

A misty, rainy street scene. In the foreground, a tree with green leaves is partially visible. Below it, a signpost has three signs: a right-pointing arrow, the number '205-253', a left-pointing arrow, and the word 'Exit'. In the background, a building with a gabled roof is visible through the rain. The overall atmosphere is soft and overcast.

Givens

COMMUNITIES

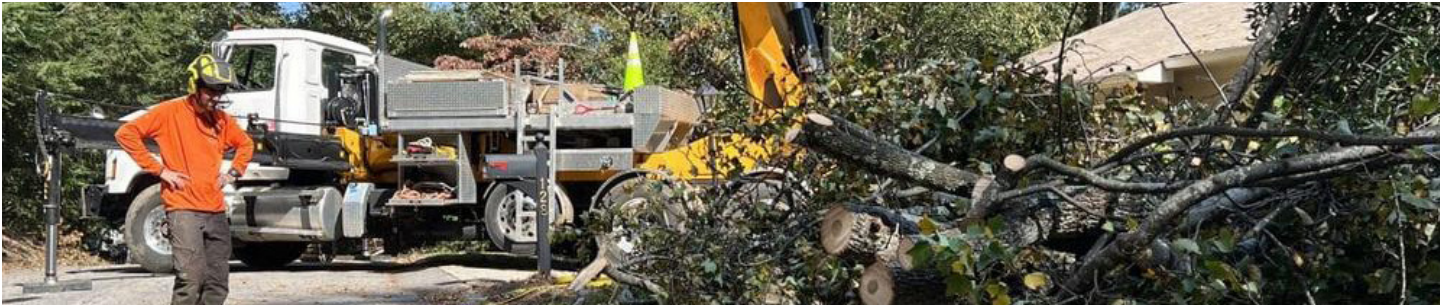
Special Helene
Edition

Discovery

NEWSLETTER

*People Passionate, Make A Difference,
Power of Community, Do What's Right*

Cover photo by Vince Higbee



We Are Givens Strong

There is a time when resilience becomes endurance.

In the wake of Hurricane Helene, I have said repeatedly that we are in a marathon, not a sprint. The storm left us with widespread devastation, displacing families, damaging homes, and disrupting essential services, and significant disruption to our daily lives. Many of our own Givens' team and families in the region have lost possessions, homes, and, tragically for some, even loved ones.

The road to recovery will be long, but when we face challenges together, we build strength and inspire others to do the same.

2.

Many of our team members have been on the front lines of recovery—helping families access necessities, clearing mud from homes, grieving with people they've never met, and even assisting in the search for lost loved ones. It has been an incredibly difficult and emotional journey. In light of these experiences, I want to share two important reflections:

- **Resilience:** The people of Western North Carolina, along with our Givens team, have shown incredible resilience. We know that setbacks aren't the end, but rather steppingstones on our path forward. Whether as a community recovering from a disaster like Helene or as individuals overcoming personal challenges, this resilience is driven by hope, determination, and an

unwavering spirit. The team and residents of Givens, along with this incredible region, have reminded me that while life may present obstacles, it's our response that truly defines us. And because of this, we are #GivensStrong.

- **Community:** More than ever, this experience has highlighted the vital importance of community. It's the foundation of our shared human experience, offering belonging and support, especially in times of crisis. A strong



Kevin Schwab
CEO of Givens Communities

Continued on next page

community nurtures relationships, fosters resilience, and inspires collective action. At Givens and across Western North Carolina, we are witnessing this strength firsthand, as people come together to uplift one another, share resources, and ensure that no one faces these challenges alone.

We are profoundly grateful for the support we've received as we work through this long recovery process. Words cannot express how much each act of kindness—whether it's a donation, a thoughtful gesture, or a kind word—has meant to our residents and team members. For those asking how you can help Givens during this time, we are requesting monetary donations. You can direct your support to the Area of Greatest Need, the Hurricane Helene Fund, or our Team Member Assistance Fund, which will help cover needs not addressed by FEMA or insurance. To contribute, please visit www.givensphilanthropy.org/giving. You can also send a check to Givens Estates or contact us at 828-274-4800 to explore other ways to give.

Thank you, once again, for your generosity and for your kind words of support. Your contributions make a world of difference to our community as we rebuild and recover.

