

## 'Hope Builders' work hard for family shelters

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The “Hope Builders” have a great excuse when their spouses complain that the volunteers are buying too many new tools.

Last year, those tools helped provide emergency shelter for 22 families.

“This is a way to take a hobby and feel like you’re really helping the community,” said Steve Dyer, a board member at New Hope Family Shelter.

The New Hope Family Shelter started with one dilapidated building on West Second Street in Bloomington. Before 409 W. Second St. could serve as an emergency shelter, a mostly volunteer labor force was directed to tear down its walls and rip up its flooring. Volunteers with little to no experience in home improvement found themselves fixing ceilings, replacing a roof and landscaping the property, which is owned by Indiana University Health and leased to the United Way agency for \$1 a year.

“We take help anywhere we can get it, as often as we can get it,” said volunteer Roger Lee.

Four and a half years later, the New Hope housing network spans three houses on West Second Street, and a fourth house is set to open this spring as the location of New Hope’s Early Childhood Center. Dyer is one of a dozen or so volunteers who meet weekly to renovate the houses on West Second Street that have become the New Hope Family Shelter.

The volunteers dubbed themselves the “Hope Builders,” and the name has stuck because it’s so fitting, said Emily Pike, director of New Hope’s Early Childhood Center.

“They’re unfailingly optimistic,” she said. “I have been so impressed by their can-do attitude.”

There’s little, Pike said, the Hope Builders can’t do in their capacity as volunteers. The men and women, many of whom are retired, meet on Wednesdays to work in buildings that can seem pretty hopeless. The volunteers have focused their efforts for the past several months on 311 W. Second St., which will accommodate up to 16 low-income children once finished and fully accredited.

Before the Hope Builders set to work on the future home of New Hope’s Children’s Program, the house had a basement covered in mold and a ceiling that sagged several inches. Wallpaper and drywall needed to be removed and reinstalled. The backyard needed to be leveled so a safe playground could be installed.

“We don’t break any speed records, but we get the job done,” Lee said.

And when the Hope Builders can’t do a task, they task themselves with finding the right person for the job. Hope Builders like Judy Downey, who has been the interior designer for New Hope’s shelter buildings, can use their connections to the construction sector to find roofers, plumbers and heating, ventilation and air-conditioning technicians to complete renovations volunteers aren’t qualified to perform.

“When we explain what the mission is, they say, ‘Oh yeah, sure,’” Downey said. “People are glad to help; they just need to be given the opportunity to participate.”

The volunteer labor force also saves the nonprofit tens of thousands of dollars in renovation costs, Pike said. Dyer and Lee, who had experience in mold remediation, spent a few hundred dollars on a job that would have cost an estimated \$8,000, Dyer said.

“We simply couldn’t have New Hope without volunteers,” Pike said.

United Way of Monroe County campaign highlights

Week ending 2/5/16

Highlights of the "Your Donation has Power" campaign

Total dollars raised: \$1,079,000 (83%).

\* Indiana University faculty, staff and students have so far contributed a generous \$779,240 to this year’s campaign.

\* Bank of America employees are making local lives better by donating \$1,138 to the United Way campaign.

\* Employees from LifeDesigns, a United Way partner agency, generously donated \$502 to help unite and strengthen our community.

Impact:

Donations to United Way ensured that 215 clients at LifeDesigns developed budgeting and money management skills.

Donation impact to United Way

- \$2 per week supplies three monthly bus passes for parents without transportation.
- \$3 per week provides school supplies for five children living in transitional shelter.
- \$10 per week provides gifts for 20 children during the holidays.
- \$50 per week supplies 100 nights of safe transitional housing for a family working to get back on their feet.
- \$100 per week provides 400 hours of high-quality programs and meaningful activities for homeless children staying with their family in a transitional shelter.

## Gala fundraiser

New Hope's Evening of Love Songs will take place Friday at 6 p.m. in the Tudor Room at the Indiana Memorial Union. The gala will start with cocktails and a silent auction, and dinner will be served at 7 p.m. Entertainment will be provided by Indiana University students in the department of theatre, drama and contemporary dance. Tickets are \$100 per person, and can be purchased by check, Visa or MasterCard. For more information, call 812-334-9840 or email [jim@nhfsinc.org](mailto:jim@nhfsinc.org). Proceeds will benefit New Hope's Children's Program.