



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

WHEN NEW YORKERS COME TOGETHER

PATTY RITCHIE September 26, 2011

A few weeks ago I saw firsthand what a disaster can do when it strikes rural New York.

I saw families forced from their homes, gathered at emergency shelters, waiting for relief supplies.

I met farmers who had spent months raising their crops only to see them washed away in a single day.

I spoke to people with nowhere to go after their homes were devastated by the rising waters in the wake of the Hurricane rains that swept parts of our state.

I toured Schoharie County in the Mohawk Valley in my role as the chair of the Senate's Agriculture Committee to see firsthand the extent of the flood's damage to the rural farms that fill the Mohawk Valley.

It was heart breaking seeing what a sudden flood can do to families.

On my way home, I thought about what I had seen and how I might be able to help some of those families recover from the devastation. I asked the people of Central and Northern New York to consider donating items to Schoharie's families. I have to admit, I was touched and pleased by the way people of St. Lawrence, Jefferson and Oswego Counties pitched in to help

their fellow New Yorkers.

In less than two weeks, we together collected hundreds of pounds of canned goods, baby food, diapers and formula, bottled water, clothing and personal items—enough to fill an oversized van.

After we delivered your donations to a relief center in Schoharie County, I received a touching letter from one of the volunteers.

Dear Senator Ritchie.

The Carlisle Fire Department has been assisting flood victims in Schoharie County every day since the flood occurred on that fateful Sunday three weeks ago. As our elevation is one of the highest in Schoharie County, we were designated as a shelter and housed 15 evacuees/stranded travelers that night, including one gentleman rescued from his car just before it was swept away by rising waters. We continue our relief efforts by accepting donations of food, diapers, household items, furniture, etc. and will do so while there continues to be a need.

As a member of the Carlisle Fire Department and volunteer of the relief work, I was concerned last night that our supplies had dwindled during the day. We formulated a plan to post on-line for more donations and before that was accomplished a very large van backed to our door with two gentlemen(Tom and Bill) explaining your effort of setting up collection locations in your district and delivering the goods to the Carlisle Fire Department for distribution to flood victims.

Your van could not have arrived at a more needed time. We're thrilled with the awesome donations contained in that van and assure you that your efforts will greatly benefit the flood victims.

We realize it's impossible to thank all the individuals who made this effort possible, but please pass along our thanks and appreciation any way you can.

With so much devastation in our beautiful Schoharie County, we are truly uplifted by the kindness and enormous generosity of our neighbors not bound by zip code.

I hope you, and all the contributors, have a wonderful day knowing you've made a difference in Schoharie County.

THANK YOU.

Sincerely,

Debi Christman

Secretary/Treasurer

Carlisle Fire District