

Local Nonprofit Needs Help After Flood

by Dalton Brown

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WOOD RIVER - Riverbend Family Ministries, a collective of local nonprofit organizations that helps area families in crisis, is asking the public for assistance after heavy rainfall caused severe flood damage to 14 rooms in the lower level of its newest building, displacing eight nonprofits and disrupting their Phase 2 building renovation plans.

Executive Director Tammy Iskarous said she and other organization members walked in last Tuesday morning after heavy rainfall overnight Monday evening and found the entire first level completely flooded. Since Phase 2 of the construction plan was to renovate the upstairs level and move some organizations up there, all eight organizations were operating on the lower level when the flood occurred.

While insurance covered a small number of sewage costs, the amount isn't nearly enough for all the repairs needed, Iskarous said.

“With all insurances, there’s a cap, and the cap was minimal. The damage that was done is going to cost way more than what the insurance will pay,” Iskarous said. “We had to cut the drywall up 12 inches, we had to rip out all the carpet, we’re going to have to completely redo everything - art supplies, personal things that were in all of the therapists’ offices that serve our kiddos, all of our kitchen cabinets had to be torn out, all the linoleum tile - everything had to be torn out because of the flood.”

To continue providing their services, Riverbend Family Ministries has relied on the generosity of a few local businesses and churches who have let them use office space while repairs are made.

“Just because we’re in crisis doesn’t mean that everyone else stops being in crisis,” Iskarous said. “Our therapists and our organizations and our case managers have been so flexible, and this community has offered church space, office space, meeting rooms that are right here in our area for us to be able to continue services.”

Iskarous added that last night's heavy rainfall caused the lower level to flood a second time, to about two-thirds the level it did the first time. She said volunteers are currently working on plumbing solutions to help prevent this situation from happening in the future.

“Our community has come together and they've been so generous, and I just want to thank them for all that they are doing,” Iskarous said.

They are asking the public to make donations, either through their [website](#), through their [GoFundMe fundraiser page](#), or in person at 144 E. Ferguson Ave. in Wood River - Iskarous noted there are only two front rooms that weren't damaged by the flood, so someone is there from 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. each day to accept donations.

To learn more about the work Riverbend Family Ministries does, visit riverbendfamilyministries.com.