

SBP, Toyota Team Up to Help Families Impacted by Disasters

January 19, 2022

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For the past nine years, more than 700 families affected by Hurricane Sandy in New York and New Jersey have been helped, thanks to support by nonprofit SBP and Toyota.

The relationship between the two organizations began in 2011 with a mission to help people impacted by disaster. Originally called the St. Bernard Project, SBP has grown from a three-person volunteer team to a national organization — recognized as leaders in disaster resilience and recovery.

Toyota has invested more than \$10 million to help SBP be there for families affected by natural disasters across the nation.

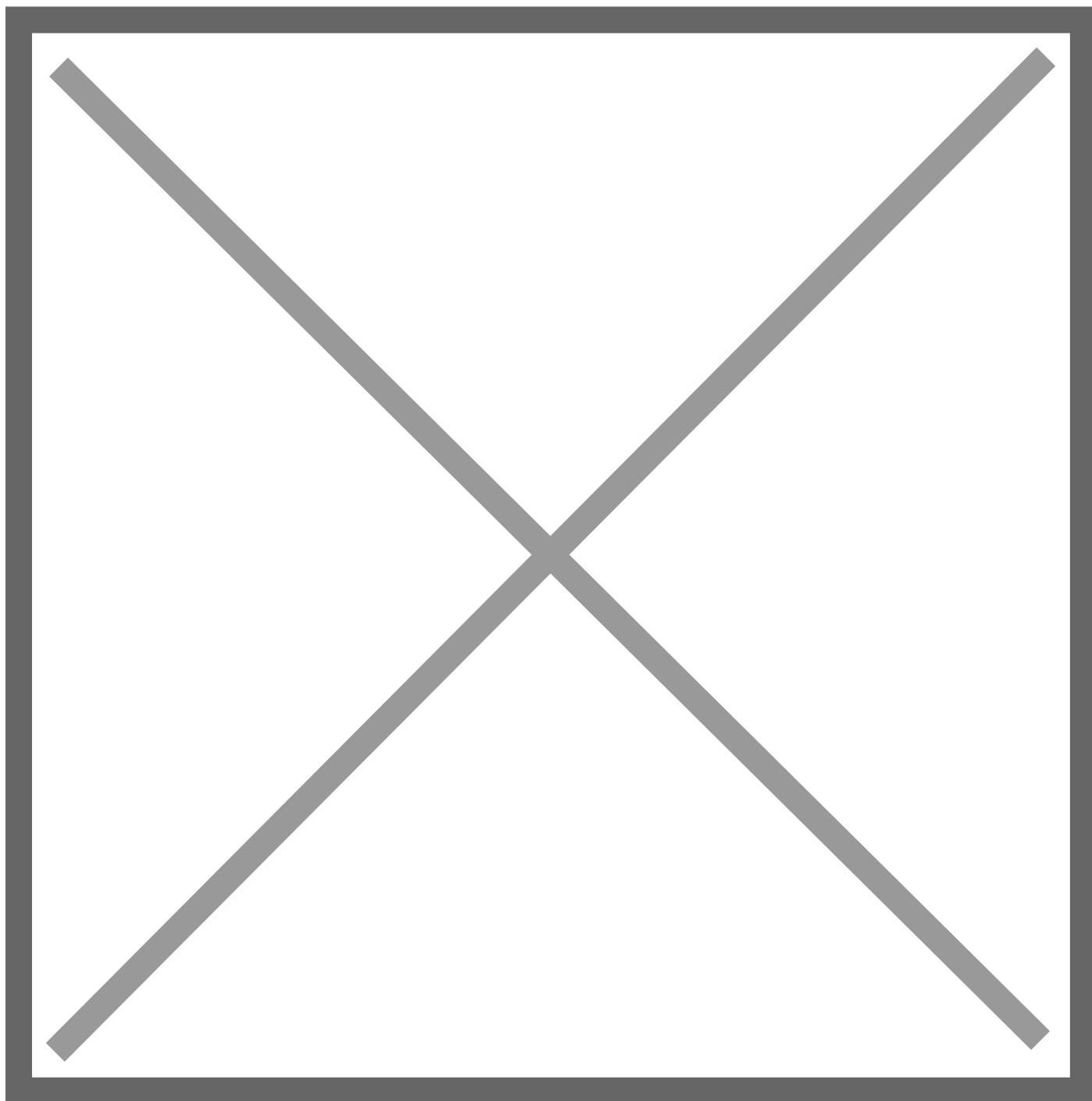
The Bennicks were one of those families.



The Bennick family stands outside their home, which suffered major damage during Hurricane Sandy.

