



VOL. 7, April-September 2026

NEWSLETTER

Dear Friends,

As we continue through 2026, we are reminded that recovery doesn't end when the headlines fade. Nearly two years after Hurricane Helene, families across Western North Carolina are still rebuilding their homes, businesses are working to reopen, and students are pursuing their dreams despite the challenges they've faced.

Thanks to your incredible support, HopeMill continues to make a lasting impact through **housing restoration, small business recovery**, and our **HopeMill Resilience Scholarship Program**. In this edition, you'll meet inspiring scholarship recipients whose stories remind us why this work matters and see firsthand how your generosity is restoring hope throughout our mountain communities.

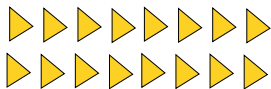
As we look ahead, we're preparing for **HopeMill's 3rd Annual Mountain Gala on October 23, 2026**, our largest fundraiser of the year. This special evening allows us to continue serving families, supporting students, and investing in long-term recovery across Western North Carolina.

We're currently **seeking** event **sponsors** and **donations** for our silent and live auctions. Whether you're a business, an individual, or someone with a unique item or experience to donate, your support will make a direct impact. One hundred percent of the proceeds from the Mountain Gala go directly toward HopeMill's mission.

Thank you for believing in our work and for standing with the families and communities we serve. Together, we are restoring hope, rebuilding lives, and proving that recovery is possible.

With gratitude,

The HopeMill Team



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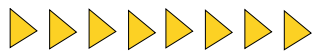
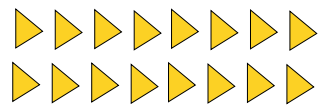


info@hopemill.org



<https://hopemill.org/hurricane-helene-donations/>

HOPEMILL RESILIENCE SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS



Since launching the **HopeMill Resilience Scholarship** Program, we have awarded more than **\$15,000** in scholarships to students across **Avery, Buncombe, McDowell,** and **Mitchell** Counties whose lives were impacted by Hurricane Helene.

This year's recipients—**Zoe Carpenter, Kendall Clark, Camryn Clark, Mason Thompson, Kylie Holtsclaw, Allison "Ali" McClellan, and Samantha**—each have a unique story of perseverance, service, and resilience.

While Hurricane Helene brought tremendous challenges to these students and their families, they refused to let the storm define their future. We are honored to support their educational journeys and celebrate the strength they represent throughout Western North Carolina. Read below about our 7 HopeMill Resilience Recipients

ZOE CARPENTER-AVERY HIGH SCHOOL

Some people talk about resilience, and then there are people like Zoe Carpenter who live it every single day. Truthfully, Zoe was the definition of resilience long before Hurricane Helene ever hit, but after the storm she became the poster child for what strength, faith, and perseverance truly look like.

When Hurricane Helene devastated Western North Carolina, Zoe and her parents were stranded on their family farm. Roads were blocked by flooding and mudslides, and it became too dangerous to remain in their home. For two nights, they slept in their car with no safe way out.

While living through that fear herself, Zoe focused on helping others. She volunteered alongside her father, who serves as Fire Chief, at their local fire station distributing food, water, and emergency supplies to families in need. She served through her church, encouraged those around her, and reminded others that even in the middle of hardship, "God is still good." Zoe also experienced personal loss when one of her dogs disappeared during the hurricane and has never been found. Despite everything she endured, Zoe returned to school determined to move forward. Her faith, leadership, and commitment to serving others make her an incredible example of resilience



KENDALL AND CAMRYN CLARK-AVERY HIGH SCHOOL



When Hurricane Helene devastated Western North Carolina, sisters Kendall and Camryn Clark faced unimaginable loss but never gave up on their future.

Their family lost their home, vehicles, and nearly all of their belongings. The damage exceeded \$150,000, and the family spent six months living in a camper while rebuilding their lives. Even while navigating their own challenges, Kendall and Camryn continued serving others.

Camryn volunteered by helping families sort donations, deliver supplies, and support neighbors affected by the storm. She plans to attend East Tennessee State University to pursue a degree in Radiologic Sciences.

Kendall plans to continue her education into a master's program with dreams of becoming a wildlife biologist focused on conservation and environmental education.

Despite their family's hardships, both sisters received no financial aid and remained responsible for funding their own education. Their perseverance, compassion, and dedication to helping others embody the very spirit of the HopeMill Resilience Scholarship.

