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Heritage Ministries Issues Rolling Fields Tornado Damage Update

Rolling Fields, a Heritage Elder Care Community in Crawford County, was hit directly by a tornado on October 2, 2018. The Independent Living homes suffered extensive damage, with damage also occurring in our skilled care facility. However, in spite of the damage and challenges faced after the natural disaster, we couldn't be more proud of our teams. They reacted quickly, professionally and ensured the safety of our residents.

Over 160 Elders (residents) and Care-Partners (employees) are currently safe. All Elders have been transported to a local nursing homes or rehabilitation facilities until they can return home to Rolling Fields. Repairs are underway and progressing well. David Smeltzer, Heritage President and CEO says, "We are waiting for the Department of Health approval to begin readmitting elders to the facility. We are hoping that we will receive approval tomorrow (Thursday) and possibly start the re-admission process this weekend. Unfortunately, until we receive approval, we can't provide a firm start date."

There was minimal impact and damage to our Elders' rooms, with more significant damage being contained to only 8 rooms and Independent Living (a separate building). Rolling Fields has shared that they are truly blessed and thankful for the efforts of all of their Care Partners and volunteers working tirelessly this week. A special thank you to State Senator Michele Brooks and Representative Mike Kelly for their support.

"I've always known that my family and I are fortunate to live in this community, and seeing so many pull together during this disaster clearly demonstrates why we are so blessed to call this area home," said Senator Michele Brooks. "It's inspiring the way neighbors help neighbors and how we care for our own. We come together when times are tough. The worst of times bring out the best in people, and I'm so touched by the goodness of our community. Thank you to the Rolling Fields staff, the first responders, and community volunteers who did so much to ease a difficult situation and care for our seniors."

Smeltzer shared the following, "As President and CEO of Rolling Fields and its parent affiliate Heritage Ministries, I want to take this opportunity to publicly acknowledge the incredible work of the staff at Rolling Fields. Had it not been for their swift and appropriate reaction to the tornado warning, there would have certainly been serious injury to our Elders. I could not be more proud to be affiliated with this great group of care givers.



I would also like to thank the first responders and community organizations and businesses who provided support immediately after the tornado and in these days which have followed. Thank you to our vendors who have offered support of all types. Thank you to our elected Representatives who have been working behind the scenes to clear regulatory issues. Thank you to the many Heritage staff who have worked behind the scenes to support our recovery efforts. Thank you to the Heritage staff who have traveled from the Jamestown, NY area to lend a helping hand.

To anyone who I have missed. Thank you!

Most of all, I want to thank our God and Heavenly Father who surely placed His hand of protection on our elders and staff. I firmly believe that God was watching over all of you.”

Tanya Bish, Rolling Fields Administrator relayed her appreciation for the outpouring of community support in the days following the tornado. “While we are so thankful for our staff on the ground, we are also thankful for the strength of Heritage Ministries, located in Chautauqua County, NY. Heritage recently acquired Rolling Fields and is offering its full support of Rolling Fields during this time of need. They have offered strength, support and organizational stability.”

Lisa Haglund, Heritage Vice President of Marketing and Development, echoed the thoughts of Bish, stating, “Every day, I see our employees live our mission, and these past several days exemplify how much our teams care about those that are entrusted to us. In addition the community support for our residents has meant the world to us. The strength of Heritage and Rolling Fields brings years of experience, strength, and passion for our residents and our mission. The support we have received in all forms has been absolutely overwhelming and appreciated. From clothing drives to pet fostering to cleanup, so many members have come together to help Rolling Fields and our Elders in our time of need. Our recovery is far from over, and many continue to come forward asking how they can help in any way. It’s heartwarming to see so many people coming together during a disaster.”