

Team Rubicon performs ‘Operation Pineapple Express’

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Miriam S. Cody



An uninsured Indian Valley family suffering from the harsh effects of the Feb. 6 windstorm got a big helping hand beginning Friday, Feb. 20. Volunteers from Region 9 of the aid organization Team Rubicon arrived at Valivu trailer park on North Valley Road in Greenville to demolish the Gibsons’ former home in what the relief team called “Operation Pineapple Express.”

With the help of Plumas County Director of Emergency Services Jerry Sipe, many suffering community members were quickly attended to in the storm’s aftermath.

There wasn’t much left to be done to pull down the Gibson house — the family home of 40 years was already thoroughly destroyed. The storm pulled the fireplace into the yard and tore the roof off, then most of the walls.

Bill Gibson, who owns the home, was inside at the time but was unharmed.

“This is 40 years of my parents’ life,” said Bill Gibson Jr., gesturing at the skeleton of his childhood home next to a pile of rubble.

The Gibsons said they had no current plans to rebuild, but Indian Valley is where they live and where they plan to stay. Friends have created a Go Fund Me site for the Gibsons, where people can donate to help them buy a new home. Go to gofundme.com/n1xi5c to help out.

More about Team Rubicon

According to the website teamrubiconusa.org, Team Rubicon is an organization of volunteers based in El Segundo. TR “unites the skills and experiences of military veterans with first responders to rapidly deploy emergency response teams.”

TR’s vision is to reach “victims on the fringe,” those who are outside the scope of traditional emergency attention, but who clearly need help.

The team started with a handful of people and grew to send thousands of volunteers all over the world, traveling to Haiti, Chile, Burma, Pakistan and elsewhere to provide assistance.

TR got its name from the river in northeastern Italy. “When Julius Caesar crossed the Rubicon at the head of his legions and marched on Rome, it marked a point of no return. The phrase ‘crossing the Rubicon’ has since survived in reference to any group committing itself to a risky course of action,” reads the website.

Bridging the gap

Team Rubicon’s primary mission is to provide relief between the moment a disaster happens and the point at which conventional aid organizations respond. Once that gap closes, TR “moves on.”

Another way TR “bridges the gap” is by providing veterans with three things they lose after leaving the military. It gives them a purpose, a sense of community, and a feeling of self-worth.

Bill Gibson Jr. said he wanted to accentuate the fact that Team Rubicon and Jerry Sipe had stepped in as heroes for his family.

“Jerry made this happen for my parents. That’s the important thing here,” he said.

<http://www.plumasnews.com/index.php/13505-team-rubicon-performs-operation-pineapple-express>