Blue Haven

A Chief Cares Mission

www.bluehaven.org

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Blue Haven

A Chief Cares Mission

ANNUAL REPORT

2024 - 2025

$35 Million

Raised in support of Blue Haven's mission and efforts.

82,193 people

Gathered at the *Concert for Carolina* in support of Hurricane Helene recovery efforts.

37 Homes

Built in the inaugural Blue Haven Avery neighborhood. Each home is fully furnished.

91 Residents

Expected to move into the first completed Blue Haven Avery community.

10 Years

Mortgage-free and rent-free pathway to homeownership provided to participating families before ownership transfers free and clear.

1 Scalable, Replicable Model

A people-centered recovery strategy to strengthen small towns

A LETTER FROM OUR FOUNDER



Dear Friends and Supporters,

Western North Carolina has shaped everything about me. I grew up in the mountains of Granite Falls, and have spent much of my adult life returning to them to write, to think, and to be near the people and places that made me who I am. When Hurricane Helene struck in September 2024, those mountains were at the center of unmatched devastation. My wife, Katherine, and I were determined to stand with the communities impacted by the storm.

In May 2026, addressing the graduating class of the University of North Carolina, I spoke about what I call the *Six Strings of Life*: faith, family, a life partner, resilience, community, and individuality. The one I find myself returning to again and again, in life and in this work, is community. In moments of devastation, against all logic, communities come together at their strongest. This special kind of resilience was our guiding star when we formed Blue Haven, a Chief Cares Mission.

We believe that the most meaningful thing we can do for communities in need is make a long-term commitment to the people within them. Every small town in every state across this country has people who embody hope when things get tough. They are the steady hands, and the warm heart. They are the reason that Western North Carolina, or any community touched by disaster, endures. And they are vital to the future of the places they love.

These were the people I kept thinking about in the days and weeks after the storm. *These* are the people Blue Haven were built to serve. And by making it possible for them to stay rooted in their communities, we have created a model for rising up after disaster.

None of this happens without you. The donors, partners, volunteers, and supporters who believed in this before there was much to show for it—your generosity is the reason Blue Haven exists. Thank you for trusting us with your resources and your confidence. We take that trust seriously, and we intend to keep earning it.

Looking ahead, we are hopeful and determined. There's more work to do, and I'm grateful to be doing it alongside you.

With gratitude,

Eric Church

"We asked ourselves: what if we didn't just give someone a house? What if we selected people who would repay this act of kindness with their own acts of kindness? What if, by choosing wisely and investing deeply, we could help make this entire community stronger, more resilient, more connected?"

– Eric Church



OUR FOUNDERS

Eric and Katherine Church

Blue Haven

A Chief Cares Mission

ABOUT US

Founded by Eric and Katherine Church and powered by community, Blue Haven, a Chief Cares Mission, was created with a simple but powerful intention: to serve those in need and strengthen communities through compassion, action, and long-term investment.

Our Vision

To establish a blueprint for community preservation, where those who dedicate their lives to serving others are rewarded, and therefore enabled to nurture roots, create stability, and help their communities thrive.

Our Mission

Blue Haven provides homes as a 'hand up' to Community Pillars – those who hold their communities together – so they can stay rooted in the places they love and strengthen them for generations to come

Our Strategy

Blue Haven operates with the belief that **the most durable form of recovery is one that keeps communities intact**. By offering stability to exceptional community servants, we create long-term opportunity that extends far beyond individual households.

Our housing initiative provides **mortgage-free, rent-free homes to Community Pillars**. After 10 years, the titles are transferred outright, offering a pathway to homeownership. The initiative is designed to offset challenges of affordable housing and economic instability for individuals who, through this support, **can invest in greater service to the community**.

When we invest in the people who hold a community together, everyone benefits: Families put down roots. Schools are sustained. Places become healthier. The next generation sees a future worth staying for. One act of generosity creates a waterfall effect that strengthens the social fabric.

Operating at the intersection of disaster response, housing, social services, and economic development, this model is a **roadmap for long-term resilience in small towns**. With this blueprint, Blue Haven is building a replicable, scalable model to serve communities across the country.

What is a Community Pillar?

A Community Pillar is someone whose exceptional presence, service and care strengthens the places and people around them, resulting in a stronger, safer, healthier and more vibrant community.

