

**LABOR OF LOVE**  
**United Way**  
**of Eastern LaSalle County**  
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F O R I M M E D I A T E R E L E A S E

## **United Way Accepting Labor of Love Home Repair Applications through August 24, 2017**

United Way of Eastern LaSalle County is now accepting Labor of Love applications for repairs and improvements on homes owned by low-income homeowners and homes owned by military families of deployed personnel. **Homeowners impacted by the February 28 tornado are also encouraged to apply.** The deadline to submit an application is Thursday, August 24, 2017.

For the 26th consecutive year, United Way's volunteer-based Labor of Love program will help low-income homeowners repair, improve and modify their homes at no cost to them. The program works in partnership with twelve area communities and hundreds of volunteers to rehabilitate the homes of low-income homeowners, particularly the elderly, people with disabilities, veterans, and families with young children. The program also helps spouses of active duty military personnel keep up their homes while their loved ones are away, and homeowners whose home has been damaged by a natural disaster such as the recent tornado. "The primary goal of Labor of Love", explained Bill Cairns, retired carpenter Local 195", is to help individuals and families remain in their homes, living independently, warm, safe and dry. Our first priorities are to address repair and maintenance issues that present a health or safety risk, and/or limit the access to or within the home."

Labor of Love repairs are provided at no charge to people who own their home, but who, because of financial or physical limitations are unable to do needed repairs themselves and cannot afford the expense of hiring the work done. To be eligible for Labor of Love assistance consideration, applicants must:

- Own and live in their home, with no plans to vacate or sell the home for a period of 3-5 years;
- The home must be located within eastern LaSalle County, specifically: Dayton, Grand Ridge, Harding, Leland, Marseilles, Naplate, Norway, Ottawa, Seneca, Serena, Sheridan, and Wedron;
- Sign a homeowner agreement, release, and waiver; and provide verification of income & homeownership
- Have the home insured under a homeowner's policy;
- Household income must be no greater than 50% of the LaSalle County median annual income. Income flexibility may be considered for homeowners whose homes were damaged by the 2-28 tornado;
- Applicants must be financially and physically unable to do the work themselves;
- Military families must provide a copy of military orders or active duty ID Card. All homes owned by military families of deployed personnel will be considered;
- The applicant must agree to inspections of the property by the Labor of Love preview team.

Almost all of the work is done in one day, which traditionally takes place, rain or shine, the first Saturday in October. This year's Labor of Love is set for Saturday, October 7. An estimated 300 volunteers, from all walks of life and all skill levels, will come together to tackle leaky roofs, broken steps, peeling paint, faulty plumbing and wiring, unruly yards, drafty windows, and other weatherization and home-safety repair projects. Repair/improvement projects are planned and supervised by professional trade's people, contractors and House Captains who generously donate their time and skills.

Labor of Love applications are available at the drive-up windows of area banks; including First National Bank of Ottawa, 300 W. Madison Street, 2771 N. Columbus Street, and 601 State Street (all Ottawa); First Federal Savings Bank, 433 W. Main Street, Ottawa; Old Second National Bank, 323 E Norris Dr., Ottawa; Ottawa Savings Bank, 925 LaSalle Street and Twin Oaks Savings Bank, 125 W. Bluff Street, Marseilles; Financial Plus Credit Union, 800 Chestnut St., Ottawa; First State Bank, 1212 LaSalle Street, Ottawa; Marseilles Bank, 100 E. Bluff Street, Marseilles, Grand Ridge National Bank, 105 W. Main, Grand Ridge, and First Midwest Bank of Seneca, 224 N. Main Street, Seneca. Applications are also available at the United Way office, 601 State Street, Ottawa. All applications are to be returned to the United Way office by Thursday, August 24. Applications will be considered and homes previewed as they are received. United Way will make copies of all required documents required at submission.

If you know someone in eastern LaSalle County whose safety and quality of life would be improved with help from Labor of Love, please encourage and assist them with filling out a homeowner application. “So often the people who need and deserve the help the most, are the most hesitant to apply, explained Shelli Ocepek, United Way’s Executive Director. “Older Adults may be fearful to seek Labor of Love assistance, afraid that there may be a “catch”, a hidden cost to ‘free’ home repairs. We have also been told by deserving seniors that there are others who need help more than they do.” Ocepek added, “The Labor of Love Planning Team prioritizes the home’s selected and repairs considered based on need and safety concerns.”

Free home repairs may seem “too good to be true”, but rest assured all materials and labor are provided to eligible homeowners with no charge to the homeowner(s) or their family, now or in the future. United Way is able to offer the program at no cost because of the extreme generosity of our local community and the hundreds of volunteers who give their hearts, talents, and muscle to help. Labor of Love is based on the age old tradition of a “barn-raising”, people coming together to assist neighbors who can’t do the work themselves.

Labor of Love repairs are made possible through corporate and community donations, memorials, a weatherization grant from the Warm Neighbors Foundation, and a Community Outreach grant from Exelon Nuclear LaSalle Station - - Labor of Love’s Signature Sponsor for the past fourteen years.

Last year over three hundred volunteers improved 26 area homes. For more information about applying for Labor of Love home assistance, to get involved, or to donate contact United Way of Eastern LaSalle County at (815) 434-4003 or [unitedwayelc@sbcglobal.net](mailto:unitedwayelc@sbcglobal.net)