

NEWS

Nonprofits partner to help fire survivors return to smoke-damaged homes

Longtime Altadena resident Mary Bell expects to return home next week, after help from SGV Habitat for Humanity and GER³.



Coordinated by a partnership between SGV Habitat for Humanity and GER³, volunteers and supporters work to repair homes damaged by smoke from the Eaton fire. (Courtesy of SGV Habitat for Humanity)



By **VICTORIA LE**

UPDATED: July 28, 2025 at 2:50 PM PDT

Mary Bell, an Altadena resident of over 40 years, is eagerly waiting to return home after being displaced by the Eaton fire.

Bell, 76, evacuated with her son and grandchildren the evening of Jan. 7, when winds carried flames to the foothill communities of Altadena. When she returned to survey her community in May, she found that her home was inhospitable.

“When you opened up the door, you felt that the fire was still going on. The smoke was just heavy inside that house,” Bell said.

Bell was unsure of what to do. With limited funds and nowhere to go, she was regularly traveling between Los Angeles and San Bernardino to stay with relatives.

She turned to a nonprofit initiative for help.

The [San Gabriel Valley Habitat for Humanity](#) and [Global Emergency Relief, Recovery and Reconstruction \(GER³\)](#) have partnered to support homeowners affected by smoke damage from the Eaton fire.

AD

Ad Choices 

Over the past few months, GER³'s licensed contractors have conducted smoke testing and remediation and trash removal while SGV Habitat volunteers work on painting and installing appliance replacements and other needed repairs for smoke-damaged homes.

“Partnering with GER³ allows us to bring together critical expertise in disaster response and long-term recovery,” said SGV Habitat Director of Programs Laura Ealy. “Together, we’re helping families move from smoke-damaged houses to safer, livable homes.”

For Bell, this means her home is getting a new roof, paint job, insulation and air conditioning unit — all free of cost. Bell is also receiving a new wardrobe, after the clothes she’d left behind were damaged by the smoke.

Bell expects to begin moving back to her Altadena home next week, after volunteers and workers put the finishing touches on the property. She says she’s looking forward to being in Altadena again, with her friends and neighbors.

“They promised to make sure that I could get into my house smoke-free and that I wouldn’t have anything to worry about,” Bell said. “And that has happened.”

Originally Published: July 28, 2025 at 2:09 PM PDT



Around the Web

REVCONTENT

