

August 13, 2016 Louisiana Flood, 2 years later we are still called Flood Victims and not Flood Survivors, why?



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Two years after the flood we have foundations cracking due to erosion, wood buckled and warped, joists and beams bent and split. Old wood has never been perfect after it's been soaked for days and dried slowly for months.

You are a flood victim until you complete your repairs and return to your life as it was before the flood. In Louisiana that can be a very difficult task for many that didn't have the means or the health to repair and rebuild.

August 13 is the Birthday of one of our members, Julie Matherne. *Happy Birthday Julie!*

Two years ago on her birthday Julie was helped into a high water vehicle just like hundreds of other 2016

flood victims.

What makes Julie special to us is that she has the spirit to push forward without much mud slinging over the flood. She's retired, living on social security with a disability and still manages to keep a clean and orderly home, even as the floors begin to sag and walls crack. It's not easy living on less than \$11,000 per year, but she manages and she's one strong cajun warrior because of it.

But being strong and being able to manage a life on wages that HUD identifies as extreme poverty it not always what some think, food stamps, social security, medicaid don't pay for flood recovery labor and materials. So Julie had to ask family and friends for money that they may never see again due to one simple fact, Julie can not afford additional debt and to repay any money used to rebuild her home after the flood is not possible based on living expenses and income.

FEMA inspected Julie's home and didn't see what we see today. FEMA classified the home as not qualified to receive FEMA IA or IHP grants to help Julie rebuild. But Julie did rebuild, and it was without FEMA's assistance like so many of us received to help with our structural repairs. Julie was seriously limited on what she could repair. As contractors, handyman services, neighbors and friends told her about her foundation and told her the costs to repair the damage all she could think about is where would the money come from. She didn't and still today doesn't have the financial resources needed to address the issue of a slipped foundation footer that the flood waters caused on her birthday August 2016.

When the HUD CDBG-DR grants became available from the Louisiana Restore Homeowners Assistance program Julie felt this may actually be her federal assistance that she needed so badly.

She applied to the Restore program July 2017 and very quickly was denied and referred to the "Do I Qualify" section at the Restore.LA.Gov website.

Restore told Julie that she did not qualify because FEMA identified her home as not having enough damage to qualify for the FEMA program. The Restore.LA.Gov program uses data provided by FEMA to screen and pre-qualify homeowners for acceptance to the CDBG-DR Grant program, in Julie's case the FEMA report disqualified her from the HUD CDBG-DR program that was actually designed to help her and all retirees on fixed low incomes.

By the time Julie learned that the Restore Louisiana Homeowners Assistance program would not qualify her for a HUD CDBG-DR grant it was too late to appeal the FEMA damage assessments.

Today Julie is planning on asking for help, from Congressman Graves to Managers and Directors of the Office of Community Development Disaster Recovery Unit. She is using Social Media with the hope that the main contractor IEM Inc. passes her message to those that can order an inspection of her home and make a better more qualified assessment of the true damages that Julie has been faced with and left to her own means to remedy.

We are asking RestoreLA.Gov on Facebook.com and sending emails about Julie Matherne, we are even trying to get her in front of Congressman Graves just to make Restore damage assessors take notice.

We are asking that Restore LA and the OCD-DRU reach out to Julie Matherne and review her case. We want Julie to have a safe and secure home, we want to allow her to relax in her retirement home during her retirement years. We look at this as if it were our retirement years and our home, we want to trust in our state leaders and we want to have trust that they will do what it takes to make sure our retirees are placed first on our list of the people we all need to support. It will be us one day and we will then pray someone remembers our life contribution to the state of Louisiana.

I'm asking on behalf of Julie Matherne that other flood victims send to their case workers, to your

construction technical advisers this story. We have to allow all flood victims into the program, we have to allow our senior citizens into the program, the low income, the disabled, the Julie Matherne's of Louisiana need us to help them fight to make their homes safe and secure.

