

Tioga Opportunities Inc. gets \$100,000 boost from Senior Citizens Foundation

Rick Stilson On 7/30/12 • in the category News



Members of the Tioga County Senior Citizens Foundation present a check for \$100,000 to Tioga Opportunities. From the left are TCSCF Board members Roy Yarrington and Mary Donnelly, Foundation President Ralph Kelsey, Tioga Opportunities Executive Director Kathleen Horner and Deputy Director Dave Woodburn. (Photos by Rick Stilson)

The Tioga County Senior Citizens Foundation (TCSCF) made a donation of \$100,000 to Tioga Opportunities Inc. for recovery efforts and other flood-related repairs. The check was presented by President of the Tioga County Senior Citizens Foundation Ralph Kelsey at the beginning of the foundation's regular July meeting on July 23, 2012.

"In appreciation of all Tioga Opportunities does, we as a board wanted to thank you," Kelsey said as he presented the check, "this represents the trust you have with us to get the funds out to the community."

Tioga Opportunities Executive Director Kathleen Horner said that recovering from the flood has been a real journey, and that though they've come a long way, there is still much to do. "We couldn't do it without you," Horner said to the TCSCF board. She added that it is alarming how many homes are still vacant, some abandoned, and more without electricity.



Pictured is the home at 529 River Rd. in Nichols owned by George Robinson, while being worked on by Group Work Camp volunteers coordinated through Tioga Opportunities. Robinson's home has been worked on by Tioga Opportunities since the beginning of the year, and is the kind of project that the donation from the Tioga County Senior Citizens Foundation will be used for.

“Twenty percent of the homes affected by the flood were homes owned by seniors,” Horner said, adding that those homes frequently have the highest expense to repair while the owners have little money to pay for it. “Little by little, house by house, people are getting back in,” Horner said.

George Robinson of River Road in Nichols is one of the seniors being helped by Tioga Opportunities. Robinson praised Flood Recovery Case Manager Jerry Pierce for the assistance he has offered through Tioga Opportunities.

Robinson had 11 feet of water in his home during the flood, to the ceiling of the first floor. Everything had to be gutted. Tioga Opportunities Inc. Deputy Director Dave Woodburn said that they have been working on Robinson’s home since January.

Thanks to the efforts of Pierce and Tioga Opportunities Inc., the first floor of Robinson’s home is finished, with Spartan but comfortable furniture. “They have been awesome, they have been so good to me,” Robinson said. Robinson talked about working two fulltime jobs in order to help his children get a good start in life. He joked that he gave all his money away, so as to leave the world as he came into it. It has been hard at times for Robinson to accept the outpouring of help he has been given.

“They have done more than they said they would,” Robinson said of Tioga Opportunities Inc.