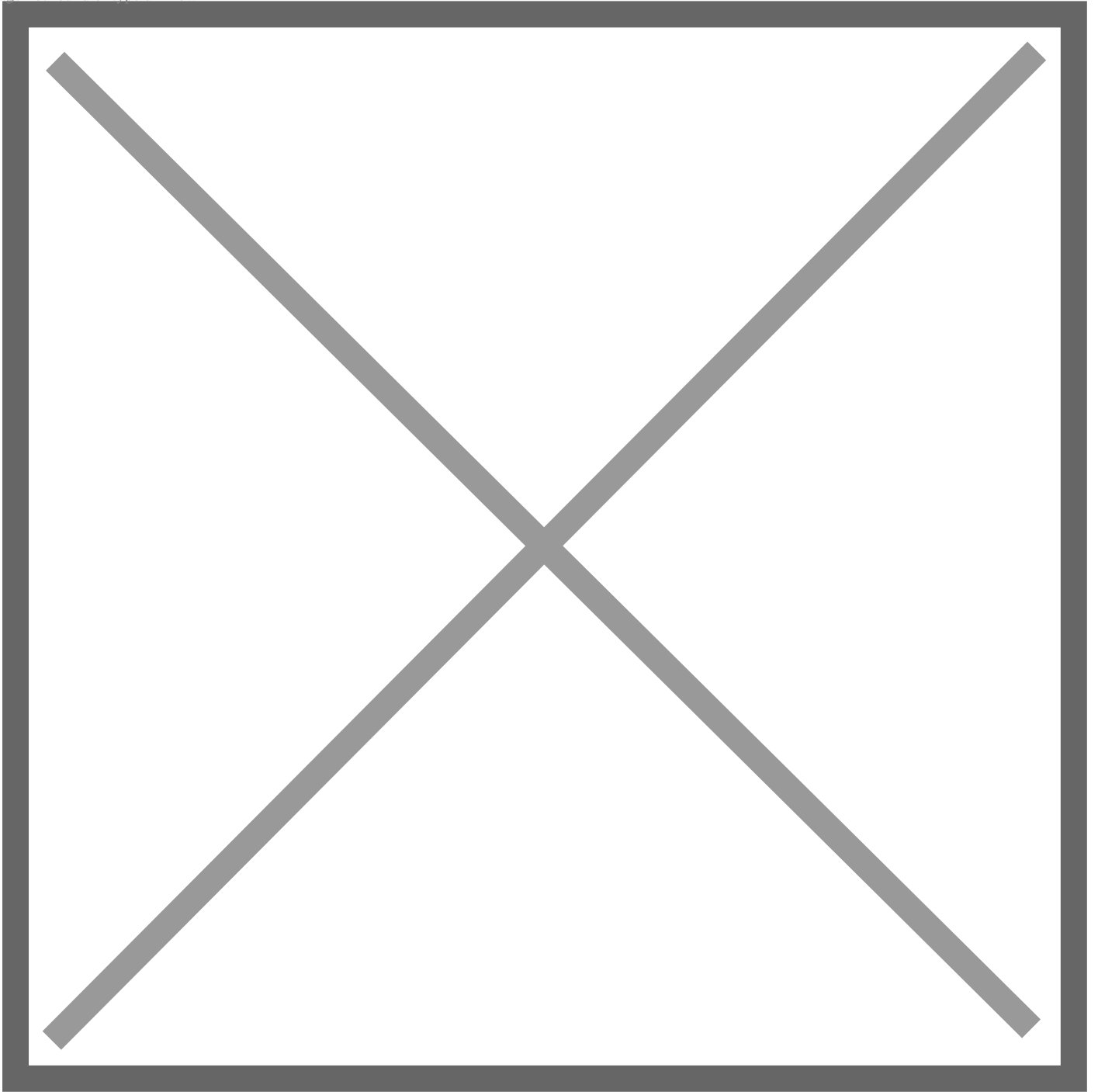
The home of Richard Bennick, a retired New York firefighter and 9/11 first responder, was flooded with five feet of water when Hurricane Sandy surged the East Coast in 2012. He gutted the first floor of his home himself but ran out of funding to repair his roof.

For the last nine years, water leaked into the house every time it rained causing the family to live with tarps inside of their home to protect it from their hurricane-damaged roof.



A family member points out one of the many leaks that have plagued the Bennick home after Hurricane Sandy.

