



Surviving 'Superstorm Sandy' and its 38 inches of snow was a true team effort at Cortland Acres.

The Untold Story: How Cortland Acres came together during 'Superstorm'

Superstorm Sandy dumped 38 inches of heavy wet snow on the Cortland Acres community between noon on October 29 and evening on October 31. The power went off at 1:30 a.m. Tuesday, and that's when the incredible things started happening.

Cortland was ready. A diesel fuel powered generator ran the facility for the next five days. A 1,000 gallon fuel shipment was received on Thursday from Oakland Oil to continue generated power.

Approximately 20 residents from the Pineview Apartments were relocated to the main facility or were staying with family and friends by late Tuesday. Most slept on recliners or couches for the duration. All had meals and a warm place to stay.

Cortland Acres staff members were incredible. Several employees were unable to get to their powerless homes, so they stayed at the facility providing care and activities. Many local staff worked additional hours in various areas of the facilities helping wherever they were needed.

Staff from all departments joined together to make the best of the tremendous storm. Dietary staff operated from emergency meal plans. The Activities department kept things happening with residents, including cupcake baking, "blizzard bingo," checkers and puzzles.

Administrative and activity staff assisted in the kitchen. Maintenance, laundry and housekeeping staff continued to keep things running smoothly.

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Check out our website at www.cortlandacres.org



Floyd Crawford was an angel during the 'Harps of Gold' tree lighting program.



Marie Grafton holds the microphone while Vincent DiBacco talks about the honor of flipping the switch on the Christmas tree lights.

DiBacco flips switch for tree lights

Under the watchful eye of an angel (Floyd Crawford), the residents and staff of Cortland Acres celebrated the meaning of Christmas with readings and carols before lighting the star and tree.

The annual event, which also raises funds for special projects coordinated by the Friends of Cortland Acres, attracted more than 100 people on the afternoon of Dec. 2.

With a Christmas tree in the front corner – complete with model train underneath – the event brought back memories of Christmas for all in attendance.

Called "Harps of Gold," the 2012 program started with the singing of "Hark the Herald Angels Sing," with Crawford taking his wings to the front of the dining room.

Betty Bonner read the poem "Harps of Gold" and Fran Bibeau read "Harps" before Clara Davis led a reading and the singing of "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear."

Cindy Helmick and Linda Shupp honored the residents

with "Memory Verse Awards" (list at bottom) before Nancy Zizunas and Mary Mullenax took turns reading the names of those who donated money for tree lights in honor or memory of friends and loved ones.

As Donna Markely read the names of the special star light honorees, Nancy Moore of the Friends of Cortland Acres turned lights on one at a time.

Among the 36 star light honorees was Deacon the Therapy Dog, a longtime fixture at Cortland Acres who recently passed away.

Cortland Activities Director Marie Grafton, who served as master of ceremonies for the day, announced that the star light effort had raised more than \$3,600 for the Friends of Cortland Acres, who will use the money for special projects to benefit Cortland Acres and its residents.

Vincent DiBacco had the honor of flipping the switch to light the huge tree in front of Cortland Acres to the tune of "Ring Those Bells." DiBacco,

a member of the "Greatest Generation" and veteran of World War II, told those in attendance the honor was something he would always remember.

Champ Sedmock and Dot Jones drew door prize winners, then Sandy Kisamore gave the benediction before everyone enjoyed cookies and punch.

Memory Verse Winners were Fran Bibeau, Beula Black, Kathryn Bucher, Thelma Butler, Mildred Carr, Eva Carter, Theresa Cook, Jerry Cummings, Mary Daff, Clara Davis, Goldie Kennard, Lois Lamont, Betty Lane, Mary Matlick, Leta Rader, Robert Snyder, Helen Wilson, Margaret Arnold, Sis Arnold, Betty Bonner, Freda Bright, Chico Chumpitaz, Clennis Halstead, Margaret Helmick, Bonnie Hissam, Leona Howell, Dottie Knicley, Ward Moats, Marlene Morgan, Sharlene Mullenax, Patsy Nestor, Jackie Roy, Ada Severe, Frances Snyder, Jesse Summerfield, Ethel Temple, Jean Waybright, Charlie Workman.

