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Letters to Santa, pages 5B-6B, 8B

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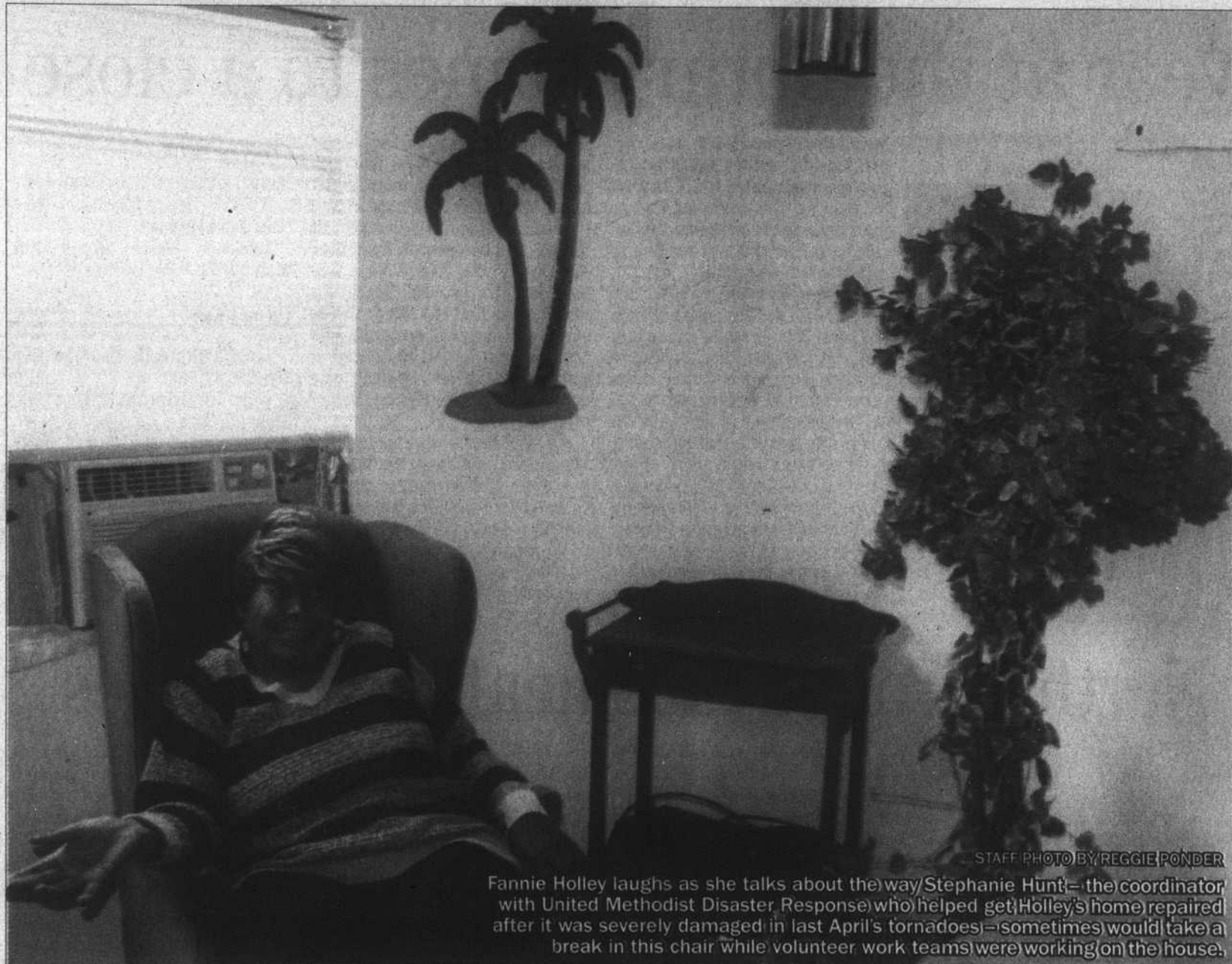
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Wednesday, December 24, 2014

Long route to a Merry Christmas



Fannie Holley laughs as she talks about the way Stephanie Hunt—the coordinator with United Methodist Disaster Response—who helped get Holley's home repaired after it was severely damaged in last April's tornadoes—sometimes would take a break in this chair while volunteer work teams were working on the house.

BY REGGIE PONDER
Editor

Fannie Holley is having a Merry Christmas this year.

While holiday festivities might be a matter of course this time of year for many people, she has had a tough two-year road back to Christmas cheer.

Her grandson in Philadelphia was murdered two years ago in November. She said her close-knit family could not bring themselves to celebrate either Thanksgiving or Christmas that first year, or last year.

Then in April of this year the powerful tornadoes that cut across Chowan County ripped the top off her home on Wildcat Road.

As awful as the damage to the house was, though, she said it wasn't as bad as losing her grandson.