OUR VISION

A Call to Action: THE FOUNDING OF BLUE HAVEN

INTRODUCTION FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR:

In September 2024, Hurricane Helene changed Western North Carolina forever. Its communities were confronted with unimaginable loss. More than a hundred lives were lost. Homes disappeared, businesses closed, and essential infrastructure was destroyed. Vulnerabilities long present in the region—economic stress, declining population, overburdened health and education systems—became dire. Families who had spent generations in these mountains suddenly faced a deeply uncertain future. For some, leaving was the only viable option.

For my lifelong friends, Eric and Katherine Church, there was not a moment's hesitation before they pledged to do whatever they could to revitalize the region. They began by raising awareness, funds, and hope. Soon, our mission became clear: we would help communities remain strong by investing in the people who *make* them strong.

THE CONCERT FOR CAROLINA

Together with fellow North Carolinian Luke Combs, Eric Church helped organize the ***Concert for Carolina***, a historic benefit event to help Western North Carolina recover from one of the most devastating disasters in its history.

The event drew over 82,000 attendees and 7.1 million online views, and raised $24.5 million for relief and recovery efforts across the region, half of which seeded the creation of Blue Haven.

"DARKEST HOUR"

Underscoring his commitment to the people of North Carolina, even after the national spotlight moved on, Eric Church signed over all royalties to his solo release "Darkest Hour" in support of ongoing relief efforts. The song, available everywhere, is dedicated to the heroes who "show up in the hardest times, offering a hand when it's most needed, and standing tall when others can't."



Photo Credit: Khadejeh Nikouyeh

A powerful concept took hold: the people within a community are the true engine of its recovery. By investing in individuals, who, through acts of service large and small, fortify and inspire those around them, we strengthen the social connectivity and informal support networks that allow others to stay, to prosper, and to benefit from a collective increase in social wellbeing. These exceptional community servants are the ones who lay the groundwork for a vibrant, healthier, and more resilient communities.

Our mission evolved:

Responding became ***Rebuilding***.

Rebuilding became ***Reinvesting***.

Reinvesting became ***Revitalizing***.

When we started this, we thought we were building houses. What we've learned is that we're building something more difficult and important: a blueprint for keeping small towns strong.

These last two years have been formative. We secured land. We broke ground. We assembled a team and built a process. We listened to experts and adjusted our approach based on what we heard. By the end of 2026, we expect 37 families to have moved into Blue Haven Avery, the first community in what we believe has become a meaningful blueprint for future impact. These homes represent more than shelter. They provide stability, dignity, and opportunity for families who are deeply connected to the people they serve.

What makes this work so important is its reach beyond any one household. When families are able to remain rooted where they are needed most, neighborhoods are strengthened, local institutions are sustained, and communities are positioned to thrive. As Blue Haven Avery begins to welcome residents, we believe its effect will be felt not only in the lives of those families, but also in the schools, churches, workplaces, and towns they help sustain. Looking ahead, we remain firmly committed to helping build 100 homes across Western North Carolina, with future neighborhoods planned in Yancey and Mitchell Counties.

This report is a record of our work from its earliest stages. We could not do this important work without the belief of those who stand with us. What has begun in Avery County is only the beginning. We move forward with great hope, confident that the strongest chapters of Blue Haven are still ahead.

Allen Wilson
Board Chair, Blue Haven



OUR APPROACH

Beyond Disaster Relief:
BUILDING A BLUEPRINT FOR LASTING IMPACT

Amidst the vulnerabilities laid bare by Helene, the inherent strength of small towns became the presiding force in our efforts.

"Keeping the community intact has been my goal all along. And what we've learned these past several months is that offering long-term housing to the people who hold our communities together—from those whose homes were lost, to those who are critical to rebuilding—will bring the greatest impact."

- Eric Church

Harnessing people-driven resilience, Blue Haven has developed **a new approach to recovery** that complements, but does not duplicate, the work of our fellow nonprofits.

By providing a '**hand up**' to those positioned to pay this act of service forward, we invest in the lives and livelihoods that will animate the region once it's rebuilt. By investing in the givers who stay, we create strength and resilience that are not diminished over time.