KYLIE HOLTSCLAW-AVERY HIGH SCHOOL

Kylie Holtsclaw's story is one of service, sacrifice, and perseverance. When Hurricane Helene struck, her family's home in Minneapolis, North Carolina, suffered devastating damage. The foundation shifted, septic and plumbing systems were destroyed, and much of the property became unusable.

At the same time, Kylie's father, a district manager for Mountain Electric, spent countless hours helping restore power throughout Avery County while their own family faced uncertainty at home. Her mother's small business also sustained flood damage. Despite these challenges, Kylie chose to serve others. She volunteered at her church's distribution center, delivered supplies to families in need, and helped provide meals to electrical workers restoring power across the region.

Today, Kylie is pursuing a future in cosmetology, and HopeMill is honored to support her educational journey.



SAMANTHA-A.C. REYNOLDS HIGH SCHOOL



For Samantha, Hurricane Helene disrupted more than daily life. It interrupted school, activities, and opportunities she had worked hard to achieve.

Her school was closed for nearly a month, and her marching band lost valuable preparation time for competitions. A major event that would have raised tens of thousands of dollars for the band was canceled.

As a section leader, Samantha stepped up when her fellow students needed her most. She checked on band members, encouraged her peers, and worked to maintain a sense of normalcy during an uncertain time.

Her leadership, resilience, and dedication to others exemplify exactly what the HopeMill Resilience Scholarship was created to celebrate.

MASON THOMPSON-MCDOWELL TECHNICAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Mason Thompson is pursuing his Associate's Degree in Welding Technology at McDowell Technical Community College and is one of our HopeMill Resilience Scholarship recipients.

From the moment we read Mason's essay, we knew he was someone special. When Hurricane Helene impacted McDowell County, Mason didn't wait to be asked for help. As soon as conditions were safe, he and his father climbed onto their tractor and began clearing roads throughout their community. Working alongside local firefighters, they helped clear more than six miles of roadway on the very first day.

Mason's family logging business, tree service, and cattle farm suffered significant damage from the storm, creating challenges for their own family. Yet even while dealing with those losses, Mason continued serving others by helping rebuild fences, clear debris, and deliver water and meals to neighbors in need.

What stands out most about Mason is his quiet strength and humble character. He is the kind of young man who leads by example, works hard without seeking recognition, and remains grounded in his faith, family, and community.

With the support of the HopeMill Resilience Scholarship, Mason is continuing his welding education and building a future shaped by determination, service, and resilience. We are honored to support his journey and excited to see all he accomplishes.



ALLISON "ALI" MCCLELLAN-MITCHELL HIGH SCHOOL

HopeMill first met Allison and her family last summer when we were able to send volunteers to assist with cleanup and recovery after Hurricane Helene devastated their home. Like so many families across Western North Carolina, the McClellans lost nearly everything when more than seven feet of floodwater filled their home. They were displaced for nearly 10 months while they worked tirelessly to rebuild.

When we recently visited their newly restored home, Allison proudly gave us a tour, sharing how she worked alongside her parents throughout the rebuilding process. As she walked us from room to room, she didn't focus on what the storm had taken away. Instead, she spoke with pride about what her family had built together.

That says everything you need to know about Allison. Even while navigating the loss of her home and supporting her father through his battle with Stage 3 lung cancer, Allison remained dedicated to her education and faced every challenge with remarkable strength and maturity.

One of the most meaningful features of their home is a wall dedicated to the volunteers, churches, and organizations that helped their family along the way. It is a beautiful reminder that hope grows through community and that no one has to rebuild alone.

Now, Allison is preparing to attend East Tennessee State University, and HopeMill is honored to support her next chapter through the HopeMill Resilience Scholarship.

Her story reminds us that resilience isn't just about overcoming hardship, it's about choosing hope, embracing gratitude, and moving forward with courage. We can't wait to see all that Allison accomplishes in the years ahead.



CANE RIVER HOME RESTORATION UPDATE

We've made **incredible progress** on our Cane River home this summer, thanks to the many **helping hands** that have come together to move this family one step closer to rebuilding their home. During the flooding caused by Hurricane Helene, this **family became trapped inside** their home and had to be rescued. In the aftermath, **neighbors immediately stepped in** to begin the initial gutting process, helping **prevent further damage** and saving the home from becoming overwhelmed by mold.

Today, it's amazing to see the **transformation**. With **new paint** and **beautiful new cabinets installed**, this house is beginning to feel like a home again. Be sure to check out the **before-and-after photos** to see just how far this project has come!

