



December 24, 2009

Building for nonprofit

With money tight all around, a partnership recently formed that unites builders, architects and designers to provide physical improvements for facilities of cash-strapped nonprofit organizations.

E.J. Powers, vice president of strategic communications at Montagne Communications, said Building on Hope, a volunteer organization based in Manchester, sprouted out of a community advisory board meeting. The organization took shape about two months ago. Members reached out to members of the building industry asking professionals to pitch in their time, talent and resources to renovate facilities.

“There’s a lot of facilities that have fallen into disrepair that could use a face lift,” Powers said, adding Building on Hope will initially look to do a project every year or two. “We’ve had a tremendous response from the building community.”

Building on Hope will first perform improvements at the White House Intensive Residential Treatment Center, an Easter Seals facility in Manchester. The Treatment Center houses troubled boys who, for whatever reason, cannot live at home. Many of the boys have behavioral problems or learning disabilities, with most having experienced traumatic life events. Part of the Center’s mission is to get boys ready to lead normal and productive lives. The White House, built in the 1930s, was designed more as a functional space than for comfortable living.

“It’s a nice house but it doesn’t have many of the comforts [people] would have growing up,” Powers said.

Renovations will entail improving the boiler, making it more energy-efficient, making rooms “a little more homey,” and kitchen renovations — about \$100,000 worth of work in all. The work will take place for 10 days in May and volunteers are welcome. Powers said members are still seeking more construction and specialist help.

“We’re looking for people that can be hands-on and volunteer and that are in the trade,” Powers said. Building on Hope is also seeking financial sponsors who can help it buy supplies. “We’re hoping it’s an effort the whole community really rallies around.”

Powers said he is hoping this is just the beginning.

“The sky’s the limit,” Powers said. He and others are hoping Building on Hope takes off not just in Manchester but beyond. “We’d love to see different groups try to replicate it around the region. I think everybody could identify some nonprofit in their community that could use some helping hands.”

For more go to buildingonhope.com. — JM

<http://www.hippopress.com/091224/News2.html>