Four Cornerstones Support our Vision

Homes

It all starts at home.

Every home we build is a catalyst for positive impact. By providing a stable, healthy, community-oriented environment, we lay the foundation for wider social benefit.

On a personal level, the impact of a safe, affordable, permanent home on families' lives cannot be overstated.

Community

Strong relationships are the foundation of strong communities.

Every aspect of our neighborhoods, from the architecture, to our impartial resident selection process, to programming, encourages deep, supportive bonds between neighbors.

By fostering a thriving community *within* the neighborhood, we forge a path to strengthen the community *around* it.

Opportunity

With opportunity comes hope.

The 'hand up' of a mortgage-free, rent-free home for exceptional community servants is the first link in a chain of opportunity that changes the lives of residents, and in turn expands opportunity for others.

This opportunity creates ***social capital***, which in turn benefits the wider public.

Service & Responsibility

A culture of service transforms an investment in one into impact for many.

Blue Haven neighborhoods are designed to foster acts of service. Intentional programs create an imperative for residents to extend mutual support outwards.

Active interaction, collective stewardship, and deep connection are the foundation upon which residents build a future for their communities.

BLUE HAVEN SHIFTS THE PARADIGM

- We build the **whole community** — land, homes, *and* the social support networks that sustain it.
- Our success is defined by **social impact and community wellness**, not infrastructure.
- We target community needs **unmet by other resources.**
- **Our investment is in *people*.** Community Pillars are positioned to "pay it forward" and multiply the impact of our investment.
- Our process leverages **local insights** through our Community Advisory Board, ensuring that solutions are customized to need.
- Peers often focus on time-limited projects; we invest for the long haul. **Wraparound services** ensure continuing resident success.
- **A rent-free pathway to homeownership** keeps families and communities rooted in place.

OUR VALUES AT WORK

'The Six Strings of Life'
ERIC CHURCH ON THE VALUE OF COMMUNITY

'A Place to Belong'

In his 2026 address to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's graduating class, Eric Church shared his philosophy for '**The Six Strings of Life**.' Widely resonant and virally celebrated, these principles provide a framework for living a fulfilling life. Like the six strings of a guitar played in tune, the six strings of life create a chord that is full and true.

The six strings—**foremost among them, *Community***—are both the motivation and the means by which Blue Haven serves people in need. They are the reason Eric chose to invest in the people who make a place great; they are the principles we uphold in our work; and they are the true gifts in life that Blue Haven hopes to restore for individuals and families touched by disaster.

Photo Credit: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

The Low E String: Faith

"The people who nurture their faith in ordinary seasons don't come undone in extraordinary ones."

The A String: Family

"The string that makes you feel like you're not alone in a room."

The D String: A Life Partner

"The right partner is the string that makes the whole chord ring fuller and warmer and truer than anything you could ever play alone."

The G String: Ambition and Resilience

"Want the thing, say it out loud, build toward it, and when you fail, tune the string and keep playing."

The B String: Community

"Plant yourself somewhere. Put down roots with the full intention of growing there...and if you get lost — and at some point, I promise you, you will— you have a place you belong now."

The High E String: Individuality

"The world does not need another cover song. It needs an original."

OUR MISSION IN ACTION

Proof of Concept: AVERY COUNTY

Blue Haven Avery was launched as our first community. Located in one of the most rural areas in the country, the neighborhood provides a scalable template for people-centered reinvestment in small towns.

Construction

Blue Haven's homes are built to last. The homes range from 2 to 4 bedrooms, with the majority standing at 3-bedrooms and 2-baths. They span approximately 1,600 square feet and can accommodate families of all sizes. Thoughtful features range from heat-pump systems to keep energy costs low, to attractive front porches that foster community interaction. Each home, once complete, is offered fully furnished.



Resident Selection

The resident selection process is deliberately multi-layered, designed to identify individuals who demonstrate not only genuine housing need, but a deep commitment to strengthening the region for years to come. The process unfolds in three phases:

I. Comprehensive Application Screening
II. Structured Interviews
III. Community Advisory Board Review

Ongoing Engagement

To build a culture of service and help residents thrive personally and professionally, the Avery County team assembled a suite of resources to support residents:

- → Financial and homeownership education
- → Access to wellness and mental health resources, including free memberships to the Y
- → Career support and continuing education opportunities
- → Community connection initiatives and access to peer networks
- → Gathering spaces for neighbors and local groups
- → An "In-Community Team" to facilitate volunteer and local event participation



What is the COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD?

