

Efforts Underway to Assist Displaced Families

Written by Ashley Wilson
Monday, 22 July 2013 11:54

Individuals and agencies in Avery County are coming together to provide assistance to three families displaced by the July 16 landslide on Highway 194. Weeks of soaking rain led to the collapse of roadway, sending tons of debris down the mountainside, covering two occupied mobile homes on Blevins Creek Road. A third mobile home was later condemned by the fire marshal.

Several animals were killed in the landslide, but residents of the two homes covered by debris escaped safely. All of those affected by the slide are currently residing with family. The residents of the third home were able to return to retrieve essential belongings, but the two families whose homes are covered were not so fortunate. According to Madison Tapio, who is organizing a fundraiser for the families, they have “lost everything.”

Tapio, who heard about the incident and sought out a way to help, is supporting the families with a bake sale. She and others are selling homemade baked goods at the Newland Rock Gym from 7 to 9 p.m. from July 22 to July 24. All proceeds will benefit those affected by the landslide. Donations will also be collected at the sale.

Tapio said the families had received a small amount of assistance from the Red Cross, but they are still experiencing extreme difficulty following the loss of their homes. All of those affected had small children living with them. The families did not have home insurance, and requests for help from FEMA have gone unanswered. They are currently working with the Attorney General to determine eligibility for other assistance.

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Reaching Avery Ministry (R.A.M.) is also serving the families. Located at 147 New Vale Road, Newland, R.A.M. is accepting donations of household goods, clothing and money.