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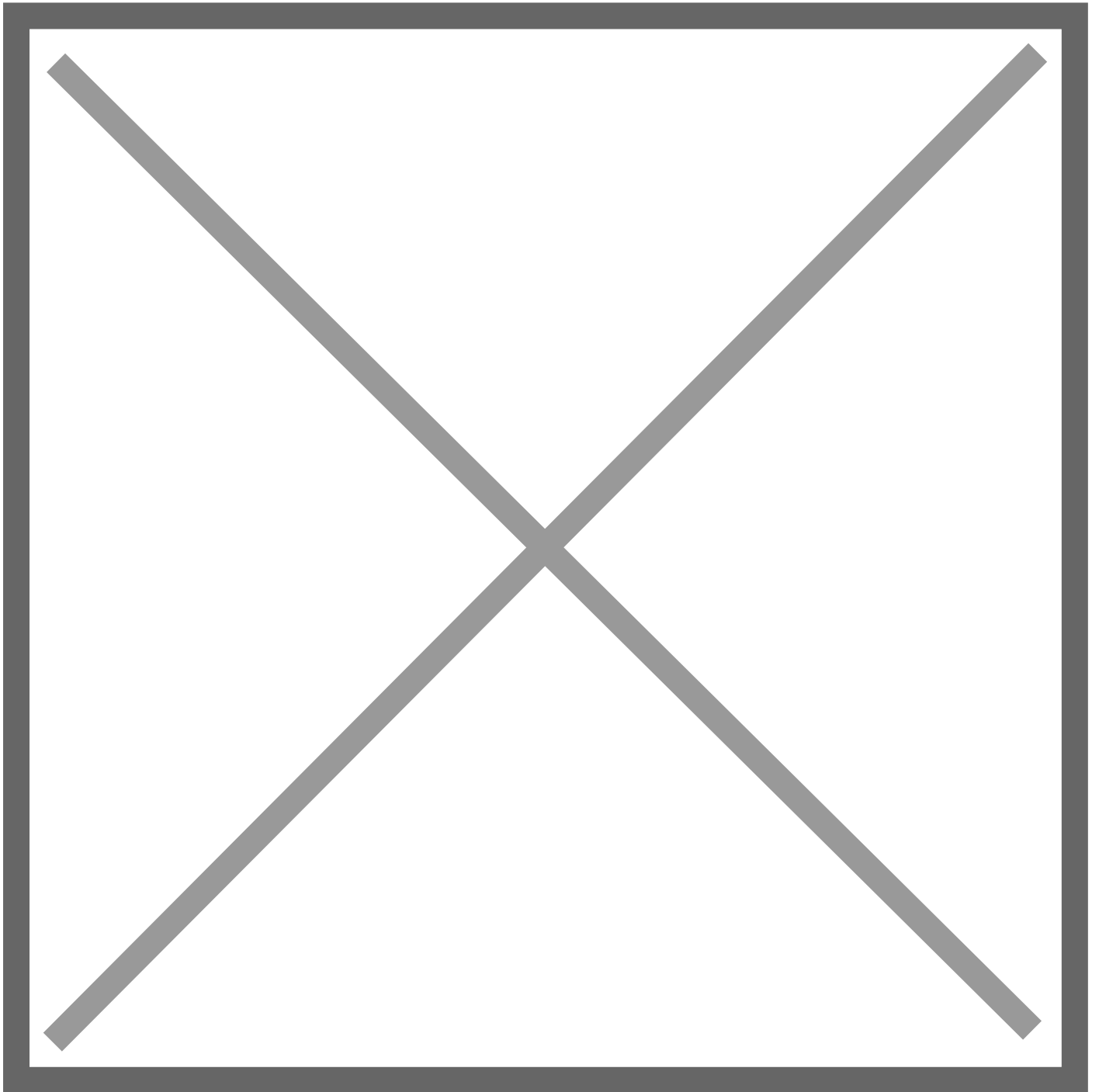


The Bennick family's home as it stood for nine years after Hurricane Sandy hit.

Then, their luck seemed to take a turn for the better.

A community group connected the Bennicks with SBP in the summer of 2020, and by October 2021, the organization welcomed the family back home with a new roof, gutters and siding. A ceremony was held to welcome them home.

“When it rained recently, it was the first time we’ve had peace of mind in years that the water wasn’t coming inside through the walls,” says Peggy Bennick. “It wasn’t raining on top of our dining room table.”



Richard Bennick checks out his newly-renovated home, which was flooded during Hurricane Sandy.

As it turns out, millions of federal aid dollars were untouched — even though over 20,000 people applied for them. The system didn’t improve when Hurricane Harvey hit the Houston area, followed by Winter Storm Uri.

“It should not take nine years for families to have safe, secure homes after a disaster,” says Zack Rosenberg, co-founder and CEO of SBP. “Cumbersome, bureaucratic processes prevent people from accessing funding that would allow them to rebuild their homes in a timely manner, causing further damage to homes and lives.”

As extreme weather events increase, more Americans will be impacted — but SBP and Toyota will continue to be there. Most recently, Toyota invested in SBP to support recovery in Western Kentucky following the devastating tornados. This support will help navigate the rebuilding funding process, aid local nonprofits to assist with rebuilding uninsured homes, enlist AmeriCorps to help with rebuilding, and provide educational materials to help victims avoid contractor fraud.

As a result of funding:

- Over 3,000 disaster-impacted families have had their homes rebuilt
- By instilling the value of Yokoten, Toyota has directly influenced SBP’s ability to grant \$5.4 million to 24 rebuilding partners, share 72 AmeriCorps members and train 1,073 people from 31 organizations
- SBP has trained close to 40,000 people in disaster resilience and recovery best practices
- SBP has influenced close to \$80 billion in federal recovery funding to help state and local governments build high-impact resilience and recovery programs
- SBP’s Recovery Acceleration Fund is now positioned to help nearly 1,000 Hurricane Laura survivors return home in 2022
- By applying the principles from the Toyota Production System, SBP has reduced the number of days it takes to build a house to 60 from 112