

December 13 2022

Out of Destruction, New Possibility

how Dayton's tornado recovery brings innovative housing possibility

When Associate Director Caroline Hamilton-Arnold was in Dayton, OH earlier this year, she rented a truck large enough to move a 14-foot trailer. The Heartland Conference of the United Church of Christ was outfitting the trailer with a full set of tools and supplies for volunteer teams to use for disaster recovery, and its inaugural use was at a collaborative recovery site coordinated with Week of Compassion and the Pathway to Homeownership Project (PTHO) in response to the [2019 Memorial Day tornado outbreak](#).



When Caroline picked up the truck, the staff behind the counter asked why she was in town. Learning about the tornado recovery work, he shared his own stories about the tornado. His girlfriend's apartment had been destroyed. After the tornado, she pieced together short-term rentals, sometimes couch-surfing with family and friends. "She just got into a new rental a few weeks ago [nearly 3 years later]," the young man shared. "Thanks for being here, for not forgetting about Dayton."



Through traditional recovery processes, the Long-term Recovery Operations Group in Dayton was able to help hundreds of families reach recovery, mostly those who owned their homes when the tornado hit. Renters, though, are often underserved by typical disaster recovery assistance – the assumption is made that with some help replacing lost personal items, they can relocate to a new rental. That was a challenge in Dayton, where the rental housing stock (especially affordable rentals) was limited before the tornado;

the tornado left more than 1500 units uninhabitable. Out of this need, and with the involvement of two dozen agencies and organizations, [the PTHO program](#) was launched to help qualified tornado survivors become first-time homeowners, disrupting the generational poverty cycle and stabilizing tornado-impacted neighborhoods that would see tremendous positive benefits from investment.

Several volunteers noted the positive impact of the project for the neighborhoods. Neighbors often

stopped volunteers to thank them for their work and for their kindness. A driver delivering sheetrock for the project said he had grown up in one of the homes and told the group stories about the area from his childhood.

What began in early 2022 as a short-term volunteer site for Week of Compassion extended through the summer, thanks to the partnership with the United Church of Christ and a grant award from Lowe's and National VOAD for construction materials. Through the additional weeks of operation, Week of Compassion coordinated nearly 1500 volunteer hours - bringing two homes in the program close to completion. A local youth program and technical students from Sinclair College are working to finish those homes by the end of this year, as well as working on two additional homes for the PTHO program.



"This project is truly an example of the power of collaboration," Caroline says, from the initial dreaming of the program, "to the many organizations that have contributed labor and expertise, to the multiple sources of funding and material donations. Since the start of the Pathways to Homeownership Project a couple of years ago, we've seen other communities launch similar initiatives as part of their own disaster recoveries. It is exciting to see folks coming together to meet needs for rental and affordable housing, using disaster recovery as an opportunity to make communities more affordable, more sustainable, and more just."



Click the map for an [interactive look](#) at Week of Compassion responses.



Florida

- Hurricane Nicole relief



Kentucky

- long term flood relief



Texas

- Hurricane Harvey long term response



El Salvador

- hurricane relief



Indonesia

- earthquake response



Armenia

- armed conflict

[Donate](#)

View this and other
[recent stories on our website](#)
or [download a PDF](#)
of this email.

^ CONNECT WITH US v



(317) 713-2442 info@weekofcompassion.org

www.weekofcompassion.org

Week of Compassion | PO Box 1986, Indianapolis, IN 46206

[Unsubscribe vy@woc.disciples.org](mailto:vy@woc.disciples.org)

[Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)

Sent by info@weekofcompassion.org