Slowly, however, healing has come to the family. She said she was able to go to Philadelphia and celebrate Thanksgiving this year — they finally were ready to have another family Thanksgiving.

And now she is back in her home, "thanks to God," she said.

"Now I feel like Christmas," Holley said. "I have forgotten all about the

See LONG ROUTE, 6A

Effort among church groups aids tornado victims

BY REGGIE PONDER
Editor

Local volunteers are working alongside volunteer work teams from out of town to repair, rebuild and replace homes damaged or destroyed by last April's tornadoes.

Stephanie Hunt, the coordinator for the United Methodist Disaster Response rebuilding effort in Chowan, Perquimans and Pasquotank counties, said volunteer work teams have

been coming from Virginia and North Carolina. Locally, Open Door Church has sent volunteers twice.

Hunt said she is projected to be here through Nov. 1, 2015.

Chowan County Interfaith Disaster Response's Dick Vail said all the debris from the April tornadoes had been picked up, most of it by volunteers.

"Since there was no FEMA money we had to rely on the state assistance program to help folks that

did not have insurance," Vail said. "Unfortunately, that process took longer than we expected. In fact, it was November before the last case was resolved."

Hunt said the volunteer work teams through United Methodist Disaster Response have completed extensive work at a home on Wildcat Road. Volunteers replaced the roof and repaired walls and ceiling.

United Methodist Disaster Response has three active projects in Chowan

County right now, in addition to work in Perquimans and Pasquotank. One of the Chowan projects is a home replacement on Sandy Ridge Road, and Hunt is working with volunteers to try to have that one ready for the family to move in by Christmas.

"We're just inches away trying to get them in," Hunt said. The family consists of a husband and wife and their three children.

The other two current projects are on Burnt Mill

Road, she said. One is a home replacement and the other involves extensive repairs.

Sally Holloway, volunteer coordinator for Chowan-Perquimans Habitat for Humanity, has helped recruit some volunteers for the rebuilding effort through the local Habitat network.

Although this is not a Habitat project, many of the Habitat volunteers have skills that are needed at these sites and there are Habitat volunteers who are

pitching in.

Leo Fiddes, manager of the local Habitat for Humanity ReStore, helped connect Holloway with Hunt.

The local churches have been very cooperative in supporting the work teams, according to Hunt.

"They have been wonderful," Hunt said of local churches.

The churches, for their part, have found Hunt and

See VOLUNTEERS, 6A

Former gas station site to host historic home

BY REBECCA BUNCH
Staff Writer

Fifteen years of perseverance and hard work ended with smiles Friday afternoon at the Chowan County Register of Deeds office.

Waiting to file a deed of gift for the former Etna station on North Broad Street were Elizabeth Vann Moore Fund representatives Sambo Dixon and John Morehead, along with Penny Binns, a neighborhood organizer who has been working with the board on the project.

"Penny and I have been working on fixing this site for 15 years," Dixon said.

Bestowing the gift were the former co-owners of the property, Taylor Oil of Winston-Salem and Margaret "Peggy" Satterfield



STAFF PHOTO BY REBECCA BUNCH

Chowan Deputy Clerk of Court Betty Venters (second from left) poses with (l-r) Sambo Dixon, Penny Binns and John Morehead, while the three wait to file a deed of gift on behalf of the Elizabeth Vann Moore Fund for the former Etna Station property on North Broad Street, Friday.

of Philadelphia, Pa. The tax value of the property is \$67,000.

The three noted that when they began their mission years ago there were several areas in the neighborhood that needed

"cleaning up," including the site where a doctor's office stands today. The former Etna location is the final place on their list, they said.

See ETNA STATION, 6A

Home visiting program for parents of newborns launched

From staff reports

New mothers and their babies in Chowan County now have another place to turn for health monitoring and guidance in the first few weeks after the baby's birth.

Family Connects, a home visiting program for parents of newborns was publicly launched this fall in Beaufort, Bertie, Chowan and Hyde Counties.

All parents residing in the four counties may sign up to receive a no-charge home visit regardless of income or status. Visits are conducted by registered nurses shortly after birth using the research-based "Durham Connects" home visiting model developed in Durham. The goal of the program is to improve child and family health and wellbeing by supporting parents after the birth of a new baby and by connecting them with local resources when needed.

A Spanish interpreter is available.

Parents may sign up for



STAFF PHOTO BY REGGIE PONDER

Nurse Beverly Twine (right) and mom Desiree Memory interact with infant Brodie Memory Nov. 20 during a Family Connects home visit.

the program before the child is born or shortly after birth — up to 12 weeks postpartum. Parents may sign up online at www.familyconnectsnc.org or by calling 252-793-1806. The highly qualified home visiting nurses are trained to help with parental supports such as: breast and bottle feeding,

child and maternal health assessment, postpartum depression screening, home safety, childcare selection resources, access to local services and much more. The home visiting program works in conjunction with a family's doctors to create a

See NEWBORNS, 6A



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