

COOPERATION | COMMUNICATION
COLLABORATION | COORDINATION

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**WV VOAD
Quarterly
Meetings**

Time: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

St. Thomas Catholic Church
624 Kanawha St.
Gassaway, WV

◆ June 5

◆ Sept. 11

◆ Dec. 4

Contact:
WV VOAD
815 Alderson St.
Williamson, WV 25661
(304) 235-2692 Ext. 8

**Voluntary organizations
making strides on rebuilds
in Richwood, Clendenin**



Several WV VOAD member agencies teamed to build this new home for a flood survivor in Richwood.



WV VOAD member agencies are making progress on two new homes that have been a long time coming for several flood survivors in Nicholas and Kanawha counties.

The West Virginia Conference of The United Methodist Church is leading the rebuild of a house in Richwood for a senior who lost everything when the Cherry River overran its banks during the June 2016 flood.

“He was a contractor, but he’s had a lot of health issues,” said Jack Lipphardt, who coordinates the conference’s response to the June 2016 flood. “He contracted pneumonia, had several surgeries on his leg and back and there are a number of health issues that prevent his ability to work and derive an income. He was just a natural fit for us to come in and offer some help.”

The senior has been assisted by a United Methodist disaster case manager, and he’s been living in a camper near his property while waiting for his new home to be built.

With about \$25,000 in funding from the conference, \$20,000 from the Disaster Relief Fund and volunteer labor provided by the United Methodist Church and World Renew, his new home is now complete except for flooring, some interior work and a new heating, cooling and ventilation system.

“World Renew really wanted to build this house, and their initial hope was to build it soup-to-nuts,” Lipphardt said. “They ran into some schedule issues with their volunteers, so we needed to contract to put the footers in.”

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The footers were poured in February, “but then March happened,” Lipphardt said. “Snow, rain, ice, and even when the sun was out, it was cold. We weren’t able to mix mortar or lay block — March just killed us.”

The project faced repeated weather delays. But in the past couple of months, volunteer teams collaborated to get the work done. United Methodist volunteer crews began the framework, and then World Renew brought in volunteers from around the country to install windows, set up the electricity and plumbing and do the drywall.

“It’s been a neat partnership with so many groups working to get this done,” Lipphardt said.

The house, which was elevated about nine feet to prevent future flood damage, is expected to be ready for the client to move in by mid-summer.

In Clendenin, a new home is underway for a couple whose property was ravaged when the Elk River flooded in June 2016.

Jerry and Anna Rucker lived right next to Herbert Hoover High School on the property where Jerry grew up. They were getting ready for church — Anna is a part-time minister and attends several local churches — and barely had time to get out of their home as flood waters rose.

Just two weeks earlier they had finished remodeling their home, installing new flooring and moving in new furniture.

Four feet of water got into their house, eventually destroying it and two other buildings on their property. In the coming days, the swollen river would bring down nearby trees and wash away their riverbank and dock.

“This is a couple who, over the years, has done all kinds of things to help out other folks in their community,” said Tina Smith, the Ruckers’ Disaster Case Manager.

Last year, even while they were displaced and in the midst of their own recovery, they volunteered to collect supplies for hurricane survivors in Texas and Florida.

The couple has been staying in the vacant home of a neighbor who recently passed away.

Just this month, the footers for their new home have been poured and the rebuilding process has begun. The home is being constructed by volunteers with Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS), with funding provided by Community Lutheran Partners, Lutheran Disaster Response, MDS and the VOAD Disaster Relief Fund. The homeowners contributed \$20,000 toward the rebuilding.

To avoid future flooding, the homesite has been moved to an elevated plot of land about 100 yards uphill from their previous house, and the foundation will be elevated about four feet as an added precaution.

The goal is to get the family moved into their new home by early fall.

“It’s great to see things moving along,” Smith said. “This is just a really special family.”



Site work has begun on a new home for a Clendenin couple whose property was destroyed in the June 2016 flood.



Federal employees visit West Virginia to volunteer on flood recovery project



A group of nine employees from the federal **Department of Homeland Security** traveled to West Virginia this month as volunteers, helping a Nicholas County family rebuild from the flood of June 2016.

DHS employees select different recovery projects around the country to volunteer with each year, often spending several days on site.

Volunteers, who were from Washington D.C., Virginia and New Jersey, traveled to West Virginia May 7-11 and stayed at the National Guard Armory-Convention Center in Summersville. They were accompanied by a volunteer with the **American Red Cross**.

The team worked on a Richwood home, belonging to a young couple and their three children, that sustained major damage in the June 2016 flood. The family has been assisted by a WV VOAD disaster case manager throughout their recovery.

Through the coordination of WV VOAD and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the DHS team helped replace damaged siding, replaced damaged interior doors and began trim work inside the home. WV VOAD, the United Way of Southern West Virginia and the Greater Nicholas Long Term Recovery Group provided funding to pay for materials for the project.

While in Nicholas County, the DHS volunteer team was honored with a luncheon.

