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News

Volunteers help seniors, disabled with mess left from July 20 flooding (with video)

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By John Arthur Hutchison

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Painesville residents Allison and Brian Schedler had one week this summer to spend on vacation away from work, and with that time they decided to complete some mission work for their church.

Their volunteer mission group from Grove Church in Painesville Township had been scheduled this week to head to Atlantic City to help with the ongoing cleanup from Hurricane Sandy.

But when a storm hit Northeast Ohio on July 20, the trip to New Jersey was canceled. It was decided that the mission trip would instead stay local and focus on helping elderly and disabled residents in Lake County who needed assistance with flooding cleanup.

Allison and Brian, who also will celebrate their first wedding anniversary on Saturday, weren't disappointed to spend their time volunteering closer to home.

"For us, we're really excited to use our time to help people who can't help themselves right here in our back yard," Allison said. "These are people we may see again and are able to help out. It's even better."

The Rev. Jeff Sivyer said the group has divided into teams and began cleanup work on their ninth home Wednesday.

"Since Monday, we've been doing two to four per day, depending on the degree of difficulty," Sivyer said.

He said the types of damage has ranged from a little bit of moisture in a basement to discovering puddles of standing water and mold growing.



Some of the cleanup involved scraping walls to get rid of flaked paint and applying bleach solutions to get rid of mold, along with work to dry out basements and remove damaged and moldy debris.

Sivyer and his team were at the home of Willowick resident Ron Godic on Wednesday to help clean up his basement.

Godic, who is disabled, wasn't sure how exactly bad his basement was because he is unable to get downstairs.

"I was one of the few that had a minimal loss, even though I had several inches of water," Godic said. "I haven't been down there in a few years, I have no idea what it looks like anymore."

Some family members helped him with the initial cleanup after the basement flooded July 20, but he wanted some additional work done if possible because he was concerned there could be mold.

He called 211 and received a return call from Sivyer, who told him that his crew would come out this week to help him clean up.

Godic was extremely grateful for the help from the Grove Church volunteers, especially because he couldn't afford to pay a professional company to clean his basement.

"Being on a fixed income, it takes a huge amount out of your budget," he said. "Right now, that's kind of out of the question."

Robert Romig, 51, of Painesville, also was part of the four-member team who worked at Godic's home.

"I'm glad I'm here in the local area serving the people in need out here," he said. "I have done missions in West Virginia for about three years and it's a labor of love helping out the local people around here. It just makes you feel good."

Sivyer also credited Cristen Kane, director of RSVP Lake County and Lake County Citizen Corps coordinator, who has been instrumental in coordinating plans and organizations to help folks in need of assistance.

He said people who would like to volunteer to help others with flooding cleanup or who may need assistance themselves can call 211 to find out more information. People also may contact him through the church's website, www.grovechurch.cc, or by message on the church's Facebook page.

Sivyer also suggested people may call the Lake County Council on Aging at 440-205-8111 or the Lake County Emergency Management Agency at 440-350-5499.

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