

Hear2Help in the Midst of Disaster

By: Buffy Ashmore

Hear2Help Program Director

Edward Everett Hale once said, “Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success.” This quote best describes the Polk County community collaboration after recent flooding and mudslides. Such loss is often unthinkable and unimaginable. However, in the midst of all the chaos, organizations, agencies and community members collaborated in an effort to help those affected by the tragedy. Several local agencies and organizations were convened by Josh Kennedy, Polk County Consolidated Human Services Director, in an effort to develop a plan of action focused on providing recovery resources for those impacted by recent events.

On Saturday, June 9, many of these agencies and organizations made themselves available at the Polk County Public Library for the Polk County Disaster Recovery Fair to answer questions and provide resources to those in need. Polk Fit, Fresh and Friendly along with the Foothills Health Network assisted by developing and distributing flyers to promote the event, and distribute a Hear2Help Disaster Resource Guide created to complement the existing Hear2Help Community Resource Guide.

The Hear2Help program was developed to provide and disseminate information on community health and wellness resources, including how to access those resources, in Polk County. Listed below are agencies that may have resources available for those who may need help. While the resources listed pertain directly to disaster recovery, keep in mind that these agencies may provide additional resources and assistance not directly related to disaster recovery.

The American Red Cross is available to assist by providing shelter, food, health and mental services to help families and entire communities get back on their feet.

Polk County Planning Department is available to answer questions for properties located in the flood boundary and floodway areas according to Polk County maps. They can also assist in explaining current ordinances, and rebuilding standards for any development in the designated flood areas.

Thermal Belt Outreach Ministry (TBOM) may be able to assist with medical care and/or prescriptions for qualified clients, and may be available to assist with material cost for culvert, driveway, and fence repair. TBOM has a food pantry on-site.

The Free Clinics have volunteer counselors on staff at their Hendersonville location. They also have a pharmacy as well as a prescription assistance program that provides free medications to those who qualify. Medical supplies may be obtainable through St. James Medical Closet in Hendersonville.

Polk Health Center- Blue Ridge Community Health has licensed social workers and family nurse practitioners onsite for counseling and medical services. They also provide medication and prescription assistance through The Free Clinics, available onsite.

St. Luke's Hospital offers outpatient psychiatry services for adults age 55 and over at Senior Life Solutions. They accept self-referrals as well as physician, social services, rest home, adult daycare and/ or hospital referrals.

Rutherford, Polk, McDowell Health District offers permits for new septic tanks and drain lines to replace a damaged/ failing system. Well permits and water testing is available also.

Melvin Hill Baptist Church is available to assist with appliance damage, broken windows, driveways, retaining walls, and fence repair.

Vaya Health can offer assistance and support around stress management through tools and resources such as handouts.

Family Preservation Services provide clinicians that may be available to assist and connect clients to counselors, medical services and medication/ prescription assistance.

Polk County Schools are available to provide counseling and support for students/youth.

Polk County Human Service Agency may be available to provide assistance with medical expenses and prescription costs for those who are eligible. They may also be able to provide temporary financial assistance to meet specific family needs for families with minor children in the home. All programs do have eligibility criteria.

The Meeting Place may be able to assist with medical supplies such as canes and walkers.

Foothills Pharmacy can supply medical supplies, as well as provide prescription refills.

If you were unable to attend the event, and still need help or information, you can access the Recovery Resource Guide online at

<http://www.polkfitfreshandfriendly.org/uploads/1/0/8/7/10875927/h2hrecoveryresourceguide.pdf>

If you would like more information on the Hear2Help program, please contact Buffy Ashmore, Program Director, at 828-894-8271 ext. 222 or hear2helppolkcounty@gmail.com. Check us out online at www.polkfitfreshandfriendly.org/hear2help.

Polk Fit, Fresh and Friendly (PF3) is a group of 80+ community members, leaders and health professionals, all working together to plan and implement effective strategies to promote wellness in our community. We welcome any individual who is interested in joining us to make our community a healthier place for all. For more information and a list of our 2018 meeting dates, please visit our website at www.polkfitfreshandfriendly.org.