With gratitude,
Kevin Schwab,
CEO of Givens Communities



Calamity Strikes

To recap the impact of the storm that struck the southern Appalachians cannot be captured in a few words or even hundreds of images.

Crashing into the Asheville area on Sept. 26-27, a region already inundated by preceding days of rainfall, the situation quickly became a worst-case scenario.

The scale of destruction and loss of life by Hurricane Helene is still difficult to grasp.

This special edition of Discovery newsletter carries our story of fortitude and perseverance we exemplified then, the work now of rebuilding and hope for the future, and deep gratitude for everyone who helped and continues to make a difference.

Ready Response

The sheer volume of accomplishments that Givens Communities achieved in such a short period is remarkable. Just to highlight a few key actions:

- We acted swiftly to ensure the safety of residents in units that were flooded or damaged, embodying our commitment to compassion and care.
- We mitigated further damage and promptly secured water for flushing toilets, continuously improving the delivery process.
- We secured essential supplies, including food, water, cleaning supplies, gas, and generators, reflecting our commitment to resourcefulness.
- The dining teams continued to feed our residents and team on a routine basis, ensuring people were cared for.
- Our IT team quickly set up connectivity using StarLink to ensure communication and timely payroll processing.
- Our HR and FinOps team completed payroll processing with very limited information.
- We coordinated with partners to provide shower access and utilized Appalachian ingenuity to restore laundry facilities and showers.
- We connected and worked with Samaritan's Purse to assist with providing clean water from our water sources.
- We collaborated with neighboring facilities to access their water sources when available.
- We distributed food and supply baskets to team members and established a commissary for residents and team.

- Our communication efforts ramped up through social media and other channels, keeping loved ones informed during a time when traditional communication was down.
- Many dedicated hours and nights to ensure safety at the communities, demonstrating commitment.
- Team members navigated difficult and dangerous roadways to get to work, often facing significant losses at home themselves.
- Human Resources pivoted to support team members, ensuring their safety and well-being during the crisis and then pivoted further to assist team members in navigating available resources and applying for funds from LeadingAge.



- Givens' community spirit shone brightly as we engaged numerous volunteers—both from outside and within our resident population—to assist with various tasks.
- We set up temporary on-site childcare for team members affected by school and daycare closures.
- We initiated well drilling at Givens Estates and Givens Highland Farms to secure reliable water sources for the future.
- We launched a comprehensive fundraising campaign dedicated to Hurricane Helene relief and support for team members, raising over \$180,000 to date.
- Our legal partners generously offered pro bono services to assist team members with FEMA applications and other funding opportunities.
- Our LeadingAge North Carolina association members supported us in countless ways, donating nearly \$400,000 in disaster relief designated for team member assistance for the area members.
- These are just a small example of the amazing work done.

Expanded Services

With the challenges brought by Hurricane Helene, Givens Home First played a vital role in supporting individuals during and after the storm, providing everything from meal deliveries and medication pickups to wellness checks and pet care. Now, the aging in place service is expanding its reach.

Givens Home First will offer safety assessments and home modifications to all residents of Givens Estates, Givens Highland Farms, Givens Gerber Park, Givens Great Laurels, Givens Choice membership and the broader community.

This includes anyone within a 90-minute drive from Givens Estates.

What sets this program apart is the expertise of two Certified Aging in Place Specialists who are dedicated to enhancing home safety and providing personalized recommendations to ensure that every home is prepared for any situation.

To learn more, go to givenshomefirst.org, call 828-575-1132 or email info@givenshomefirst.org.



Letter: Pulling Together

Originally published by Mountain Xpress on Oct. 20

One of the greatest blessings of my life is that I am a 7-year resident of this senior community in Asheville. Hurricane Helene swept through here last week taking out trees, damaging some areas, roiling our creeks, and drenching our beautiful grounds. Thankfully, our homes (with one exception), apartments, main building, and our grounds and maintenance buildings came through undamaged. Some residents left to go to their families, but the majority of residents have remained on campus. And we are all safe!!! We have electricity and internet, but no running water or TV (small inconveniences in the big picture).

The truly amazing part of our story is our leadership team and staff members.