A **special thank you** to all of the **volunteers who continue to show up** and **Direct Kitchen & Bath** for traveling the distance to install the new cabinets. Your generosity, time, and willingness to help make a lasting difference in this family's journey home.

There is **still work to be done**, but with every volunteer and your donations we're getting closer. Together, we can help **bring this family home**.



GET INVOLVED: EVENTS & GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

- **August 1st** - Resilience Scholarship application open
- **October 23rd**-HopeMill's 3rd Annual Mountain Gala
- **November 1st**- Fall Resilience Scholarship Application closes
- **November 1st**- Hope Wreaths for Hidden Cove Sale Ends
- **March 31st**- Spring Resilience Scholarship Application closes
- WNC Thanksgiving Turkey and Christmas Toy Drives TBA



OTHER WAYS TO HELP

- **Mountain Gala sponsorship**
 - **Donate** to our Mountain Gala **silent** and **live auction**.
 - Be a part of our **Gala Committee**
 - **Monetary donations keep our efforts moving forward** and our mountain communities strong.
 - **Volunteers** who are skilled in **restoration**, debris removal, residential construction.
 - **Grant Writing** information and assistance
 - Seeking **headstone replacements** for our cemetery project
- If you would like to volunteer for events, rebuilding projects, or have time to assist with writing grants, please reach out to info@hopemill.org



HopeMill Resilience Scholarship

Supporting students whose education has been disrupted by Hurricane Helene.

Eligibility: Applicants must reside in an affected WNC area, be enrolled in an accredited college or trade school, and demonstrate financial need due to storm-related hardships

Apply by visiting our website www.hopemill.org and select Resilience Scholarship.

Fall Applications open August 1st through November 1st, 2026

Thank you for standing with us. Your kindness is rebuilding lives, one step at a time.

HOLDING ONTO HOPE: BRINGS THIS FAMILY HOME

We've met so many **resilient people** through disaster recovery, and when we **met Haley in May 2025, we knew she was one of them.** After flooding left her home filled with mold, she spent months fighting to create a **safe place for her family.**

She **filled out countless applications and heard more "no's" than "yes's,"** but she never stopped fighting for her family. Then, **God's Pit Crew**, a Virginia-based nonprofit **specializing in home replacements,** stepped in and **changed everything.**

Case management is not always easy, but stories like Haley's remind us **why we never stop advocating.** Sometimes the right "yes" is worth waiting for.

We are so grateful to God's Pit Crew for restoring not only a home, but our faith in humanity.



WHITSON CEMETERY RESTORATION PROJECT

After restoring the grounds at **Whitson Cemetery**, we began mapping burial sites to determine which graves were impacted by the flooding.

For the past 16 months, we've been researching records and family histories to help identify loved ones recovered along the Nolichucky River.

Through the dedicated work of **ETSU's Forensic Center**, DNA testing is being conducted to help identify those who were recovered. Each identification brings us one step closer to giving them the **final resting place** they deserve.

Now, we need your help. **Donations will help provide new headstones and cover reburial services following each positive identification.**



PULL UP A SEAT FOR SHEENA'S

One of HopeMill's favorite projects has been helping Sheena's Restaurant in Barnardsville take the final steps toward reopening after Hurricane Helene. For more than 46 years, Sheena's has been more than a restaurant. It's been a gathering place where neighbors meet, families celebrate, and visitors experience the heart of the community. Like so many small businesses across Western North Carolina, Sheena's suffered devastating damage from the storm and was forced to close its doors. Over the past year, HopeMill has been honored to help provide flooring and other critical building materials needed to restore the restaurant. Today, we're helping with the final piece of the puzzle through our Pull Up A Seat Campaign. Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, tables and chairs are arriving, and the dining room is beginning to come back to life. Every sponsored table and chair brings Sheena's one step closer to welcoming customers through its doors once again. They're so close to the finish line. There are still tables and chairs available to sponsor, and we'd love for you to help us complete this project. Together, we can help restore more than a restaurant, we can restore a place where memories are made, friendships are strengthened, and a community gathers once again. Thank you to everyone who has supported the Pull Up A Seat Campaign. Your generosity is helping write the next chapter of Sheena's story, and we can't wait to celebrate the day they reopen their doors.



RESTORING A LIFELINE: LYNN PETERSON'S GENERAL STORE

In many rural mountain communities, the local general store is much more than a place to buy groceries or fuel—it's the heart of the community.

