storm hits?

**SPP\_AL01:** Before the storm? Not no, I don't think so.

**NYU T.G.:** So now during the storm... What kind of things do you remember?

**SPP\_AL01:** We were mostly locked inside the house until around Halloween. I still tell my sisters about that story, because I remember that we begged our parents to take us out trick or treating, and they were barely [any] kids out. There were some. And that's when I saw that it was actually really bad, because there was a time where the winds were pushing us. We couldn't walk and our dad had to go pick us up in the car just to take us home.

**NYU T.G.:** When the storm hit, do you remember if you went to school that day or when did schools close?

**SPP\_AL01:** I don't remember exactly that day, but when we saw that it was getting hard, our parents didn't want us to go to school. They didn't want to risk our safety.

**NYU T.G.:** Right. What do you think were the main effects of the storm in Sunset Park? Was it wind or what caused the most damage?

**SPP\_AL01:** Yeah, I feel like it was mostly wind.

**NYU T.G.:** Did you see any flooding?

**SPP\_AL01:** From what I remember, there wasn't much flooding on Sunset, at least the areas that I went around.

**NYU T.G.:** Um, was there anything that impacted you during the storm? Were you, like, looking out the window or something?

**SPP\_AL01:** Like, yeah, we were mostly at the window looking at how bad it was getting.

**NYU T.G.:** When the storm stopped, what did you do? Did you go out? Did you stay in the house?

**SPP\_AL01:** Yeah, I remember when it finally stopped, we all went running out to play, because we were tired of being locked inside the house.

**NYU T.G.:** And how did the neighborhood look? Were people out or was everybody still scared?

**SPP\_AL01:** Well, most neighbors were out. They were all seeing how it was. Some trees I remember had fallen, mostly the small ones. And up until now, they are still taking out trees that were impacted by that.

**NYU T.G.:** Did you guys have electricity and water?

**SPP\_AL01:** I remember that [it] had stopped for a while... The electricity had stopped for a while. It had turned off. And I don't remember if we used candles at that time to...

**NYU T.G.:** What about the subway and the buses and all that stuff? Do you remember?

**SPP\_AL01:** No. At that time, we didn't really use the subway. We mostly walked everywhere.

**NYU T.G.:** Do you remember if there was anybody, like, an organization or the government or anybody who came to help people who had, you know, lost things in the storm?

**SPP\_AL01:** No, from what I remember no one actually came to ask.

**NYU T.G.:** Were there neighbors helping each other?

**SPP\_AL01:** Yes, in the building we all know each other, we think of each other as family, since we've all been around the same time. We helped each other. We were asking, like, how we were. I remember one of my neighbors didn't have much food and we would give her some.

**NYU T.G.:** Do you feel like Sunset Park was impacted a lot, or do you feel like things were mostly okay?

**SPP\_AL01:** I feel like it was mostly okay. It wasn't as impacted, because I saw on the news that there were a lot of places that were [worse off].

**NYU T.G.:** So after the storm... Do you remember how much time? Well, you said that you kind of stayed in your place until, like, Halloween, right? So did you basically stay, like, a week and not go to school or schools were closed?

**SPP\_AL01:** Yes, we didn't go to school at that time.

**NYU T.G.:** Did your parents go to work or were their workplaces closed as well?

**SPP\_AL01:** My dad, he did go to work at that time. I remember I also was worried about that because they work... My grandpa has a business for landscaping and they were helping people out.

**NYU T.G.:** What did your... Do you remember anything that your dad would say about how the storm impacted their work?

**SPP\_AL01:** No, he didn't really tell us

**NYU T.G.:** How do you think the storm affected you in how you live today? Or did it? You know, like do you feel like you're scared of storms?

**SPP\_AL01:** Yes, actually, I am kind of scared of storms. I tell my sisters that I'm mostly scared of tsunamis. And that's what I was thinking of when Hurricane Sandy hit.

**NYU T.G.:** Like of the water... more like the flooding and all that stuff.

**SPP\_AL01:** Yeah, because I'm like, there's not much we could do other than run.

**NYU T.G.:** Do you feel like you've changed how you like... where you live or how you live because of any of these experiences?

**SPP\_AL01:** I feel like now I'm more cautious because of that. Before I didn't really use to think about that.

**NYU T.G.:** Do you think about how to prepare for the next storm?

**SPP\_AL01:** Yes.

**NYU T.G.:** And what have you thought about?

**SPP\_AL01:** I remember like we would load up on stuff like water, mostly the essentials. So like with toilet paper, with everything.

**NYU T.G.:** Do you feel like you would be able to be prepared now? Like if it happened again?

**SPP\_AL01:** I feel like I would, but it's never certain if we would.

**NYU T.G.:** What are some of the things that you think would help? Like if anybody was helping communities prepare... What would you think would be good for you? What would you want an organization or the government to do?

**SPP\_AL01:** From what I've seen, I think food supply would help a lot, because I saw that most people didn't have much food at the time, or if they did, everything would go up in price and they wouldn't be able to afford it. So I feel like food supplies would help a lot.

**NYU T.G.:** Do you feel like New York City is ready for the next storm? Like if another hurricane Sandy happens, do you think we learned our lessons?

**SPP\_AL01:** I feel like we did, but I don't know. It's also, we never know how strong it would be.

**NYU T.G.:** Is there anything else you want to tell me? Any other stories that you have from the storm?

**SPP\_AL01:** No, I don't think so.

**NYU T.G.:** Do your parents still live where you lived?

**SPP\_AL01:** Yes, they still live there. My parents and my sisters. My three sisters.

**NYU T.G.:** Oh, your three sisters still live there in the same place... And do you talk about Hurricane Sandy? Does it come up?

**SPP\_AL01:** I brought it up to them when I told them about the interview and my sister was willing to come, but she said she had work so she couldn't come.

**NYU T.G.:** Do you feel like this was something that impacted your family and you still talk about it?

**SPP\_AL01:** No, we didn't really talk much about it. We, it's like we completely forgot about it at some point.

**NYU T.G.:** I don't know if there's anything else that you want to say about that or if there's anything else that you want to share.

**SPP\_AL01:** I don't think I remember much, so I don't think so.

**NYU T.G.:** All right. Well, thank you so much for participating in this project. We will put your interview in the NYU library and we're going to share with you our results and hopefully help the city be more prepared for another storm.