

June 27-July 3, 2004

Community Action Committee of Pike County, Inc., and Eastern Local Schools joined forces to bring Group Workcamps to the Pike County area.

Group Workcamp 2004 a Huge Success!!!

What is Group Workcamp?

GROUP WORKCAMP is a faith-based, national organization that organizes student volunteers and adult sponsors to perform home improvement projects in participating communities. Group Workcamps are intensive one-week mission trips of service.

Workcamps offer individuals and youth an opportunity to perform hands-on home-repair projects for needy residents, many of whom have seen their homes damaged by natural disaster or just years of can't-afford-to-fix disrepair.

How did Group Workcamp benefit our community?

Community Action Committee of Pike County, Inc., along with Eastern Local School District co-sponsored the Group Workcamp.

Group Workcamp Foundation brought approximately 400 adults and teenagers from around the country to work on the homes of low-income families and elderly who needed their homes repaired in Pike County.

This program provided home repair, including free material and labor, to qualifying residents.

The participants and volunteers built wheelchair ramps, put roofs on homes, painted, and performed general home repairs where needed. Workcamp participants were housed at the Eastern Local School in Beaver, Ohio. At the end of each day, the Group Workcamp participants recapped the activities of each day and put the experience into perspective. This group of teenagers and adults repaired, renovated, and weatherized 52 homes throughout Pike County, totalling a whopping 9,750 labor hours.



*We would like to
thank all
participants,
volunteers, and
members of the
community for
their help and
support in
making the
2004
Group
Workcamp
a great success!
We couldn't have
done it without
you.*

THANK YOU!!!

Please contact Group Workcamps for more information.

Group Workcamps
P.O. Box 599
Loveland, CO 80539

www.groupworkcamps.com



Chillicothe Gazette Newspaper Article 6/25/2004



Robert J. Moorhead/Gazette

Dale Brigner, 70, will be getting help from Group Workcamps with his Pike County home. Group Workcamps is a non-denominational Christian organization that does home repairs for low-income and disabled residents.

Teen missionaries to come to Pike County to lend a hand

By **CLAIRE CAHOON** and **DANIEL PRAZER**
Gazette Staff Writers

CAMP CREEK TOWNSHIP — At age 70, Dale Brigner finds it difficult to keep up with things up like he used to.

He said he goes out with his dogs every day and sees the work needing to be done on his house. He wishes he could fix it up, but just isn't able to do it anymore.

"I've worked all my life in timber," he said. "Now that I'm older, I can no longer do these things. I have a lot of stuff around the house that needs repaired."

With the help of a group of teenagers from across the country, Brigner is going to get his wish.

Group Workcamps, a non-denominational Christian organization that repairs homes for low-income and disabled residents, is coming to Pike County. For Brigner, being the recipient of their help is a weight of his mind.

"I'm really looking forward to

For more information

Visit its Web site at www.group-workcamps.com or call toll-free (800) 774-3838.

it," he said. "They're going to fix the gutters and replace three lower layers of siding and paint the whole end of the house there."

Pam Mustard, of the Pike County Community Action Organization, said 400 teens and adults from all over will come to help repair 60 homes in the county. The teams will arrive Sunday and work through July 3.

Mustard said area business, churches and community groups have opened their doors to support the program. Everyone from Group Workcamps will be staying in the Eastern Local Schools building, using their lockerroom shower

facilities and "camping" on the floor. Business and churches have also offered supplies and donations to the effort.

"It's the community coming together," Mustard said. "We've had so much support from the area."

The teens will spend the week doing work on area homes, with only a half-day Wednesday for a break. Mustard said the groups will be doing everything from minor repairs and painting to installing siding and building decks and wheelchair ramps.

Even local teens are getting involved. Mustard said some area kids are volunteering with the effort and several others have joined Group Workcamps to help make repairs in other parts of the country.

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Van Rose/News Watchman

Jackie Couch, 15, of Centerville, staples down tar paper for a porch repair project in Beaver as part of the Group Workcamps program. Nearly 400 youth volunteers and adult supervisors are participating in similar projects throughout Pike County this week.

Group Workcamps hammers its way through Pike County

VAN ROSE

Staff Writer

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Hearing a mixture of nail hammering and laughter is music to Pam Mustard's ears. This is her first year helping organize a Group Workcamp, a program that began this week to allow high school and early college students to perform free home repairs for low income residents. And it probably won't be her last.

Mustard, a planning and development assistant for workcamp cosponsor Pike County Community Action Committee, has been working tirelessly since August 2003 to bring Group

Workcamps to Pike County. The program is organized annually by Group Publishing, Inc. of Loveland, Colo., in over 50 locations nationwide.

Nearly 400 youth volunteers and adult supervisors spread throughout Pike County to begin repair projects Monday. Painting, dry-walling, roof and porch repair and other tasks too difficult or costly for some residents to undertake are being performed by the teens.

"We received 120 applications, but we had to turn some of them away because their homes weren't safe or the work was too difficult for the kids," said Mustard.

About 60 homes in Waverly, Piketon, Idaho and surrounding areas will be repaired by Group Workcamp between now and Saturday.