Let's spread the word and get Julie on the "A" list at Restore Louisiana Homeowners Assistance Program. We know every penny counts when you are a retiree living in the Great State of Louisiana.

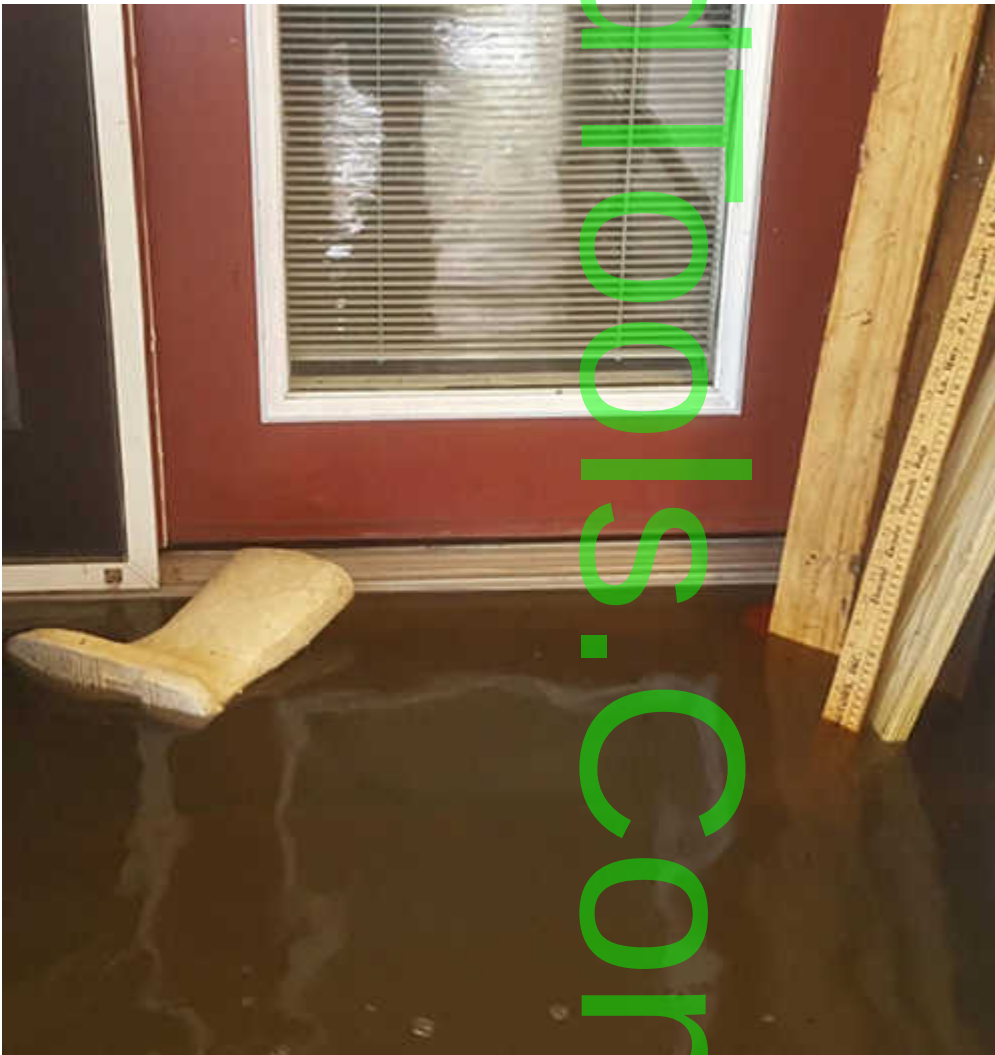
Reach out to Julie Matherne on her Facebook page: [Julie.Matherne Facebook.Com page](#) or by email: jewels_70394@yahoo.com

Floors as of today.





Day of the flood August 13, 2016.



Julie's view while evacuating her home.



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