MOUNTAIN PROJECTS

Fall Newsletter 2024



Jennifer Cagle lost her home during flooding caused by Hurricane Helene. Mountain Projects helped to provide shelter



Western Carolina University athletes helped collect and transport three full-size truckloads of in-kind donations for flood survivors



Mountain Projects employees Vivian Bumgarner, Mary Jane Messer, Tori Plemmons and Vicky Ferguson canvas Haywood County communities to provide relief services after Hurricane Helene

We Are Thankful for You Every Day

Dear Friends of Mountain Projects,



Patsy Davis

Every day, we hear stories. They come to us with every phone call or every visitor who walks into our office. Each story is unique, yet they all share a common thread: **a need for a helping hand at just the right time.** These stories remind us that everyone, at some point, needs support—and that's where Mountain Projects comes in.

In this newsletter, **we're honored to share a few stories we have permission to tell.** They highlight how your generosity transforms lives, improves health, and builds resilience right here in Haywood and Jackson Counties. **Your donations make this possible.**

As a community action agency, **Mountain Projects is dedicated to helping people become self-sufficient.** Through programs like housing support, economic mobility initiatives, affordable healthcare access, public transportation, and senior services, we work to lift up those in need. **We also respond to emergencies,** such as the devastation caused by **Tropical Storm Fred, Hurricane Helene, and the Canton Mill closure.** No matter the situation, Mountain Projects is here to help.

While much of our work is funded by grants earmarked for specific purposes, such as housing or healthcare counseling, **your donations give us the flexibility to address urgent, unforeseen needs.** Whether it's providing **housing for families displaced by disaster** or **helping someone navigate a sudden loss of heat or power,** your support allows us to fill the gaps and respond in real time.

Some neighbors need significant assistance; others just need a little boost. Whatever the need, **Mountain Projects is here to restore stability and hope in our small corner of heaven.** With your continued support, we can ensure that the stories we share are ones of love, generosity, and gratitude.

Thank you for being part of this work, for reading these stories, and for helping Mountain Projects make a difference. **Together, we bring blessings to households in need.**

Wishing you and your family abundance and joy,

Patsy A. Davis

Executive Director
pdavis@mountainprojects.org

Thanks to those who have already contributed!

A Special Note from Mountain Projects

Executive Director Patsy Davis, a 34-year employee of our organization, announced earlier this year her planned retirement, set for spring, 2025. Because of the challenges brought by Hurricane Helene, and to see our current affordable housing efforts through to their later stages, Patsy has chosen to postpone her retirement until fall of next year.

Mountain Projects & Hurricane Relief

Thank you to all who have made donations to flood relief – we couldn't do it without you!



The Lees

Roger Lee, a woodworker, is attached to his Clyde home place in a way that chokes him up a bit when he tries to describe it.

So it makes sense that when he finished an home addition 20 years ago, he enclosed a message in the wall. Behind the insulation, he wrote his name and those of his family, the date, and asked God to bless the place.

This was just after flooding in 2004 caused by Hurricane Ivan, and Roger built the house higher, at the back of the lot. When Tropical Storm Fred came in 2021 they were spared, and they thought they were safe. They weren't. In September Helene took everything they couldn't wrestle up the hill as the water came washing in.

Mountain Projects has been able to help.



The Tuckers

Over the years, Hadeel Saud Tucker had a recurring dream: she was alone in a body of water, and couldn't figure out what to do. On Friday, September 27, she lived the dream.

Hadeel, and her husband Nathan, an Army helicopter mechanic, spent nine hours on top of a Swannanoa car wash, with racing flood waters only inches away. Hadeel clung to their terrified cat. Fortunately the water rose no higher, and eventually they were rescued, but they had no papers, no wallets, no phones and no belongings.

Fate led them to Haywood County, to friends, and to help. Since that time the Tuckers have been stranded, trying to straighten things out with insurance and FEMA. We've been happy to lend a hand.



The Wrights

The Wright family of Clyde fled their trailer home with moments to spare on September 27, reaching high ground nearby with their eight dogs in tow and not much more.

They watched as the river filled the trailer, lifted it up, and set it back down in the adjacent Emmanuel Baptist Church parking lot, where they thought it would roll over, but it just settled. Fifteen homes in the neighborhood were destroyed.

The Wrights lived in a tent for three weeks on their former home site before an array of friends, organizations, resources and even strangers came together to make things better for this family. Mountain Projects was well-positioned to help make this happen.

Read these stories in full at mountainprojects.org/news, and consider a donation to help flood survivors get back on their feet



The Parkers & Lewises

Beth Lewis has worked with Mountain Projects since 2002, and her husband, Hugh, is retired after a career as a long-haul trucker. As they enjoyed a fall evening on the porch of their home recently, Beth was thinking about how to help households affected by the flood. What could they do to help someone who had lost it all, she wondered. It was then that Hugh turned to her and asked, "What do you think about donating our camper to a flood survivor?"

"It was weighing heavy on my heart that we needed to do something - and then Hugh was thinking the very same thing - It was a God thing," says Beth.

