

Case Study:

Buffalo, New York



NLC Service Line Warranty Program Helps Elderly Resident with Water Line Leak



In early January, there was a knock on Dolores K.'s front door and a Buffalo Water representative told the 81-year-old woman a sinkhole in the road in front of her house was caused by a leak in her water service line – and she had 24 hours to have it repaired or her water would be turned off.

Her daughter, Debbie, knew there was a sinkhole but hadn't realized what had caused it or thought about who was responsible for maintaining the service line between her mother's home and the city's water main. She didn't realize the cost of digging up sidewalks and roadway to access the water service lines beneath, then repairing them, also would fall on a homeowner.

"I never even thought about that. I don't think anyone does until something bad happens," she said.

NOWHERE TO TURN

Since the family was actively working to address the problem, the city continued water service to the home, but the cost to repair the line was \$6,000 – money neither Dolores nor Debbie had.

Dolores was stressed to learn it would cost thousands of dollars to repair not only the leaking water line, but the sinkhole it created, and she was already dealing with health issues and expenses associated with maintaining the home where she had lived for 40 years.

Buffalo Water would make the repair if she couldn't, but the cost would be passed along to Dolores, who was on a fixed income. She and Debbie didn't know where to turn.

HomeServe Cares is a charitable program that assists disadvantaged homeowners who need an emergency repair impacting their ability to remain in their home.

A HAPPY MISTAKE

Debbie looked up a recommended plumber in the phone book but mistakenly wrote down the number for 72 Degrees, a network plumber for the National League of Cities (NLC) Service Line Warranty Program, administered by Utility Service Partners, a HomeServe company.

“God had a hand in it,” Debbie said. “That was how I found them. If I didn’t write down the wrong phone number, I would have never gotten help for my mom.”

Once 72 Degrees assessed the situation, they suggested Delores apply for assistance through HomeServe Cares, a charitable program that assists disadvantaged homeowners who need an emergency repair impacting their ability to remain in their home.

A HELPING HAND

Mary Michell, Utility Service Partners regional operations manager, contacted the family, helped them with the application and walked it through approval so work could begin as soon as possible. 72 Degrees was able to begin work on the project within a week, making sure that Delores and her family were kept informed.

“To some people, it may seem small or trivial, but to my mom and me, it was big – it meant the world to us,” she said. “Thank you. I don’t know what we would have done.”

Why Offer the NLC Service Line Warranty Program?

KEY BENEFITS

- Experience from a leading company that has more than 3.6 million customers with 5.6 million service plans through over 550 partner utilities/municipalities
- Commitment to educating homeowners and reducing call volume to the municipality
- Superior, reliable and guaranteed service 24/7/365
- Award-winning in-house call centers in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and Canonsburg, Pennsylvania, with over 400 seats
- Incomparable local contractor management results in consistently achieving 98% post-service satisfaction
- Programs are proven to increase resident satisfaction
- No cost to cities to participate
- Provides cities with an ongoing revenue stream

To learn more about how you can partner with USP to bring peace of mind to your members, visit www.utilitysp.net.