

2 homes will be sold to tornado survivors

Ground broken for new construction and a rehab property.



Trotwood city leaders, Montgomery County commissioners and community partners prepare to break ground on a new home for a family impacted by the 2019 Memorial Day tornado.

By India Duke
Staff Writer

TROTWOOD

Nearly two years after Memorial Day tornadoes devastated parts of the Dayton region, volunteers and disaster service groups broke ground Wednesday on the first two homes that are being built in Trotwood as part of the Tornado Survivors Pathway to Ownership Project.

The Pathways Project gives tornado victims who were renters the opportunity to own a home and return or stay in the area where the tornadoes touched down.

“The tornado recovery group is focused on helping individuals and households identify and attain their recovery goals post tornado and we’ve served more than 2,076 families,” said Laura Mercer, executive director of the Miami Valley Long Term Recovery Operations Group. “Most of these families’ needs have been met. We only have 133 open cases remaining, 71 of which are repair/rebuild jobs and 39 of which we have actually in construction right now.”

Trotwood mayor Mary McDonald said many citizens want to come back to Trotwood, and this is the beginning of an exciting time that will only continue.

“It just makes me feel so good as a mayor to see that pride in a community where people know that they are cared about and that they’re loved,” she said.

Mennonite Disaster Service is leading the new construction on Marlin Avenue, and the Brethren Disaster Ministries and the Presbyterian of the Miami Valley will perform the rehab next door of the second home also on Marlin Avenue.

“Following a natural disaster, Mennonite Disaster Service’s aim is to assist the most vulnerable community members, individuals and families who would not otherwise have the means to recover.

MDS volunteers provide the skills and labor needed to respond, rebuild and restore in the wake of a disaster. The Pathways Project fits this vision perfectly,” said Lawrence Matthews, chairman Mennonite Disaster Service Western Ohio.

Data from Miami Valley Long Term Recovery Operations Group showed about 67% or 746 properties of the impacted area in Trotwood were single family homes, with 22 being destroyed and 148 sustaining major damage.

At least 374 single family homes were affected in some way.

Montgomery County gave \$1 million of Community Development Block Grant recovery funds toward the project.

“These homes will do so much more than provide shelter for the tornado survivors.

They will give them security, stability and the chance to build equity,” said Montgomery County Commissioner Judy Dodge.

While the homes are built, tornado survivors that have never owned a home are prepped for the home buying process with the help of the Home Ownership Center of Greater Dayton. The homes aren't being built for a specific family, but those that applied for the Pathway Project will have first pick on the affordable homes.

“The Pathways Project is both an affordable housing and a neighborhood stabilization project. The houses we build will be sold at market rate, and then we will use down payment assistance to ensure their affordability for the buyers, that way we keep the neighborhood stable and we can make it affordable for them,” said Mercer.

The project is also a way for families to save money by buying rather renting, which is often more expensive.

Requirements for the Pathways Project include verification of being impacted by the tornado, must be a nonhomeowner, and must be able to become mortgage ready.

Those interested in donating time or contracting services or applying for the Pathways Project should contact Laura Mercer via email at laura.mercer@sinclair.edu or apply at Homeownership-Dayton.org.

Contact this reporter at India.Duke@coxinc.com.