Meanwhile, the Parker family of Clyde had lost everything they owned. They needed a safe, dry, healthy place to stay while they sorted out details with insurance, FEMA and finding a new place to live. Now, a short while later, the Parkers have a safe place to live and the two families share what they consider to be a blessing.

Working to Solve the WNC Housing Dilemma





Josh Matthews, new homeowner of a self-help-built home at our Bethel Village development near Waynesville.



Jeremiah Durham is owner of a new self-help-built home at our Bethel Village development near Waynesville.

Amid an **intensifying housing crisis** in Western North Carolina, Mountain Projects **has accelerated efforts** to **provide affordable housing** in Haywood and Jackson Counties. During 2024 we **expanded our construction** efforts, completing five homes in Sylva, three homes near Maggie Valley, and began **planning another 18-23 homes** between Canton and Clyde. Available land for **micro homes** further enhances our capacity to deliver innovative, **sustainable housing options** for our mountain neighbors.

Recent **community hardships**, including severe flooding that impacted **over 500 homes**, have underscored the community's need for **fast, safe and desirable housing solutions.** "These past few years have hit our community hard," said Mountain Projects Executive Director Patsy Davis. "Housing is critical to our recovery."

With support from a national **USDA pilot program**, Mountain Projects recently placed three modular homes, with more planned for early 2025. Modular construction offers **high energy efficiency standards, fast timelines and cost predictability,** and meets grant guidelines for workforce housing and sweat equity contributions through the **USDA's Mutual Self-Help Housing Program.**

Additional plans include a micro home development at Bethel Village near **Maggie Valley**, where **compact, low-maintenance housing** is ideal for flood survivors and the region's aging population. "We have the land and the need," said Davis, "and with a bit of luck, we'll break ground in early 2025."

Mountain Projects had **good success** with volunteer support and **community partnerships** after past flooding events, and **seeks faith-based and other nonprofits** for discussion and collaboration.

Through community partnerships, volunteer efforts, and donor support, Mountain Projects is committed to building a future where **every resident has a safe, stable home.**

Would you like contribute to affordable housing in Haywood & Jackson Counties? See page 4

Housing is affordable when it comprises no more than 30% of the family's income. Families that spend more than this on housing are cost-burdened.

Cost-burdened households in Haywood County

7,540 or 29%

Cost-burdened households in Jackson County

4,473 or 30%

The Webster Village Partnership

Webster Village, a partnership between Mountain Projects, Givens Communities, Western Carolina University and Mountain Projects of Sylva, plans to create approximately 211-237 new housing units in Jackson County near the Webster community, and will include Self Help Housing.

The collaborative project was able to go forward because of financial contributions from Dogwood Health Trust.

"Our regional housing needs are greater than any one agency can address," said Patsy Davis, executive director of Mountain Projects. "Dogwood Health Trust has provided an opportunity for us to come together and meet a big challenge. We have a powerful concept and the right partners to make this project a success."



Setting a modular home at our Bethel Village project in Jonathan Valley



Mountain Projects is proud to partner with the Asheville organization **Working Wheels** to provide replacement vehicles for families who lost their cars during Hurricane Helene.

Right now Working Wheels needs cars to repair and refurbish for families in need. Can you help? Your donation of a used car is tax-deductible.

To donate a car, visit: **WorkingWheelsWNC.org/donate-a-car**



Smoky Mountain Housing Partnership/ Mountain Projects employees Kerry Moffat and Haley Griffith process donated clothes for Mountain Projects Hurricane Helene relief efforts

Head Start: A Half-Century of Educating Mountain Kids







Top left: Election Day! Students at our Waynesville B Head Start Center choose their favorite cartoon character for "President"

Bottom left: "Look at this!" at the Kneedler Center

Left: Halloween at the Kneedler Center

Head Start seeks support for holiday food and gifts for 100+ families. To support these efforts, visit MountainProjects.org/giving, then click through to the Vicky Gribble Food for Families Fund

Your support strengthens our community!

FLOOD RELIEF · EMERGENCY NEEDS · HEATING ASSISTANCE
FOOD FOR FAMILIES · AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Households that weren't affected by Hurricane Helene continue to have critical needs of their own, and we are working to address those challenges. All funds raised in support of flood survivors are used for that purpose, while other funds will support causes requested by the donor.

TO DONATE ELECTRONICALLY:
- Visit our website, MountainProjects.org/giving & fill out the online contribution form

TO DONATE BY MAIL:
- Fill out the enclosed contribution coupon
- Place coupon with credit card info OR check in return envelope, drop in mail

WANT TO VOLUNTEER?
- Call John Chicoine, Volunteer Coordinator: 828-356-2833

DONATE "ALMOST NEW" HOUSEHOLD ITEMS:
- Mountain Projects Resale Store, 2143 Asheville Rd., Waynesville
- Sylva Linings Resale Store, 1264 W. Main St., Sylva

We're grateful for your contributions

Mountain Projects is a 501(c)3 nonprofit charitable organization. Donations are tax deductible. EIN: 56-0849092

Contact Us

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Wish to inquire about our services? Schedule with one of our intake counselors in Haywood or Jackson County.

Call for an appointment:
Haywood County 828-492-4103 or 828-492-4114
Jackson County 828-586-2345 or 828-550-5315

Website: mountainprojects.org