



LIVINGSTON COUNTY  
**CATHOLIC  
CHARITIES**  
HELPING LIVES GROW

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August 12, 2021

## **PRESS RELEASE**

Livingston County's Hoarding Task Force spent the day on Saturday, August 7, 2021 working with one local senior, cleaning out her house and garage which had become unsafe for her to live in. Two dumpsters were filled throughout the day by the Hoarding Task Force team members and several local volunteers & family members.

Prior to August 7<sup>th</sup>, a team of volunteers met with the senior at the house to sort through all the items and place into designated piles of discard, donate and keep. On the 7<sup>th</sup>, the task force team members and volunteers spent the day moving all of the discard items to the dumpster, donate items into vehicles to deliver to various donation sites and organized the "keep" items.

By the end of the day, the garage had been completely cleaned out and reorganized with some of the "keep" items. Much of the house had been purged of items and reorganized with more work yet to be done. One of Livingston County Catholic Charities' Mental Health Counselors was on hand and remained at the client's side helping her through this stressful process.

The beneficiary of this activity had had much trauma in her past and hoarding became her coping mechanism. As the hoarding got out of control, it was no longer safe for her to remain in the house she and her husband shared and raised their child in. She moved into an apartment but desperately wanted to get back into her home. However, it was too overwhelming to begin on her own. Thanks to the Livingston County Hoarding Task Force, this is now a reality. At the end of the day, she shared that she just wanted to relish this moment, sit in the chair on her lawn and visit with her neighbors she dearly missed and look at her house.

This was possible because of many organizations and individuals who came together to make this happen: Livingston Co. Community Mental Health, Livingston Co. Catholic Charities, Habitat for Humanities, Home Depot, Smith Douglas & Associates, Dept. of Health & Human Services, and several individuals, including some of the neighbors who saw what was being done, grabbed their gloves and joined in the activity.

The Hoarding Task Force wants the community to understand that hoarding is not an illegal activity. It is worrisome and stressful for families, but the task force can only help when the client wants to engage in support and take the steps to recover. It is very important for families to understand the disease and engage in the difficult conversations with loved ones. Resources can be found here: <https://www.livgov.com/hscb/Pages/LC-Hoarding-Task-Force>

If you would like to learn more about the Livingston County Hoarding Task Force check out the website: <https://www.livgov.com/hscb/Pages/LC-Hoarding-Task-Force.aspx> or contact Amy Johnston of CMH at [ajohnston@CMHLIV.ORG](mailto:ajohnston@CMHLIV.ORG) or Beth Newman of LCCC at [beth@livingstoncc.org](mailto:beth@livingstoncc.org).