

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE ON COMMUNITY TORNADO RESPONSE IN GAYLORD MICHIGAN



Contact: The Karing Home Youth Project (KHYP)
Cameron Stefanski, Communications Chair
cameron@thekaringhomeyouthproject.org
(248) 622-0796

Kari Jo Stefanski, Founder + Managing Director
karijo@thekaringhomeyouthproject.org
(989) 350-5566

KHYP
KaringHomeYP@gmail.com
(989) 448-6654
thekaringhomeyouthproject.org

Otsego Community Foundation
(989) 731-0597
<https://www.otsegofoundation.org/>
Dana Benzinger, Executive Director
Karin Beyer, Director of Community Philanthropy
info@otsegofoundation.org

Otsego County United Way
(989) 732-8929
<https://www.otsegounitedway.org/>
Erin Mann, Executive Director
Megan Hacker, Assistant Executive Director
director@otsegounitedway.org

The Refuge
(989) 350-8231
Chris Czajkowski
<https://www.otsegorefuge.org/>

Gaylord, Michigan (Mon May 23, 3 pm): On Friday, May 20th, a destructive tornado hit our community. While we are just hours into this and don't understand the magnitude of the damage, the initial losses are devastating.

Together, we will respond, recover, and rebuild. The following is information on community services, immediate needs, volunteer opportunities, mental health services, and ways to support financially.

Disaster relief crews and community organizations are asking members of the community who need immediate assistance to call **211**.

If you or anyone you may know has been displaced by the tornado, please contact Chris at The Refuge in Otsego County at (989) 350-8231 or by email at christherefuge@gmail.com

The best way to be prepared for volunteer opportunities is through the Volunteer Center at the Otsego County United Way. To register go to <https://www.otsegounitedway.org/volunteers>.

Totes, gas cards, cleaning supplies, hand/face/body cleansing wipes, first aid kits, food gift cards, work gloves, new brasphone chargers, and minute cards for prepaid cell phones are all current needs. Infant needs include diapers, formula, food, and pacifiers.

All in-kind items for donation can be dropped off at Otsego County United Way's Community Services building **116 E 5th St, Gaylord, MI 49735 - (989) 732-8929**. If you need to arrange a pick of items or need more info, please call KHYP or text (989) 448-6654.

If you or anyone you know is interested in shipping items for an in-kind donation from online from outside of the city limits via Amazon or from an online store, please send it to The Karing Home Youth Project, PO Box 693 Gaylord MI 49735 and we will deliver it to Otsego County United Way.

The following are two links to donate to for disaster relief via Otsego Community Foundation & Otsego County United Way -

Otsego Community Foundation Tornado Response Fund:
<https://give.otsegofoundation.org/campaign/tornado-response/c409192>

Otsego County United Way Disaster Relief: <https://ddock.co/27a01f21>

Mental Health is important, especially in times of disaster and tragedy. North Country Community Mental Health is here for residents that may be struggling as a result of this disaster in the days, weeks, and months to come. If you or anyone you know is struggling, please connect with North Country Community Mental Health at 877-470-4668. Emergency response and crisis resolution services are available.

Additional mental health services have been set up at United Methodist Church located at 215 S Center Avenue in Gaylord for the next week. Licensed mental health clinicians specializing in trauma with young children, teenagers, and adults. Please feel free to text or call Jessie Thompson at (989) 546-9416 to schedule.

Gaylord is known for its sense of community, especially when faced with hardships. Let's work together to pick up the pieces from the tornado. In the days and weeks to come our neighbors and businesses will need our help in many ways. **The Tornado Response Fund** and **Otsego County Disaster Relief Fund** will help ensure the basics are met, gaps are filled, and resources are available to pick up the pieces and rebuild our community brick by brick.