Executive Director Kirsten Cone has continually communicated in-person and on Facebook so that everyone knows what's going on and the services being provided for residents. And our Staff directors have led and coordinated their teams: Dining (take-out meals), Grounds, Maintenance, Health Services, HR, Environmental Services. All of these staff members are heroes, and we love and appreciate, appreciate, appreciate them!

Staff members and their families have suffered (some tragically) from the force and devastation of the hurricane, with damaged homes, vehicles, and other property. But those who can are on our campus and doing their jobs (and more) to make life easier for our senior residents. Givens has set up what we're calling a G-Mart where residents can contribute food, clothes, household items, and other things that staff members might need. Givens has also set up a daycare area so that staff can bring their children for the day, while they help residents. And management has set up a staff assistance fund. We cannot begin to express how much we love them.

FEMA is on campus and provides drinking water, which staff members deliver to all resident buildings/homes. And the worldwide Samaritan's Purse organization is providing water that can be used for washing dishes and other things—but not for drinking.

- Kathy Cochran,
Givens Estates resident



Caring, Coping

In the aftermath of Hurricane Helene and lingering hardships that remain across the region, our Human Resources Department is providing coping tips and resources for residents and team members.

It is natural to experience different and strong emotions after a disaster strikes, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. With a catastrophe and an extended recovery period, it is not unusual to see increased stress, anxiety and depression.

This outreach goes to the heart of Givens Communities four core values, said Keith Robinette, Human Resources Career Coach. Along with colleagues, he distributes info sheets, contacts for assistance, and in general spreading cheer. “Our team members are facing challenges from the natural disaster not just at work but also at home,” said Robinette. “Their mental health and well-being are our top priorities. We’re committed to offering both internal and external resources to help everyone navigate these uncertain times. I’m proud to be part of such an incredible organization. I have seen us all come together, and it is inspiring.”



The impact felt by team members include 5 who lost family members, 11 who lost homes, 40 have significant home damage and 3 had to temporarily relocate.

“For some of us who have been more fortunate, it’s a matter of turning survivor’s guilt into survivor’s gratitude,” said Geoffrey Cantrell, public relations director. “We want to help others, and I see random acts of kindness and support every day that reflect that. “We have witnessed so many people stepping up as volunteers, an outpouring of contributions to our team member assistance fund, and generous donations of essential supplies when they were needed most, for us, the area and for other retirement communities,” he said. “We will get through this together.”

How You Can Help

Givens Philanthropy Department continues to be amazed and encouraged by the influx of generous support for the entirety of Givens Communities. Our four campuses have been working tirelessly to address issues and our Life Ministries team is working in tandem with other partnerships to care for the immediate needs of seniors outside of Givens.

Additionally, many of our team members have suffered great personal losses such as losing homes, significant damage from trees or flooding to homes, loss of vehicles, and loss of family members. We are working behind the scenes to find ways to assist.

If you would like to join the growing numbers of Givens Communities residents and staff who have contributed financially to our relief efforts, you may do so at www.givensphilanthropy.org/giving.



Coping Techniques for Storm Related Depression

- **Seek professional Help:** Talk to a therapist or doctor about your feelings.
- **Stay Connected:** Reach out to friends or family for support.
- **Practice Self-Care:** Get regular exercise, eat healthy, and maintain a sleep routine.
- **Use Mindfulness:** Try deep breathing, meditation, or relaxation techniques.
- **Set Small Goals:** Break tasks into manageable steps and celebrate small wins.
- **Avoid Isolation:** Stay involved in social activities, even if it feels hard.
- **Limit Negative Thoughts:** Challenge negative thinking and focus on positive actions.

If these symptoms persist for more than two weeks and interfere with daily life, it may indicate depression, and seeking professional help is essential.

**POST
Hurricane Helene
Well-Being Tips**

1. STAY CONNECTED:

Spend time with friends, reflect on memories, and support each other. Enjoy board games or puzzles for fun and mental exercise.

2. PRIORITIZE SLEEP:

Aim for 6-8 hours per night. Limit screen time before bed; try reading or listening to calming music. Write down worries to address later.

3. LIMIT NEWS INTAKE:

With power restored, avoid overindulging in news and social media. Take a late afternoon walk and enjoy nature's calming effects.









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