When Hurricane Helene devastated Green Mountain, Lynn Peterson's General Store lost its fuel pumps and underground fuel system. Without a nearby gas station, many residents were forced to drive more than 30 minutes just to fill up their vehicles. When HopeMill learned it would cost more than \$30,000 to replace the fuel system, we knew this was more than a business recovery project—it was about restoring an essential service for an entire community.

Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, HopeMill was able to help fund the new fuel system, including the fuel tanks and concrete work needed to bring gas back to Green Mountain.

Today, local residents once again have access to fuel close to home, allowing families, farmers, first responders, and businesses to continue serving their community without traveling miles for a simple necessity.

Projects like this remind us that recovery isn't just about rebuilding buildings. It's about restoring the resources that keep communities connected and moving forward.





RESTORING HOPE. REBUILDING LIVES.

3RD ANNUAL
Mountain
GALA



AN EVENING OF HOPE, COMMUNITY
AND LASTING IMPACT



FRIDAY
OCTOBER 23, 2026
5:30 - 10:00 PM



CROWE MANSION
LINCOLNTON, NORTH CAROLINA



Join us for an unforgettable evening as we come together
to support HopeMill's mission of bringing

Resilience. Restoration. Hope.

to Western North Carolina.



LIVE AUCTION



SILENT AUCTION



RAFFLES



SCAN TO PURCHASE
AND LEARN MORE

Tickets. Sponsorships



LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR MISSION
hopemill.org



TICKETS AND EVENT INFORMATION
[zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/
hopemills-3rd-annual-mountain-gala](https://zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/hopemills-3rd-annual-mountain-gala)



WE'RE LAUNCHING PULL UP A SEAT

AT SHEENA'S RESTAURANT!

— Barnardsville, NC —

Sheena's Restaurant is almost ready to reopen after Hurricane Helene. HopeMill has already provided building materials, flooring, and so much more.

Now, the final need is simple:

TABLES & CHAIRS. ❤️

That's it.

Every donation helps bring Sheena's back to life, restore jobs, and create a place for our community to gather, eat, and make memories again.



IT RESTORES
A LOCAL BUSINESS



IT BRINGS JOBS
BACK TO OUR
COMMUNITY



IT CREATES A PLACE
TO GATHER, EAT &
MAKE MEMORIES



IT SHOWS UP FOR
THE BUSINESSES
THAT SHOW UP FOR US

DONATIONS OVER \$200

RECEIVE AN INVITATION TO
SHEENA'S GRAND REOPENING
AND A FREE FAMOUS
SHEENA'S MILKSHAKE! ❤️



Together,
WE REBUILD.
WE RESTORE.
WE PULL UP
A SEAT. ❤️



MAKE YOUR DONATION TODAY!

hopemill.org/sheenas

Every gift brings Sheena's one step closer to reopening!

ALMOST READY!



WE'VE COME SO FAR,
BUT WE NEED YOUR HELP
TO FINISH STRONG!



HELP US
REOPEN THE
DOORS AND
OUR COMMUNITY
AROUND THE
TABLE! ❤️

HOW YOU CAN HELP:



SPONSOR A CHAIR

Provide a seat for
someone in our community

\$75



SPONSOR A TABLE

Bring families and friends
back together

\$250



SPONSOR A FULL SET

(1 TABLE + 4 CHAIRS)

Make an even bigger impact!

\$550

*Every
donation
helps bring
Sheena's
back to life!*



SCAN TO DONATE!





RESTORING HOPE. REBUILDING LIVES.

RESILIENCE SCHOLARSHIP



Investing in Students. Strengthening Communities.
Building a More Resilient Tomorrow.



**WE HAVE AWARDED OVER \$15,000
IN SCHOLARSHIPS TO STUDENTS IN**



AVERY
County



BUNCOMBE
County



MCDOWELL
County



MITCHELL
County

Our Resilience Scholarship supports students whose education was disrupted by Hurricane Helene, empowering them to pursue their academic goals and build a brighter future.



RESIDENCY

Must live in
Western North Carolina



ENROLLMENT

Must be accepted or enrolled
full-time at an accredited
college, university,
or trade school



IMPACT

Must demonstrate
financial need due
to hurricane-related loss
(home, property,
family income, etc.)



AGE

Must be between
17 and 25 years old



SCAN THE QR CODE
to apply today!



At HopeMill, we believe in *Resilience. Restoration. Hope.*
Together, we are creating lasting impact across Western North Carolina.

 hopemill.org