Stephen & Tabitha King Foundation supports ACAP’s Roofs Over Aroostook project

PRESQUE ISLE – Up to ten County homes may soon have new roofs thanks to the Stephen and Tabitha King Foundation’s generous support of Aroostook County Action Program’s new Roofs Over Aroostook project. ACAP received $50,000 from the Stephen and Tabitha King Foundation to help meet the special housing repair need for seniors and low-income people in The County whose roofs are failing, or worse, no longer functional.

ACAP’s Energy and Housing has a waiting list that hovers near 460 homes in need of various repairs. Each year, homes they are able to repair with available funding sources fall off that list, while more homes in need are added. Approximately 75 percent of those homes on the waiting list are in need of some form of roof repair or replacement, according to Gary Sirois, Energy and Housing Program Coordinator at ACAP.

“Aroostook County winters take quite a toll on roofs, and the need for roof repairs is as wide as our Home Repair Priority Waiting list is long. The welcome donation from the Stephen and Tabitha King foundation will increase the overall number of home repair projects we can perform, by reducing the financial burden of roof repair from other funding sources. The generosity of Stephen and Tabitha King, and the generosity of other ACAP benefactors, helps ACAP meet its mission of Making Life Better in Aroostook County - every single day. Thank you,” said Sirois.

In June, Sirois developed the Roofs Over Aroostook project, aimed at allocating resources specifically to meet the needs of ACAP customers needing roof repairs and replacements. Replacing a roof is often a cost-prohibitive home repair for the people who ACAP services through our existing programs. Oftentimes, homes that need roof repairs also are in need of a variety of other fixes – such as window replacements, heating system upgrades, etc. Additionally, even when a home needing only roof repair is placed on the waiting list, the timeframe to address that issue is short before the damaged roof begins to cause additional, expensive necessary home repairs.

Roofs in disrepair are cause for multiple problems that are detrimental to the health and well-being of the home’s occupants. Besides the more obvious weather-protection a safe roof offers, failing, leaky roofs are responsible for costly, and sometimes irreparable interior damage to ceilings and walls. They also can cause mold and air-quality issues, and have even, in some instances, caused the home owner to lose their home insurance through cancelled policies, or to have to permanently vacate their homes.

ACAP’s current primary funding resources for the Home Repair Network comes from Maine State Housing Authority and Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). Guidelines from those primary funding resources have restrictions and per project limits. For instance, pre-1976 mobile homes that are in good condition, but need roof replacements, are ineligible for funding assistance from either of those primary funders.
Other grant funding for home repair projects that allow the agency to leverage resources with fewer hurdles are limited, making private funding a crucial tool in ACAP’s ability to intervene in dire circumstances. It can cost anywhere between $10,000 and $15,000 to replace an average roof. By the time most roofs have begun to leak or need repair, any smaller attempts at repairs, other than full replacements, are little more than temporary fixes that will end up costing more in the long run.

By dedicating the funding from the Stephen and Tabitha King Foundation strictly to replacing roofs and using that funding to leverage other resources and/or by working with community partners to reduce labor costs, Sirois estimates that ACAP will be able to perform as many as ten complete roof replacements in the upcoming year.

“The need for roofs will always exist in Aroostook County. The weather, seasons and aging populations will continue to be a challenge. ACAP Energy and Housing will rise to meet those challenges, continually addressing those needs by coming up with innovative programs, working to strengthen community partnerships, and educating the people to which we offer services on home maintenance and the programs available to those who need a little extra help,” said Sirois.

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ACAP is celebrating 45 Years of Making Life Better in Aroostook County! ACAP provides the people of Aroostook County with services and resources that help individuals and families achieve greater economic independence. As a leader, or in partnership with others, ACAP provides guidance to the community in responding to emerging human needs in the areas of community health, early care and education, energy and housing, and workforce development services. For more information on ACAP, or to make a tax-deductible contribution, please contact the agency at 771 Main Street, on the web at www.acap-me.org, or by calling 764-3721.