

I have always known that this town is a very special and caring community. You have always stepped up to help when people need it the most. It is one of the reasons I love living here and it is one of the reasons I am so proud to be your Supervisor.

This has never been more clear than this winter with the response to the Pines of Perinton fire.

On the morning of Jan. 25, 75 residents of our town, many of whom had just lost everything they owned in a fire, were welcomed at the Perinton Community Center. Our Town staff, along with staff members from the *Fairport Central School District* worked to make the residents comfortable and address their immediate needs as *Red Cross* and Monroe County personnel went to work finding temporary housing for those who were displaced. Our Town Recreation Department set up activities for the children and a provided a place for the adults to grab a cup of coffee and something to eat while they spoke with the *Red Cross* about next steps.

As word of the fire spread, our community responded in such a big way. Donations of food, clothing, toiletries, and other items began to pour in. Local restaurants donated hot meals and churches, community organizations and businesses offered volunteer support. Our Perinton family was there to help. As we transported the last family to their hotel that evening, the day's chaos may have settled down, but there was much to be done to help them get re-established and settled in.

The first thing that had to be done was to make sure the residents placed in hotels had meals and transportation for the schoolchildren. The School District was able to get the transportation worked out and volunteers from *Learning Links*, *Church of the Assumption* and *Barakah Muslim Charity* stepped up and provided meal deliveries several times per day to all residents at each of the hotels.

The Town set up a trust account for the Pines of Perinton Fund in order to collect donations to help those who were affected by the fire. We also reached out to *Perinton Square Mall* owner John DiMarco, who generously provided an available storefront and storage area. This enabled us, with the help of *Making Spirits Bright* charity organization, consolidate and set up a distribution center for all of the donated items from the community.

As the Pines staff worked to re-locate individuals and families within the complex, our staff coordinated and carried out each move. Furniture and housewares donated by *Saint's Place* and *Echo Ministries* were picked up and delivered by our Parks Department. New bedding, small appliances and electronics were purchased (with donations to the Pines Fund) and delivered by town staff. *The Perinton Food Shelf* was notified of each move and delivered food to re-stock pantries. And finally, newly settled residents were able to replace clothing and household items from the community donations available at the storefront in Perinton Square. Once settled, the residents received the balance of the Pines Fund to “fill the holes” of belongings lost in the fire. It was a wonderful collaborative effort that included town staff, a host of volunteers, various community organizations and our generous residents that allowed us to help these families put their lives back together after such a devastating event.

I would be remiss if I did not recognize all of our local volunteer firefighters who responded to the fire at 3:30 a.m. on Jan. 25. Thanks in large part to them everyone was able to get out of the building unharmed.

Lastly ... a very special thanks to our Community Services Coordinator Heather Moffitt. Heather did a remarkable job coordinating all aspects of this effort. She was on the phone daily with residents, volunteers, different organizations and anyone who may have had a question. She worked the storefront and helped people move. She dealt with everyone with patience and compassion - she epitomized what this community is all about – thank you Heather.

I am certain that I have inadvertently omitted many that also contributed in some way – for that, I apologize. But it further emphasizes overwhelming community response to this event. A heartfelt thanks to all who helped out. You have shown what Perinton is all about!

-Ciaran Hanna