

Chippewa Valley High School, Roseville family help out Kentucky tornado victims

Christmas Eve donations assisted tornado ravaged town

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On Dec. 20 and Dec. 24, 2021, the Harrison family of Roseville collected items donations at Chippewa Valley High School in Clinton Township to assist Mayfield, Ky. in the wake of that city's recent tornado. Pictured are Emma Harrison and Roger Harrison. (PHOTO COURTESY OF ROGER HARRISON)

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The Harrison family of Roseville celebrated Christmas Eve 2021 in the parking lot of Chippewa Valley High School, collecting presents not for themselves but for the tornado ravaged town of Mayfield, Ky.

The Harrisons have family ties to Mayfield, Ky., the town devastated by a tornado on Dec. 10, 2021. Roger Harrison's parents lived in the Detroit area and have died, but were both originally from Mayfield, Ky. Many friends and relatives of the Harrisons still reside in and around Mayfield. Roger Harrison, his wife Carla Harrison, his daughter Emma Harrison and his brother Richard Harrison decided to develop and execute a collection of needed items for those impacted.

"My parents and I have family in Kentucky that were greatly affected by the tornadoes," Emma Harrison said. "Seeing so many people in so much pain hurt us, and we wanted to do what we could to help."

Emma Harrison is a 17-year-old senior at Chippewa Valley High School. Roger Harrison reached out to CVHS Principal Todd Distelrath on Dec. 13, 2021, requesting to collect items donations for

the cause at the high school. Distelrath approved the plan, and together they worked out how items collections could be accepted at the school from both inside the school community and the community at large.

Distelrath also ensured the school community was made aware of the collections via school announcements and online. Roger Harrison said that after the announcements, local parents and churches reached out to offer support for the items collection effort.

“The administrative and custodian staff were very helpful with sending out email announcements and assisting us with managing donations from Chippewa Valley High School parents on Dec. 20. Mr. James Pecar CVHS choir teacher was outstanding with his assisting us with use of the auditorium area to stage and store donations and to assist us with collecting donations from the public on Christmas Eve,” Roger Harrison said. “We also had a choir student help with packing the truck on Christmas Eve. Principal Distelrath was always very supportive and very helpful with his leadership and kindness.”

The collection was taken up on Dec. 21 and 24.

“It was important that the high school campus be closed and that all students and staff were off campus at the time the public was invited to arrive to donate, to prevent traffic restrictions and safety reasons,” Roger Harrison said. “I reserved the Enterprise rental truck for the first available time and the 24th was the best that they could do on short notice. Additionally, I work full time, and this was the first day I had available to donate my time.”

Items requested as those that the residents of Mayfield, Ky. most needed were food, toiletries, hygiene products, baby food, diapers, pet food, flashlights, extension cords and tarps.

“Two churches reached out to us saying that they had significant donations for us, however, they would not be able to make the Dec. 24th date,” Roger Harrison said. “I personally drove my 20-foot enclosed trailer to each church and picked up their donations and stored them in heated storage.”

St. Martin de Porres Church in Warren donated on Dec. 19, 2021 and Heritage Church Sterling Heights Campus in Sterling Heights donated on Dec. 21, 2021.

“Our family personally donated approximately \$3,000 of our own money from which we purchased many items on the list from the stores and added to the existing donations,” Roger Harrison said.

Roger Harrison drove a 26-foot Enterprise box truck filled with 13,500 pounds of donations to Seven Oaks Church of Christ in Mayfield, Ky. The truck was loaded on Christmas Day and he and his family began the drive on Dec. 26, 2021.

“After the collection on Christmas Eve, my parents and I spent Christmas Day packing the remaining items into the truck which we had stored at our home,” Emma Harrison said.

The family arrived on Dec. 26, the truck was unloaded the next day and was then used to move items around at the church.

More information on the Harrison's Mayfield, Ky. donation collection can be found at [facebook.com/Mayfield-Kentucky-Donation-Drive-103422565539385](https://www.facebook.com/Mayfield-Kentucky-Donation-Drive-103422565539385).