

# MISSION MOMENT

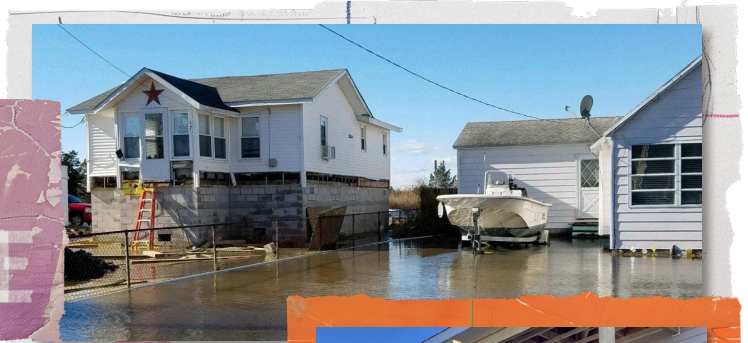
## ELEVATING HOMES AND HOPE

On October 29, 2021, Somerset and Dorchester counties experienced Maryland's worst tidal flooding in 50 years — in many places, water levels were at or higher than Hurricane Sandy (2012). This kind of massive flooding creates immediate and long-term health threats to flood survivors and to their homes. The influx of bay water carried contaminants and wreaked havoc on plumbing and electrical systems, and left homes susceptible to the growth of mold and mildew.

The 2021 storm was unnamed and undeclared by federal agencies, and received minimal media coverage. Few people knew the storm even happened, let alone where to find the resources and networks needed to help survivors move toward recovery. But the Eastern Shore Long-Term Recovery Committee was there. Having formed after Hurricane Sandy, the ESLTRC was able to stand back up quickly when needed in 2021.

Following Phase One (rebuilding 10 destroyed homes) the ESLTRC imagined new ways to respond to survivor families seeking help. In spring 2024, Week of Compassion entered into a new partnership with the Eastern Shore Long-Term Recovery Committee. This partnership agreement provides salary support for the ESLTRC Disaster Recovery Coordinator as they move into Phase Two operations: a tidal flood recovery and mitigation project, aiming to use volunteer labor to elevate 100 homes that flooded in 2021 and are at risk of repeat flooding in Somerset and Dorchester Counties. The intention is to make homes healthy and safe, to “reduce the risk of repetitive damage, provide better stewardship of funding entrusted to us, and improve the quality of life for surviving families.”

Two of the poorest counties in the state of Maryland, Dorchester and Somerset residents live primarily in HUD-owned public housing; almost half the population of Crisfield MD (Somerset Co) lives in supported housing units. In



response to this need, the ESLTRC stepped into Phase Three of their work — partnering with the city of Crisfield to build new affordable homes on previously abandoned lots and making homes affordable and available to new homeowners. Crisfield Mayor, Darlene Taylor, celebrates the way relationships nurtured over the last decade have made possible the development of this multi-phased approach. She emphasizes “those are things that only come from long-term partnerships.”



With the increased intensity and frequency of storms, the strategy — to not repair homes without also elevating them — has gained not only notoriety, but also support from the community to make lasting changes. The people of the Eastern Shore value the long-term recovery effort and the significant mitigation component.

This intersection of socioeconomic status and climate vulnerability is where the resources and creativity of Week of Compassion, our partners, and community-driven response meet. Coming alongside climate-vulnerable communities like the Eastern Shore is a significant shared priority among ecumenical partners and local leaders.

Mayor Taylor notes, “When the ESLTRC came in, from the beginning, they built relationships of trust in our community... The vulnerable in our community are often overlooked, but one of the things the ESLTRC was so good at was making sure those who were most in need... were the ones who actually received services. What we have now is a whole new paradigm, a new trust model.”

This is where Week of Compassion is eager to engage — relying on ecumenical connection and innovative local leadership to find **A NEW WAY** makes the program successful, and most importantly, provides tangible hope and new possibility for survivors right in their own communities.

*Story originally shared March 2025. Additional details and photos follow a recent Week of Compassion partner visit. See the 2026 Special Offering theme video “A NEW WAY” for more! [WeekOfCompassion.org/2026](https://WeekOfCompassion.org/2026)*