

Taking time to 'rebuild' in Vallejo

Rebuilding Together, Wells Fargo, Home Depot, others remake home for widow of veteran



George Yamada walks past a fence he built with other Rebuilding Together volunteers, with the help of Wells Fargo employees, during work for a veteran in remembrance of 9/11. The home is the 40th rehabilitation renovation project Rebuilding Together has completed since 2009. (Chris Riley/Times-Herald)

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As many have pointed out, 9/11 is often remembered for not only the tragedy of the day, but also for how the nation came together as one to help people in need. That fits right in line with the mission of Rebuilding Together Solano County.

For years Rebuilding Together Solano County has helped low-income, military, veteran, and senior residents remain in their own homes — safely and with dignity. This week the organization, with the help of Wells Fargo, Recology and Home Depot, helped fix the home of a 77-year-old veteran's widow living on the 500 block of Henry Street in Vallejo.

Volunteers with Wells Fargo and Rebuilding Together help rebuild the home of May L on the 500 block of Henry Street. (Courtesy Photo)

The organization's help for May L., who didn't wish to reveal her last name, is in recognition of 9/11. For this project, Wells Fargo donated \$13,000 and Home Depot provided more than \$15,000 in donated home safety items.

May, who has helped with the food bank for the past five years, said it was nice to be on the other end of things as her home transformed.

May and her husband, a Vietnam veteran, were married for 49 years before his recent death.

"All the people that have come and fixed the home have been very helpful," May said. "They've been doing a lot of yard work and fixed the retaining wall. They've added appliances like a refrigerator, stove, microwave, sink, hot water heater, two toilets, and grab bars. They have also installed smoke alarms. It's very exciting."



Volunteers with Wells Fargo along with Rebuilding Together, help rebuild the home of May L., a widow of a Vietnam veteran. (Courtesy Photo)

The house was also painted twice — a different shade of mint green each time.

May was also excited to see her garage begin to be cleared out. Over the years while helping others she has picked up stacks and stacks of clothes that weren't always used by the people she was helping. She has been in the home since 1992 and has never parked her car in the garage. That will change later this month. The garage is also getting a new back door.

"For years my husband was in charge of fixing the front yards and doing a lot of this stuff," May said. "I just wasn't used to doing these duties. I'd get all excited and motivated to fix all this, but after a few minutes of pulling all the weeds I would get very tired."

Some of the workday projects included exterior landscaping, yard work, fence staining, exterior house painting, window cleaning, exterior stairs repair, exterior siding replacement on rear addition, construction of raised garden boxes and garage cleanout.

Other workday donors include: Costco Vallejo, First Bank, M & M Sanitation LLC, Medic Ambulance, Minuteman Press, The Nimitz Group, and Vallejo Community Presbyterian Church.

Since 2009, Rebuilding Together, with more than 12,000 community volunteers, has provided home rehab services to more than 40 low-

income homeowners as well as holding more than 52 community facility workdays in Solano County. Rebuilding Together has installed and/or donated more than 3,200 smoke and 1,600 carbon monoxide alarms in low-income mobile home parks. The estimated value of the work is more than \$7,000,000.

The group not only worked on the home Monday and Tuesday, but also the previous week. They will return later in the week, as well as Sept. 27 and Sept. 30.



Volunteers with Wells Fargo and Rebuilding Together help rebuild the home of May L on the 500 block of Henry Street. (Courtesy Photo)

"It's so incredible, I'll walk around the house and a group will be finishing up working on something after was assigned just a few minutes earlier," said Executive Director Elizabeth Hoffman. "But if you have the right number of people and the right kind of support, the process goes by very quickly."

"I just think that this kind of work goes right to the heart of building in a community. A lot of people have given their time and money to help with the safety and repairs to this home."

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