

Roofing



BY: PAUL SCELSEI SEPTEMBER 25, 2022

Roofing Contractors Give Back to Their Communities

Easterseals Washington needed to replace the roofs on two of its buildings for its Camp Stand By Me facilities in Vaughn, Washington. Patriot Roofing in Gig Harbor, Washington, was one of the companies contacted for an estimate. Behind the scenes, the team at Patriot Roofing internally discussed donating the two roofs as a way to give back to the community. Mike Talpai, general manager at Patriot Roofing, was instrumental in making it happen. In our podcast interview with him, Talpai shared the importance of giving back to the communities we work and live in and how doing so can change lives.

“Giving back to our communities is so important because it’s our communities that create the success our businesses enjoy,” Talpai says. “And our communities need our support.”

For the Camp Stand By Me project, Easterseals was preparing to find the funding to cover the cost of the roofs, not knowing that Patriot Roofing was planning to turn it into a 100% volunteer project. Talpai coordinated the donation of all the materials needed

for the two new roofs, the delivery of the materials and the installation.



Companies contributing products and services included Convoy Supply, which donated and delivered the shingles in conjunction with CertainTeed. Beacon donated all the other parts of the roof system and provided rooftop delivery. ABC Supply donated gutters, downspouts and plywood. Velux supplied twelve skylights. Air Vent donated electric ventilation fans and assisted in the ventilation design. Reed Electric installed the fans. EagleView provided aerial imagery.

Kitsap Credit Union provided a volunteer team to assist for the day. Patriot Roofing designed and installed the roof system, donated all of the labor, and provided food and refreshments.

Talpai asked me if Air Vent could contribute the attic ventilation for the roofs.

Shortly after saying yes, I received a thank you email from Talpai he sent to all of the participating contributors. Here's how it read: "I'm excited, guys. It was shared with me that the Easterseals organization knew the repairs were needed for the roofs on the buildings, and they were in the process of identifying ways to pay for the project. The donations from all of you, in their words, 'Will change lives' by allowing them to redirect the funds to helping disabled individuals and families."

Helping the Medically Fragile

Since 1974 Camp Stand By Me provides camping getaways for children and adults with disabilities so they can experience all the joys of camp life without limitations. Fun activities include swimming, canoeing, various sports, arts & crafts, grilling hot dogs and toasting marshmallows. When estimator Paul Rowlette at Patriot Roofing brought the project to Talpai's attention, it did not take long for the wheels to go in motion turning it into a donation. After all, Patriot Roofing has been donating a few roofs annually very quietly for many years.

“Our estimators are always looking for medically fragile children where the families need help. That has been our litmus test for donating a free roof,” Talpai says. “We install two, sometimes more, free roofs per year. Those families are coming to us for a bid for a new roof. We review the details, talk about it as company and decide to take it on as a free roof. We show up, install the new roof, and leave. There’s no advertising. There’s no talking about it. The family knows and we know.”



Talpai acknowledges that the Camp Stand By Me project is a bit different because it’s for an organization, not an individual family. “This is a first for us doing a donation of this size and scope and for an organization,” he says.

The time commitment to coordinate all the donations from nine different companies — not counting Patriot Roofing — is real. It’s also very rewarding.

“It’s a humbling experience,” Talpai says. “For the Camp Stand By Me project, competitors in our industry came together to make donations. This has elevated beyond competition to doing the right thing for the community. It’s been great to witness the level of participation from everyone.”

It Starts Under Your Own Roof

Someone reading this thinking that giving back to the community is too time consuming, or too expensive, or is unsure where to even get started, Talpai has some advice.

“It’s a mindset of the organization with everyone in the boat rowing in the same direction that we are giving back to our community,” Talpai says. “So, talk to your staff, talk to your installers, talk to your estimators and explain this is the direction we want to go. And this is the program we will be starting. Together we will go from point A to point B, and we’re going to take some families with us. It all starts under your own roof.”

Talpai recommends including the cost in the annual budget. “Even if you do not have the group identified you want to give back to, put in next year’s budget, for example, \$5,000 for donations,” Talpai explains. “So now it’s budgeted, which is sometimes a barrier in itself to giving back.”

As for time constraints, Patriot Roofing runs the free roofs like a typical paid-for roof project. “Whether we get paid for the project or not, the roof is put into the chute like a standard project. It goes through a normal process and we just don’t collect a check in the end.” Talpai says. “It’s not tasking anyone in their job or their role at Patriot Roofing with something that they’re not used to doing.”

Managing a donation from your own company is one thing. Coordinating the donations from nine different companies is another. Talpai embraced the challenges and encourages others to do so.

“With the Easterseals Camp Stand By Me project, it was time consuming. To take on a project of this scope as the manager you just have to know you’ll need to put some time into it and just enjoy it. I don’t look at it as overwhelming. I look at it as something I enjoy doing,” Talpai says. “But there is time involved. You have to admit that.”

“Set aside an hour a day or so to make the necessary phone calls, emails, to make sure the project is moving forward all while still doing your regular job,” Talpai continues. “It can be done. And I’ll tell you, for as much time as I’ve put into it and all that I have gotten out of it, I’d even put more time into it. It’s just been so rewarding for me on a personal level. I just feel good about it. Sometimes it just takes someone to grab the reins and see where it takes you. If you jump into giving back to your community, you will not regret it. And it’s the right thing to do. Our communities really do need our help.”

About the author: Paul Scelsi is marketing communications manager at Air Vent Inc. and leader of its Attic Ventilation: Ask the Expert™ seminars (airvent.com). He hosts the podcast, “Airing it out with Air Vent,” and he’s the chairman of the Asphalt Roofing Manufacturers Association Ventilation Task Force. He is the author of the book, Grab and Hold Their Attention: Creating and Delivering Presentations that Move Your Audience to Action.