“With Richwood being one of the hardest-hit communities during the June 2016 flood, and an area with minimal resources, it means a lot that DHS would partner with WV VOAD to help us with the recovery of these families,” said Jenny Gannaway, WV VOAD executive director. “Without volunteers, a lot of our donated funds would have to go to pay contractors, and in some communities, there aren’t a lot of those. We can assist more flood survivors with skilled volunteers than if we were having to pay for those services.

“It’s like a pie, with volunteers, donors, case managers and agencies, and volunteers are a very important part of that,” Gannaway said. “When we all come together, it works very well.”



Photos by FEMA Region III External Affairs



So many of WV VOAD's member agencies and partner organizations play a huge role in helping West Virginians every day. One of them, **the West Virginia National Guard**, was recognized for its service and awarded the 2017 **Sam Carocci Humanitarian Disaster Relief Award** from the **Society of St. Vincent de Paul**. The award was presented last summer at the society's annual conference in Tampa.

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul is an international, nonprofit, Catholic lay organization of about 800,000 people who volunteer in 150 countries, and it's a founding member of the National VOAD. The group's Sam Carocci award is given each year to an outstanding organization in disaster relief and recovery.

"The West Virginia National Guard provided us with support for our National House in a Box® Program, and under the leadership of Major General James Hoyer, the Guard assisted us with the 2017 W. Va. Economic Recovery Summit at Marshall University. Building partnerships is critical doing disaster recovery and St. Vincent de Paul is honored to be working with the West Virginia National Guard," said **Elizabeth Disco-Shearer, CEO of the Disaster Services Corporation of St. Vincent de Paul USA**.

Major General James Hoyer said, "The 6,400 men and women of the West Virginia National Guard are honored to receive this award. Our response was part of the collective efforts of our organization, local and state first responders and volunteers from across our communities. We often use the motto, 'Neighbors helping neighbors,' and that's what it's all about. What affects one of us, affects all of us, so we respond as if every family we help is our own. It is my sincere hope that others may learn from our experience so that they are better prepared to respond to emergencies in their own communities."



**RESILIENTLY
BRIDGING
THE GAP IN WEST VIRGINIA**

WV Bridge Project provides safe passage for Kanawha County family

An extended family in Clendenin has received a new pedestrian bridge and repairs to a vehicular bridge, restoring access to several homes after their property sustained damage in the June 2016 flood. Many organizations provided donations and volunteer labor through the WV VOAD Bridge Project, including the **West Virginia Conference of The United Methodist Church**, the **Kanawha County Long-Term Recovery Committee**, **Community Lutheran Partners**, the **United Way**, **Team Orwigsburg** and **Mennonite Disaster Service**. Thanks to all who helped!

WV VOAD is a humanitarian association of independent organizations that may be active in all phases of disaster. Its mission is to identify unmet needs and facilitate efficient streamlined service delivery to those imperiled or impacted by disaster while eliminating duplication of effort through cooperation, coordination, communication, collaboration in the four phases of disaster: preparation, response, recovery and mitigation. West Virginia is a member of the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster.

SAFETY TIP: How to stay safe during a flood

When floodwaters start to rise, knowing which precautions to take can prevent a scary situation from escalating and causing injuries or death. Here are some things to remember.

If you're staying indoors:

- Continue listening to local radio stations, National Weather Service warnings or TV stations for information. Be prepared to evacuate if needed.
- If instructed by local authorities, turn off the power and water in your home.
- Avoid contact with flood water.
- Do not use any gas or electrical appliances that have been flooded.
- Food that has come into contact with flood water needs to be thrown out.

If you're evacuating:

- Do not walk, swim or drive through flood water. Six inches of fast-flowing water can knock you over, and two feet of water will float a car.



- If you get caught on a flooded road with rising water, get out of the car and move to higher ground. Call 911 for help, if possible.
- Avoid contact with flood water.
- Stay out of water that may be near electricity. Watch out for downed power lines. Stay out of areas prone to flooding, including underpasses, dips, low spots and river banks.
- Do not allow children to play in or near flood water.

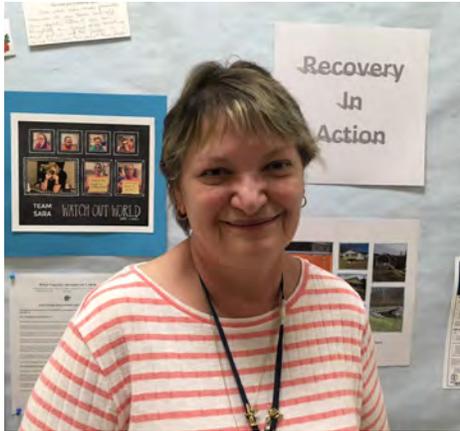
Greenbrier Valley flood survivor's new cottage is complete!



This Rainelle flood survivor has moved into his new home! He and his elderly mother escaped four feet of rushing water in their former home during the June 2016 flood and their residence was destroyed. He's been assisted by the **Disaster Case Management Program**, and he donated part of his property to provide homesites for two other flood survivors. Many thanks to **Appalachia Service Project, Catholic Charities West Virginia, the West Virginia Conference of The United Methodist Church, the Disaster Relief**

Fund and the **Greater Greenbrier Long-Term Recovery Committee** for helping build and fund his new home.