The Community Advisory Board (CAB) is a volunteer panel of community leaders whose mandate is to help select residents with a demonstrated record of service to their neighbors . They seek residents who embody the spirit of Community, a Blue Haven cornerstone and one of Eric Church's "Six Strings of Life."

Drawing on their lived experience and deep understanding of who truly serves their community, CAB members recognize forms of service that applications alone cannot reveal: the quiet acts of kindness, the neighbor who shows up in crisis, the community anchor whose presence strengthens the fabric of daily life.

The CAB's involvement ensures that resident selection is a collaborative process rooted in community knowledge and accountability—not a top-down decision. Those selected are the people who show up for others day in and day out. They are the individuals who drive Blue Haven' vision forward.

September 2024

Hurricane Helene strikes Western North Carolina

October 2024

Concert for Carolina welcomes 82,000+ in support of relief

April 2025

Blue Haven Avery groundbreaking ceremony

Summer 2025

First homes delivered and neighborhood development progresses

Late 2025

First CAB convenes and resident selection process is completed

Blue Haven Avery residents begin moving into permanent homes

2026

Completion of Blue Haven Avery neighborhood

Expansion to Yancey and Mitchell Counties

OUR MISSION IN ACTION

Real Lives, Real Impact
NEW BEGINNINGS IN AVERY COUNTY







“It’s just life changing, and it gives you that sense of security you always look for”

– Angus, Resident
Blue Haven Avery



“The weight of the world has been lifted off me”

– Barbara, Resident
Blue Haven Avery



OUR STRATEGY FOR IMPACT

Community-Driven Hope for the Future: DEFINING OUR SOCIAL IMPACT

We evaluate our impact across three areas:* personal impacts *within individual households,* program impacts *within the neighborhood, and* social impacts *in the wider community

Household Impacts

- → Housing Stability + Financial Security
- → Positive Education + Career Outcomes
- → Improved Health + Wellbeing
- → Increased Capacity for Service

A stable home has unmatched impact on individual and social outcomes.

By building stable, healthy living environments and offering ongoing resources, we deliver circumstances proven to increase wellbeing. By extending this opportunity to Community Pillars in particular, we set the foundation for these impacts to extend outwards.

Neighborhood Impacts

- → High Quality of Life
- → Sense of Shared Identity + Responsibility
- → Strong Informal Support Networks
- → Consistent Mutual Aid
- → Robust Participation in Volunteer, Civic, or Faith-based Service

Healthy home environments extend into positive neighborhood environments.

To understand neighborhood impact, we will look at indicators of health and wellbeing, along with valuable, small-scale indicators of soft-impact, many of which may never be fully measured. Acts of kindness, moments assisting neighbors, routine social interactions: each builds social capital that leads to positive outcomes.



Community Impacts

- → Stronger, More Connected Communities
- → Improved Public Health and Safety
- → Economic Vitality
- → Enhanced Resources, Greater Resilience

Strong neighborhoods build stronger, more resilient communities.

We will evaluate the ways in which the social capital built at the household and neighborhood levels is seen in the wider community. Research shows that communities with strong relationships and high rates of volunteerism, generosity, and trust are more resilient and more successful. Social benefits include better public health, lower crime, higher performing schools, greater civic engagement, better local economies, and more resilience during disasters.

Looking Ahead

Blue Haven is focused on expanding our reach and better understanding the ways in which our 'hand up' changes lives and communities.

In addition to stewarding the launch of Blue Haven Avery, we will will begin planning and constructing the next two Blue Haven neighborhoods in North Carolina's Mitchell and Yancey Counties.

Our goal is not simply to build homes, but to preserve social connectedness, strengthen local institutions, and create a blueprint for how to help small towns thrive in the wake of crisis.





People-centered reinvestment builds valuable social capital

What is Social Capital

Social capital is the understanding that **strong social relationships yield positive social value**. The ways in which people interact *within* a community has tangible impact *throughout* it. Research shows, increased social capital contributes to improved health, stability, prosperity, and resilience.

