

Central Pennsylvania Flood Report

LEND A HAND

Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee

September 2011-November 30, 2012

“Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it” Song of Solomon

BACKGROUND

When 26 inches of rain from Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee fell on Central Pennsylvania in less than one week in September, 2011, the flooding which occurred was overwhelming. The Susquehanna River and the Swatara Creek exceeded flood stage and caused much destruction. The Swatara, for example, has a flood stage of just 7 feet but it crested at 28 feet. In Dauphin County, Middletown, Hummelstown, Hershey and uptown Harrisburg were heavily affected. In Lebanon City, the Snitz and “Quitty” creeks and bad storm drainage systems resulted in hundreds of homes being affected.

LEND A HAND

LEND A HAND is a 501 C 3 non-profit, Charitable Organization and is a ministry of the Presbytery of Carlisle. It has been in existence since 1989, and was initially housed in the offices of Christian Churches United of Pennsylvania. When Katrina hit, it moved to the Presbytery offices where it has been located for seven years. LEND A HAND is an all-volunteer group, with over 800 names on our email list. We own one 15 passenger van and presently own two cargo vans in which tools are taken to disaster sites. Our web site, www.lendahand.net provides additional background information and includes our Annual Reports, where we have been and how many homeowners we have assisted. While restoring homes, we also restore lives, hopes and dreams. LEND A HAND provides the skilled labor: the homeowner provides the materials.

LEND A HAND is a registered VOAD (Volunteer Organization Active in Disasters) and is listed with FEMA and PEMA. (Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency). Because of our efforts in Oakville Iowa, we were selected as the Volunteer Organization of the Year by the Governor of Iowa.

OUR SERVICE AREA

In agreement with PEMA, we were assigned the seven county areas of the encompassed by the Presbytery of Carlisle. We were responsible for Adams, Lancaster, Cumberland Perry, Lebanon, Dauphin and Northern York Counties. (No claims were filed in Adams, Franklin or Juniata Counties, also part of the Presbytery. In essence, our territory covered over 3,000 square miles!

. All FEMA and PEMA clients were referred to us for assistance.

We also received clients from the Tri-County (Dauphin, Cumberland and Perry Counties) Long Term Recovery Committee, the York County LTRC, and the Lebanon County LTRC.

LEND A HAND RESPONSE

- a. **Publicity.** We contacted the print and visual media and indicated our willingness to help those affected by the storm. The Patriot News quickly did a series of articles featuring our work teams and interviewing the homeowners. We quickly developed forms for intake of homeowner information and for assessors to complete when visiting the sites. We developed a homeowner Waiver form whereon the homeowner gave us permission to enter their property and waived any liability of our volunteers as they performed recovery assignments.
- b. **Fund Raising.** We began the process of contacting various grant agencies and local businesses to obtain funds needed to initially lease vans and trucks to haul tools to job sites. We eventually received a temporary grant from the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance agency to purchase three cargo vans and eliminate the leased units. We also received grants to purchase over \$30,000 in tools and consumables to equip our vans and ensure the safety of our volunteers.
- c. **Determination of equipment needs.** Early on, it became obvious that we needed pumps to drain water from basements. With none available in the area, we ordered one on the Internet from California and the hoses from an outlet in Boston, MA. Generators (since the homes had no power), protometers (needed to measure the water content of walls and studs), power washers, drywall tools, chop saws and other carpentry tools, and a myriad of other items were identified and purchased.
- d. **Crew chiefs.** We canvassed our email lists and quickly identified several retired general contractors or skilled trades' people to initially survey homes, determine Bills of Materials to be shared with the homeowner, and to supervise the reconstruction efforts.
- e. **Scheduling.** The logistics of scheduling homeowner's availability, materials to be on site, the appropriate crew chief, and a work crew was accomplished at the office by volunteers and members of the Steering Committee.

CLIENTS IN NEED OF HELP

In Central Pennsylvania, over 4,200 homeowners applied for financial assistance with FEMA. Most homeowners used the funds to contract with professional restorer companies (such as ServPro) or, with the help of families or friends, restored the homes themselves.

LEND a HAND's clients fell into several categories: the elderly, the disabled, the single parent, the 'loner' who had no immediate support group, the lower income, and the otherwise disenfranchised.

As of November 30, 2012, Lend A Hand has pumped out basements, mucked out mud and debris, and power washed and sanitized hundreds of homes. Additionally, we have replaced flooring, drywall, doors, windows, insulation, and siding and otherwise rebuilt any area damaged by the waters.

Overall, we received requests for help from 341 homeowners. Of that number, several dozen were rejected because the damage was the result of long term homeowner neglect and not storm damage, per se. Others withdrew their request because they independently restored their homes.

We did, however, pump out 47 and muck out and rebuild 256 homes.

VALUE OF OUR SERVICES TO OUR CLIENTS

A nationally franchised restoration company charged a flat fee for clean out and mold remediation of \$4,000 for a basement and \$7,000 for a basement and first floor.

The Pennsylvania Trades Council has previously reviewed our daily work sheets on which the skill levels (GENERAL LABORER TO SKILLED TRADES) of assignments were listed. It is their estimate that the “average” wage for our efforts is \$27.00 an hour.

Based on the two factors (our ‘competitors’ and an average wage in this location) **the estimated value of our services is \$ 1,324,500 savings to the homeowners.**

The following chart identifies the 28 MUNICIPAL JURISDICTIONS IN FIVE COUNTIES in which we have worked.

Dauphin County-134 homes Cumberland County-8 homes Lebanon County-106 homes

Bressler-1

Camp Hill-2

Palmyra-5

Dauphin-3

Carlisle-1

Lebanon city-69

Highspire-4

New Cumberland-2

Annville-13

Steelton-1

Wormleysburg-4

Cleona-4

Harrisburg-36

Perry County-3

Cornwall-4

Hershey-18

Marysville-1

Fredricksburg-1

Hummerlstown-21

Ickesburg-2

Mt. Gretna-1

Middletown-49

Myerstown-3

Gratz-1

Grantville-1

York County-5 homes

 Lewisberry-1

Richland-4

Schafferstown-1

Dover-1

York city-3

As of Nov. 30, 2012, we continue to work on four homes in the Harrisburg area and 20 homes in the Lebanon County area. These homes are included in the overall totals above. Volunteers are still needed to complete these homes.

RESTORING HOMES and RENEWING LIVES are the core of our efforts. Although volunteers may begin their journey as strangers, the fellowship and camaraderie develop life long bonds among our people. Doing God's work for those in need is a life changing, spiritually enriching faith journey for all who participate.