



Believe it or not; Christmas happened in April

By Walt Hibner, Executive Director
Home Builders Association of Dayton

Last Saturday, April 26, several members and staff of the Home Builders Association of Dayton delivered gifts as if it were December 25 to many homeowners in neighborhoods throughout the City of Dayton. The occasion was Rebuilding Together Dayton's "Rebuilding Day" when 1,200 volunteers from all over the Miami Valley converge on 30 homes to make repairs, paint and clean. The swarms working on every home were sprinkled with HBA of Dayton volunteers. The HBA of Dayton has participated with the group since its inception in 1996.

This year was no exception, the Association's participants included a few Registered Remodelor firms, large Registered Builder new homebuilding company, local energy utilities, material suppliers, architects, urban developers, plumbers, bankers, painters, and the entire staff (and families) of the HBA of Dayton. They worked along side churches, major corporations, financial institutions, city volunteers, other associations and community volunteers to lend helping hands to people such as Lillie who is 93 years old and has lived in her home 60 years. Lillie's income is less than the \$14,000 average annual income of all 30 of the recipients of the work. Her yard and basement were cleared of two large dumpsters of debris, and overgrown trees and brush. Her rotted kitchen floor joists were repaired and her badly worn kitchen flooring was replaced with new sub floor and vinyl. Her kitchen that was in need of an energetic cleaning; it received just that through volunteers that teamed up, pitched in and gave the elbow grease it needed. Her dilapidated front porch was made safe again and her home sweet home was coated with fresh paint from top to bottom.

The local group is part of the national Rebuilding Together organization that has over 200 affiliates in 50 states, working

to restore and revitalize America's low-income houses and communities.

The group's work is especially important as most of the elderly or disabled homeowners cannot afford or make home repairs but want to stay in their own home where they are most comfortable. The average age of the homeowners who will receive assistance is 74 and the average time in their home is 30 years.

According to Amy Radachi, the extraordinary Executive Director of the local organization, Rebuilding Together focuses on the issues of homeownership for the elderly, the disabled and families with children. By identifying the challenges these homeowners face, we create sustainable solutions for the low-income homeowners we serve.

Rebuilding Together sponsors the National Rebuilding Day every April. The goal is to keep people living in safety and independence and to harness the spirit of neighbors helping neighbors. Among the tasks that were completed by all this year's local volunteers are: interior and exterior painting, electrical and plumbing work, roof, door and window repair or replacement, modifications for grab bars, hand rails and wheelchair ramps, general cleaning and yard work.

The homeowners are selected from nominations by neighborhood groups, churches, city housing inspectors, priority boards and individuals. The organization, formed in Dayton in 1996 through Preservation Dayton, has repaired over 300 homes over the years. The local organization has been recognized by its national counterpart for several innovative and best practices.

Across the country, on National Rebuilding Day in 2007, more than 272,000 women and men volunteered to rehabilitate more than 9,100 houses and non-profit facilities in 1,880 communities on National Rebuilding Day, delivering a market value of approximately \$100 million.

As you can tell, the HBA of Dayton members not only provide the ultimate American dream for many new home owners during the work week, but they share their skills on their time off helping those in need to keep their dream alive, even though it wasn't really Christmas.

For more information on Rebuilding Together, visit <http://www.rtdayton.org>.