

STYLISH LIVING IN WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA

HOME

CAROLINA

+ GARDEN

WINTER 2024-2025

SET FOR POSTERITY

MILLS RIVER HOME IS DESIGNED AROUND FAMILY ART

A Deep Look at Portraiture / Builders Give Back After Helene / The Arborvitae You (Don't) Know

Grilling Up Hope in South Asheville

Most know Buchanan Construction as a custom home builder. But after Hurricane Helene, the crew traded their hammers for spatulas and got cooking. “Our team gathered up two gas grills and enough food to provide hot meals out in our parking lot,” says president and owner Rick Buchanan. In early October, the firm served more than 1,000 meals, 75 of which they personally delivered to hard-hit families in Swannanoa. For many, it was their first taste of warm food since the storm. “As a community, we have never experienced this magnitude of destruction,” says Buchanan. “We realized there was a desperate need for warm meals and felt led to help our community. What we found was not only the opportunity to provide food but also the opportunity to provide love and encouragement for those affected by this tragedy.”

Buchanan Construction, 1642 Hendersonville Road, Asheville. See buchananconstruction.com.

Starting Fresh in Swannanoa

Sometimes, moving forward means stripping everything you ever knew down to the studs. That’s certainly been the case in Swannanoa, where Anne and Corey Black of Mountain Sound Builders have spent hours demo-ing flooded homes. “We connected with peers in our trade and found a small street in Swannanoa that needed help,” says Anne. “So, we put on N95 masks and got to work for the next 10 days. We gutted multiple houses that had water up to the roofs but were on stable foundations.” The couple also drove a trailer full of supplies from Greensboro, where Anne’s family lives, back to the mountains and distributed them at a local church. “This place has changed, but it is rising together,” Anne shared on the company’s Instagram a few days after the storm. “As a community, we are coming together in ways I’ve never seen.”

Mountain Sound Builders, 4 Celtic Drive, Suite 1-A, Arden. See mountainsoundbuilders.com.

Healing Hearts and Homes North of Asheville

The very day Hurricane Helene hit Western North Carolina, Brian Sineath of Sineath Construction in Weaverville started planning. Knowing many neighbors wouldn’t have the financial means to make home repairs, he and Andrew Willis of Tykke Builders established a nonprofit called Bunco Yancey Helene Relief. Through the 501(c)(3), the men have tackled a wide range of projects in north Buncombe and Yancey counties, including a full roof replacement for one Burnsville family. “There were three generations living in the house, and [the roof] was leaking and in terrible shape,” says Sineath. “It was very emotional for the family and for our team.” Of course, projects like these wouldn’t be possible without support from the community. “I’ve met so many wonderful people that the storm has brought together in different ways,” says Sineath. “People who lost everything are giving the only thing they have — time — to help neighbors. It’s really hard to describe.”

Sineath Construction, 65 Monticello Road, Weaverville. See sineathconstruction.com.

Stockpiling Strength on Sweeten Creek Road

Giving back has always been important at Living Stone Design + Build. Every first Friday for more than 10 years, the firm has volunteered with a local charity, spending the day building porches or picking up trash. But Hurricane Helene took Living Stone’s commitment to community to a whole new level. “Overnight, we went into restoration mode,” says president Sean Sullivan, explaining that their office on Sweeten Creek Road became a receiving facility for donations. “We began channeling supplies to the most dire needs of our team and trades,” says Sullivan. “Once those needs were met, we then began funneling all supplies to Biltmore Church and Hearts With Hands.” The crew also worked overtime to restore donated water tanks for Western Carolina Rescue Ministries, build shelving for Bounty & Soul, and fix plumbing at the Black Mountain Home for Children. “This was certainly the most tragic experience we have ever seen,” says Sullivan. “However, the tragedy brought out an increased appetite for our team to want to help.”

Living Stone Design + Build, 121 Sweeten Creek Road, Suite 70, Asheville. See livingstoneconstruction.com.



Baylor Blythe, John Blythe, and Heather Blythe, whose property in Penrose housed temporary shelter for displaced families through the Housing Assistance Corporation and architecture firm PLATT. Photo by Karin Strickland



PLATT President and Principal Architect Parker Platt and Housing Assistance Corporation Executive Director Meg Lebeck stand outside one of the RVs provided to local families. Photo by Karin Strickland

Raising Funds and Spirits in Brevard

When disaster struck in late September, team members with the Brevard design-build firm PLATT, interiors firm Platt Home, and the real-estate brokerage group Witherspoon Platt + Associates rolled up their sleeves and got to work. In a matter of weeks, staff raised enough money for the Housing Assistance Corporation (HAC), a nonprofit committed to providing safe and affordable housing, to purchase eight 27-foot travel trailers. These RVs were then parked on Heather and John Blythe's property in Penrose, providing temporary shelter for displaced families. According to Karin Strickland, an employee of Witherspoon

spoon Platt + Associates and member of the PLATT Heal Committee (an ongoing volunteer group formed post-Helene), the initiative has been life-changing for many. "Just last week, two families were in the process of withdrawing their kids from Pisgah Forest Elementary with the intention of moving to Greenville, South Carolina, in search of housing," she says. "Luckily, the school had heard about this project and contacted HAC. The families are now moving into two of the trailers, and their kids will be able to stay in school with their teachers and friends."

PLATT, 33 West Main St., Brevard. See platt.us.

Restoring Faith in West Asheville

As a former lineman, Tim Wright of Wright Family Custom Homes has spent many long, stormy nights chain-sawing uprooted oaks and gnarled pines. But no restoration effort compares to the one that followed Hurricane Helene. "We were shut down for two months, not taking on any new construction projects," says Wright, who instead spent that time removing trees, patching roofs, and rebuilding damaged homes. "We had a widow call us and say one contractor was trying to charge \$30,000 to clear her driveway [of trees]. I told her, 'Don't you dare pay that,'" Wright recalls. "Within two hours, I sent a crew of five men over. It took them a few days to remove the trees by hand because we didn't have equipment, but they got the job done." Wright also worked with West Asheville Baptist Church to organize supply drives and collaborated with other area builders to demo a home in Swannanoa. "Never in my life have I seen people be so kind and good to others," says Wright. "Everyone took care of one another — it didn't matter your faith, your creed, or what you did for a living."

Wright Family Custom Homes, P.O. Box 25057, Asheville. See wrightfamily-customhomes.com.