Spotlight: FEMA liaison feels right at home in West Virginia



It was just three months after the devastating flood of June 2016 that **Janet Strickland** found herself in West Virginia.

Strickland, a Voluntary Agency Liaison for the **Federal Emergency Management Agency**, was deployed to the state to help WV VOAD coordinate the recovery of thousands of survivors in 12 flood-damaged counties.

“WV VOAD as an organization as a whole was refreshing to me,” said Strickland, who has been with FEMA since 2005. “The coordination and cooperation that this VOAD exhibits is phenomenal to me. The cohesion is evident — I could see it when I got here. The first thing you see is how everybody is on the same page. Everybody is here ready to work. There are so many people and churches and denominations and state and local organizations who are willing to do whatever they can to make sure people get the help they need.”

The role of a Voluntary Agency Liaison (or VAL, as they’re called) is “to ensure survivors and their communities benefit from a coordinated, comprehensive emergency management effort integrating diverse stakeholders including voluntary, faith-based and community-based organizations,” according to a FEMA fact sheet.

Strickland, an Ohio native, came to the position with FEMA after a career with several nonprofit agencies. She had begun working with the Salvation Army before taking a job with a council on aging in Ohio. Eventually, she became the director of a nonprofit serving four communities before moving to Florida, where she took on a position with an Office on Aging.

It was in that capacity that she had some interactions with FEMA and found a role with the federal agency in November 2005 as a disaster assistance employee. Her experience in the nonprofit sector eventually led to the VAL position.

“I loved it,” said Strickland. “It was a comfortable fit because it was something I knew how to do. I’m a firm believer in, if there is an urgent need and a way to fix it, then fix it.”

Strickland has spent the past nine years as a liaison, working with VOADs and long-term recovery groups on disasters in Kansas, Florida, Indiana, Illinois, and Kentucky, and other states. Her previous deployment before arriving in West Virginia was a nine-month stint doing flood recovery in Missouri.

Strickland’s day-to-day mission revolves around helping WV VOAD fulfill the needs of people impacted by a disaster.

“I am working with case managers to help them any way I can to find resources to address unmet needs,” she said. “I work to try to establish contacts for case managers that are viable resources. Each case is different and there are always different needs.”



Janet Strickland, center, is the FEMA Voluntary Agency Liaison working with WV VOAD on the June 2016 flood recovery. She has been assisting case managers to help fulfill flood survivors’ unmet needs since Sept. 2016.

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One area in which Strickland has put in much effort is to find contacts and resources for flood survivors with disabilities.

“People need ramps, people need assistive devices and people need home modifications, and it can be a challenge to find those resources,” she said.

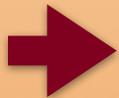
Through her work, the West Virginia University Center for Excellence in Disabilities has become a major partner with WV VOAD and the Disaster Case Management Program.

“It is working really well with VOAD and it’s a great resource for the case managers,” Strickland said.

In the months following the June 2016 flood, Strickland helped WV VOAD and survivors navigate FEMA funding and funding appeals, and she continues to coordinate relations between WV VOAD and FEMA’s regional and local recovery offices.

“We are very blessed to have Janet working with our staff,” said Jenny Gannaway, WV VOAD executive director. “Her knowledge of recovery resources and case management in general has been a tremendous help to our staff.”

“It is so good to see people working together for a common goal,” Strickland said. “I was comfortable here from day one and to me it was an honor to be able to play whatever part it was I was able to do. I know I can’t save the world, but with any case that comes across my desk, there’s usually something I can do to help.”



New resource manual available for those in need after a disaster

WV VOAD has created a new **resource manual** for residents, community organizations and state agencies seeking assistance or looking to assist others after a disaster.

Produced by WV VOAD’s AmeriCorps VISTA, **Erin Bower**, who has been working with VOAD since June 2017, the 411-page guide is now available on our website, www.wvvoad.org.

“We hoped to create a hub, or a single place where communities could find information about where to seek help in the wake of a flood or other disaster,” WV VOAD Recovery Coordinator **Bethany Bentley** said. “We wanted something that was specific to West Virginia with agencies and businesses that have been cooperative and collaborative with WV VOAD.”

The resource manual includes information about WV VOAD member agencies and the services they provide, along with contact information on vendors that have had strong relationships with WV VOAD and its member organizations.

The information is broken down geographically, first listing those organizations and businesses that provide services statewide and then identifying resources in each county. Information can be found on everything from debris cleanup and home rebuilding and repair to spiritual care, financial planning and assistance, plumbing and electrical contractors and much more.

Bower, who spent more than six months compiling information, said many people had a hand in helping identify relevant resources.

“Case managers and our member agencies played a huge role in gathering and providing contact information,” she said.

The resource manual will continue to be updated, and WV VOAD is actively seeking recommendations for additional resources, particularly in the construction field. Information can be sent to wvvoad@gmail.com.



The West Virginia Health Funders Committee gathered in Sutton in May and heard from WV VOAD on the remaining needs of flood survivors of the June 2016 flood. They also received information on progress made so far on recovery efforts. The committee includes representatives from various philanthropic health foundations around the state.