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Press Release

December 4, 2012

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IMMEDIATE

NY Transit Museum Store Launches Rockaways Relief Collection

The New York Transit Museum, in collaboration with vendors who produce Official MTA Licensed products are proud to announce a limited collection of H line merchandise for sale through the Museum's online store. The proceeds generated by this sale will benefit relief efforts led by The Graybeards, a local not-for-profit organization established in response to 9/11 and dedicated to the Rockaways community.

The H is the route designation given to the special subway shuttle set up in late November to provide some subway service on the Rockaway Peninsula, which had been without subway service since Sandy struck in October. The H designation has not been used since 1994 when it was last used for the Rockaway Park Shuttle, which operates between Rockaway Park and Broad Channel.

"We were looking for a way to use our licensed products to help out in the recovery efforts taking place in the Rockaways," said Mark Heavey, MTA Director of Marketing & Communications. "The H Line has piqued a lot of interest in subway service in the Rockaways and, with the help of a few of our product licensees, presented us with a unique opportunity to promote the service and to provide tangible assistance to efforts to rebuild that community."

"All proceeds will be donated to The Graybeards Rockaway Relief efforts," said Darren Kornblut of The Image Exchange, the firm that operates the New York Transit Museum's online store. "Initially, the blue H logo will be available on t-shirts and hooded sweatshirts paired with either "The Rockaways" or "Rockaway Shuttle" spelled out underneath. The H logo will also be available on magnets and a lapel pin. Other products may be developed as well," Kornblut added.

"Graybeards are excited that the MTA has chosen us as we will get the much needed funds to those in need," said Steve Stathis, President of The Graybeards and owner of Boarders Surf Shop, one of the Rockaway Beach businesses severely harmed by Hurricane Sandy.

The H shuttle currently operates between Far Rockaway-Mott Av and Beach 90 St, providing a rail link to the A Shuttle bus to Howard Beach and connections to the A line and JFK AirTrain. The shuttle, given the H route designation, operates on tracks that pass through Hammels Wye. The rarely used Hammels Wye is the point where a single track not normally used for service that connects the Rockaway Line where it divides to serve Rockaway Park and Far Rockaway.

The first H shuttle (then known as the "HH") began service in 1956, running on repurposed LIRR tracks from Euclid Avenue to either Rockaway Park or Mott Avenue in Far Rockaway until 1972. In the late 1970s, the shuttle came back as the "CC," changed back to the "HH," then became just the H in 1986. The H was retired in 1994, replaced by an S for Shuttle.

When Sandy washed up on shore, her record breaking and destructive surge destroyed the Rockaway beach front, flooding streets, washing out the boardwalk and wiping out entire blocks. Thousands were left homeless, businesses were destroyed. Sandy's destructive surge also submerged and washed out the tracks that make up "the flats" a 70 foot wide fenced strip of land that carries the A across the middle of Jamaica Bay between Howard Beach and Broad Channel. The extensive damage left the Rockaways without a rail link between the peninsula and Queens.

Even as repairs continue to rebuild the "the flats," it will take several months before full subway service is restored to the peninsula, and even longer before the Rockaways rebuilds.

To buy from The Rockaways Relief Collection: <http://www.transitmuseumstore.com/rockaways>

To learn more about The Graybeards: <http://www.Graybeards.com>

To learn about the MTA's efforts to restore transit service to The Rockaways:
<http://www.mta.info/nycct/service/RebuildingRockawaysAfterHurricaneSandy.htm>



MTA Chairman & CEO Joseph J. Lhota sports "H The Rockaways" hooded sweatshirt in his Midtown office.