Storm

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The Rehab staff kept residents in their therapy routines, including Dan Sager, a physical therapy assistant who made the commute from his Pennsylvania home nearly every day.

Many staff members didn't miss even one day of work, an incredible show of dedication.

Family members of many residents jumped in to help, too, after checking on their loved ones and helping at Cortland and throughout the community. Overall it was a wonderful reminder of what a great community this is, and how much people help each other.

Davis Home Plus delivered important supplies as soon as the roadways were safely passable. Pharma Care from Barboursville met their prescription deliveries with help from Cortland staff, and

physicians remained available to address resident emergent needs. Board members assisted and made sure things went as smoothly as possible.

Charles Roth and Jimmy Wilfong with plows and an endloader cleaned the huge snowfall from the parking lots.

Friends of Cortland volunteers helped, too. They opened the gift shop, and Father Grassi held mass on Friday, November 2. Sirianni's Pizza Café also brought food to the facility. Although the rumor of our roof collapsing spread rapidly through the county, there wasn't ever a danger that the roof would fall. National Guard crews did inspect the structure and scientifically assessed the load on the building. The building was more than strong enough to sustain the load.

Administrative and senior management tirelessly led the staff throughout the whole event.

The City of Thomas provided uninterrupted utility service including water to the site. In the words of Administrator Don Black, "Thomas never missed a beat."

The Thomas and Davis Volunteer Fire Departments, Department of Highways and the Tucker County Office of Emergency Management were also really responsive to all requests. This successful effort allowed the emergency personnel to direct their resources to others in need.

This facility has an amazing network of staff, board members, volunteers and friends that helped make this operation truly an untold success story!

Becky Lipscomb win Gold Star Award

Becky Lipscomb received the West Virginia Activity Professional Association's Gold Star Award for 2012, which honors a staff member who assists the activities department above and beyond.

Lipscomb has been an employee of Cortland Acres since Feb. 28, 2006. She first was in the housekeeping department and is now currently in the Laundry department.

Lipscomb sees the need to help transport residents to the activities they desire so she consistently comes in early for her shifts to assist residents in bingo, on trips, music groups, wherever they need to go or to provide individual visits.



She especially provides these extra hours on the weekends when the activity staff can use an extra set of hands.

Many times Lipscomb appears in just the nick of time when the Activity staff is overwhelmed with last minute details. She has special sensitivities toward meeting the little extra needs of the residents which are the icing on their cake such as sitting them in their favorite spot in the

activity and providing a sweater or jacket without being asked.

She recently came to the Annual Family Picnic with her two granddaughters, and all three assisted with the transporting, serving, and games for the residents and their families.

Becky Lipscomb is the quiet, helpful, unsung employee for the Activity Staff and the residents.

Staff prepares for Christmas season

Cortland staff and volunteers have worked hard to prepare for the Christmas season.

Cris Lambruno and his staff decorated throughout the buildings and campus. Residents especially enjoy the outdoor decorated trees that were added last year by Cris as a part of the holiday scenery.

The Maintenance staff decorated the large spruce tree again this year, with the official lighting occurring during the Tree Lighting Program. The activities staff decorated the main dining room in a traditional style, lending to a warm, cozy environment.

Marie Grafton and her activity staff have a packed calendar for residents during the month of December. Volunteers have been as busy as elves purchasing and preparing for the annual Christmas Workshop. The Cortland bus is a famil-



Cortland's dining room feels like Christmas, especially at the tree lighting.

iar site pulling up to the doors bulging with gifts.

Volunteers purchase merchandise from local shops to stock up the Workshop, which is held in the main activity room. The gifts are available for a fraction of the actual cost to residents to purchase for their family and friends. The volunteers are on hand to wrap the gifts for the residents.

Kelley Young, manager of Pineview Apartments, and her residents have a full calendar for December as well including a Christmas dinner, a brunch, community shopping days, baking treats, movie day and gift exchange.



39 Cortland Acres Lane
Thomas, WV 26292
304.463.4181
304.463.4190 (fax)
www.cortlandacres.org

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