But there is more to the program than just fixing people's houses, said Chris Wirt, a youth leader for Nichols Bethel United Methodist Church in Odenton, Md., spending the week volunteering as a workcamp supervisor. It's about praising and worshipping God and growing in faith through serving others, he explained.

"It's one thing to say you're a Christian," said

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WORK

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Wirt. "When it comes to sacrificing time, money and sweat, that's the next step. It's one many kids haven't taken."

The teens in Wirt's group were from a number of different locations, from Medina and Centerville to Silver Spring, Md., and Waterdown, Ontario, Canada. None were hesitant to learn all they could about home repair, specifically how to remedy a leaking porch and roof at 327 Third St. in Beaver. The house is owned by Gene James and his wife, Doris,

who are both pleased with the Group Workcamp program.

"My porch had leaks. The boards were rotten. They're going to put a whole new roof on it while they're up there," said James. "They'll do some painting on the inside too." If not for the program it would've taken a long time to get the work done, said the 67-year-old Beaver resident who described youth volunteers as "good kids."

Bei Achirimofor, 15, of Maryland, said she was a little nervous about starting

work.

"At first I had second thoughts," she said. "I was thinking, 'What if the residents don't like me?' But they're very nice, and the work is really fun."

The Group Workcamp volunteers are urged to share their faith with the residents while working on their homes. When the day is over, they return to their base of operations at the Eastern Local Schools Campus in Beaver and discuss their experiences.

Community Action Committee's groundwork paved the way for Steve Phipps, director for the Pike County Group Workcamp, to come in

and oversee the efforts. Phipps said the cosponsor was the most prepared of any he had ever seen. CAC held a training session in March to teach home evaluators the criteria for approving program applications and also collected donations from local organizations - \$1,000 from the Pike County Board of Commissioners and \$3,000 from the Waverly Eagles' Lodge #2227.

"It's laborsome," said Phipps. "It takes a lot of planning and preparation." He was sorry to mention that the workcamp program won't be offered again in 2005.

"We definitely won't be ready for next year," Mustard

said regretfully, due to the incredible amount of work that would have to begin in

August.

"Maybe in two years," she said.

"It just seemed like a good idea, helping out a community."

Jen Catharine, 21, of Milford, N.H.



Robert J. Moorhead/Gazette

Danielle Stillwell, 17, of Fort Wayne, Ind., scrapes old caulk from around a window Tuesday on the home of Rosetta Ward as part of the work being done by Group Workcamps this week in Pike County.

A summer camp with tool belts

Teens from across the nation help area residents

By DANIEL PRAZER
Gazette Staff Writer

BEAVER — It's been 12 years since 70-year-old Rosetta Ward had her garage painted.

That is, until Sunday, when 400 teen-agers descended upon Eastern High School, ready to fan out each morning and help those in need with nagging home repairs.

Group Workcamps is a national program based in Colorado that sends Christian youth groups of many

denominations across the country to depressed areas ready to help mend the homes of the disabled, elderly or impoverished, according to its Web site.

"I've heard some people explain what a life-changing thing it was," said Michael Lopuszynski, a teen-ager from Aurora, Ill.

"God calls you here to do something good."

To come to Beaver, they paid \$399 each for a week of sleeping on Eastern High



Robert J. Moorhead/Gazette

Members of Group Workcamps and homeowner Rosetta Ward take a break from painting Tuesday to gather in the front yard for a brief prayer circle. Group Workcamps is comprised of Christian youth from across the country.

School's floor and working in teams of five or six during the day. The school's parking lots held license plates from as far away as Maine, Kansas and Ontario, Canada.

"Being around 400 other kids who have the same be-

liefs as you is pretty awesome, because you're all here for the same reason," said Danielle Stoillwell, a 17-year-old from Fort Wayne, Ind. She said after a trip last year to

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Camp

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Michigan, the faces of the people she helped brought her back.

And the community came out to say hello. Driving down U.S. 23 through Waverly, motorists saw signs on businesses welcoming the work camps.

"I've heard stories from a couple of the years when they community didn't embrace them," said Donna Basler, 45, who came with her youth group from East Hartford, Conn. "Everyone's been so welcoming. It's really neat to be appreciated."

Pam Mustard, task coordinator with Pike County Community Action, said she received 120 applications from people requesting help with their home repairs, but because projects had to be within a 30-minute radius of Eastern High School, that number was whittled down to 64.

The teens who came are doing minor repairs — building wheelchair ramps, applying coats of paint, caulking windows, etc. — but to the recipients, it's help they normally wouldn't have.

"It means a lot because there ain't no way I could have done it," Ward said.

Their evenings are filled with activities as well. Though they have a half-day off today, most of the time is already scheduled with fellowship activities, devotional time and programs such as a variety show and a three-on-three basketball tournament.

With 400 campers, both teens



Robert J. Moorhead/Gazette

A map inside Eastern High School shows the 64 homes being worked on by Group Workcamps this week.

and adults, and about 30 staffers, organizing all the events is a daunting task, but Jen Catharine, 21, from Milford, N.H., said her task of running the office has gone smoothly.

"This has been going awesome," she said. "This is the most community involvement I've ever seen, either as a camper or a staffer."

Catharine originally started as a camper five years ago, and two years ago moved up to a staffing position. She said the reason for

getting involved was simple.

"It just seemed like a good idea, helping out a community."

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