Why does it matter?

Social Capital creates:

1. ***Opportunity:*** it connects people to jobs, partnerships, and resources.
2. ***Strength***: it fosters cooperation, civic function, and overall social health.
3. ***Support***: it provides emotional and practical backing in hard times.

BLUE HAVEN: A CHIEF CARES MISSION

FINANCIAL REPORT

The following is a summary of Blue Haven Communities, Inc.'s financial statements for the fiscal year ending on December 31, 2025. Full audited financial statements including associated notes that are essential to understanding the information presented here are available for download at www.bluehaven.org.

Consolidated Statement of Financial Position	**December 31, 2025**
Assets	
Cash	$ 698,410
Investments	13,537,335
Contributions receivable, current	4,500,000
Other receivables	73,426
Total current assets	**18,809,171**
Land, homes and equipment, net	8,901,082
Contributions receivable, long-term	6,488,068
Total assets	**$ 34,198,321**

Liabilities and Net Assets	**December 31, 2025**
Accounts payable	$ 218,284
Accrued expenses	374,251
Total current liabilities	**592,535**
Net assets without donor restrictions	21,337,139
Net assets with donor restrictions	12,268,647
Total net assets	**33,605,786**
Total liabilities and net assets	**$ 34,198,321**

Consolidated Statement of Activities and Changes in Net Assets	**Year Ended 12/31/2025**
Net assets without donor restrictions:	
Contributions	$ 21,187,436
In-kind contributions	5,445
Investment return	1,076,092
Total support and revenue	**22,268,973**
Program expenses	646,233
General and administrative expenses	195,168
Fundraising expenses	90,433
Total expenses	**931,834**
Increase in net assets without donor restrictions	**21,337,139**
Net assets with donor restrictions:	
Contributions	12,268,647
Increase in net assets	**33,605,786**
Net assets, beginning of year	-
Net assets, end of year	**$ 33,605,786**

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

With sincere gratitude, we recognize the generosity and partnership of the following supporters:

$10,000,000+

Lift a Life Novak Family Foundation

*Thank you to the 82,193 fans that attended the **Concert for Carolina.***
*Special thanks to **David and Nicole Tepper** and other music industry friends that waived fees, reduced costs, and offered services, which generated more than $10 million to fund the launch of Blue Haven.*

$1,000,000+

AMY Foundation
Cisco Systems
Eric and Katherine Church
Dolly Parton

$500,000 - $999,999

Explore Asheville
Jeff Rhoades

$250,000 - $499,999

Biltmore
The Cousins Family
The Roberts Family Fund
VEEPS Streaming
Wells Fargo

$100,000 - $249,000

Bank of America
Jim and Dana Bernhard
Champions of the Field/ Mack & Sally Brown
Todd Graves
T-Mobile
The Walters Group

$50,000 - $99,999

Anonymous
AshBritt Foundation, Inc.
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$25,000 - $49,999

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$10,000 - $24,999

Anonymous (5)
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Diana Parrish Design and Photography
Rip Gerber
La Columbe
National Philanthropic Trust
Clay L. Staley
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$5,000 - $9,999

Anonymous (3)
American Endowment Foundation
The Brandon E. Church Legacy Foundation
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ERFRE, LLC
The Fox Family
The Generosity Trust
Katherine Hill
John Kane
Lacey Realty & Auction
Chandra MacFarland

$5,000 - $9,999 *cont'd*

Jan Mattson
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L. Tabit
Tryon Investors, LLC
The Whittington Family Foundation

$2,500 - $4,999

Community Foundation of Greater Greensboro, Inc
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Christopher Manning
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Philip Stutzman
The Sandy & Richard Ullman Foundation
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BLUE HAVEN: A CHIEF CARES MISSION

LEADERSHIP TEAM

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Board Vice Chair & Executive Committee Member

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Board Secretary/Treasurer &
Executive Committee Member
Owner & Business Manager, FBMM

John Peets
Board & Executive Committee Member
Founder, Q Prime South

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Deputy Governor, State of Tennessee
Commissioner, TN Dept. of Economic and Community Development

Jim Harrell, III
Board Member
Partner, Bode & Harrell
Former State Representative, North Carolina

Marshall Alexander
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