

## HERKIMER – ONEIDA ORGANIZATIONS ACTIVE IN DISASTER

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## Herkimer Oneida-Organizations Active in Disaster

Herkimer Oneida Organizations Active in Disaster (HOOAD) announced that on July 13<sup>th</sup> a volunteer-led rebuilding effort to assist homeowners impacted by the October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2019 flooding will be launched. Volunteer teams from across New York State are expected, and local volunteers are also welcome to join the effort. This rebuilding effort is the final phase of assistance organized by HOOAD. Examples of the types of assistance to be provided include light carpentry, floor repair, and drywall work.

“We know there are residents who have been unable to find or afford the construction assistance needed. It might be that a set of basement steps, a floor that was compromised or drywall that needs to be replaced,” explained Kathy Fox, Co-Chair of HOOAD, “By mobilizing skilled volunteer teams who have access to construction materials bought in bulk, we can help impacted families stretch their budgets further and help them more fully recover.” Earlier efforts of HOOAD primary partner in this work, the United Methodist Committee on Relief, mobilized volunteer crews that were responsible for removing mud and debris from more than 134 homes. They now lead the construction side of this rebuild effort.

Local volunteers interested in joining this effort can register at [www.volunteersunitedmv.org](http://www.volunteersunitedmv.org). Local volunteers will be linked to experienced teams and will participate in an orientation session before deploying.

United Way of the Valley & Greater Utica Area (United Way VGU) is continuing to accept donations on HOOAD’s behalf for construction materials. Donations can be made at [unitedwayvgu.org/donateflood](http://unitedwayvgu.org/donateflood).

The Long Term Recovery Committee of HOOAD, comprised of HOOAD representatives, are responsible for fund allocation decisions. Fox explains,

“When donors contribute to the HOOAD Construction Fund, they are helping their neighbors get the maximum benefit because it funds repair work with no labor costs. Donations will buy the wood, drywall and materials that the volunteers need to help restore these homes.”

Disaster case managers, employees from local not for profits who are trained in disaster recovery, are reaching out to impacted residents to conduct interviews to fully understand the current needs. Many of those who will be helped in this effort have already been served by the volunteer crews who deployed in the months after the event to remove damaged materials, mud and debris, but as with any disaster, Fox acknowledges that new needs might be revealed.

“We have extensive list from reports that we are working with. These lists were gathered by United Way VGU’s 211 hotline and survey teams that went door to door at the time, but if a homeowner isn’t confident that we are aware of their needs, they can dial 2-1-1 to make us aware of their needs.”