

## Housing Greensboro hits milestone

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Staff Writer

### More information

To volunteer or donate: Call Gene Brown, 232-0142 or [gbrown@hhgg.org](mailto:gbrown@hhgg.org)

To get help: Call Greensboro Housing Coalition, 691-9521

GREENSBORO — Sometimes water from the faulty plumbing would overflow into Nora White's kitchen or bathroom.

The roof leaked. The heat kept breaking down. The floors creaked and buckled and the supports below — unknown to White — were rotting away in places.

What she did know: This house built in 1966 could not comfortably accommodate her adult daughter's wheelchair. And White, 63, could not afford to fix any of it.

"I knew that I was in trouble," White said. "If one thing you didn't fix it, something else would happen. I said, 'There's got to be somebody that can help me.'"

Housing Greensboro and volunteers from local churches did just that Thursday. They began an estimated \$15,000 in repairs on White's home, marking the nonprofit's 100th project since it formed in 2004. Housing Greensboro originally started as part of Habitat for Humanity, which builds homes for low-income families.

But plenty of struggling families owned homes they could not afford to fix, officials said.

"We knew there was a huge need out there," said Gene Brown, Housing Greensboro's executive director. Last year, the group repaired 25 homes. They're on track for 40 this year, Brown said.

The nonprofit compiles money from federal, state and local funding sources. Donations come from local companies, churches, civic organizations and individuals.

Each project typically takes 100 to 120 hours of volunteer labor. Costs average \$6,500, but range from \$1,000 to projects as large as the White home — \$15,000.

Volunteers will take at least two weeks for the repairs needed at White's three-bedroom Phillips Avenue home.

In the bathroom, they'll remove a closet, widen the doorway and replace the tub with a roll-in shower. In the kitchen, they'll install new cabinets and hope to get a stackable washer and dryer donated.

They'll also repair the hallway ceiling, rebuild parts of the floor in the bathroom and kitchen where the supports are rotting away, add railing to the back steps and repair and seal the front deck and ramp. Workers already fixed a roof leak.

So far this year, the non-profit has worked on 22 homes, Brown said. Recipients must be Greensboro homeowners and meet income guidelines. Three-fourths of those who receive help are older residents, usually on a fixed income.

Some, like White, are working full-time but struggling. White supports her 44-year-old daughter, Iris Patricia Wright, who has cerebral palsy and now needs a wheelchair to get around.

“I’m really excited for my mom,” said Robin Howard, 34, also White’s daughter. She said her mother and older sister will stay with her during the repairs.

The family has spent the past four or five years watching the house slowly deteriorate with no money to make repairs, Howard said. Contractors said it would cost \$18,000 to \$20,000. They sought help through other programs, but couldn’t meet income guidelines.

“It’s like a dream come true,” Howard said, “to see it’s actually going to take place.”

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