

Volunteers repair Hope House Houston while the ministry repairs lives

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HOUSTON—Hope can come in many forms—a genuine conversation, a hug, a prayer or a warm meal. For a handful of Houstonians, it comes through a house that offers stability, love and independence.

A resident of Hope House Houston, who is a recovering addict and member of Deer Park Baptist Church, helps put sheet rock up in one of the homes.

Earlier this year, Dave Dozier, director of [Hope House Houston](#), purchased a drug and alcohol rehab center including 13 dilapidated homes in Houston's low-income Kashmere Garden neighborhood. Dozier realized Houston needed a ministry to help people recovering from addictions—as well as families needing help to get back on their feet—make the transition to independent living.

Dozier partnered with Robert Kennard, who now is the property manager at Hope House Houston, to create stable transitional housing for families and individuals attempting to gain independence. The men “stepped out in faith,” knowing only God could bring the volunteers and funding needed to make the ministry a reality.

“We are here to rebuild lives and relationships,” Dozier said. “We feel like

God has called us to do urban ministry, and part of that is to offer stability and teach (residents) to become missionaries to their own people.”

Out of the 13 Hope House residences, seven are repaired and occupied. Residents are required to pay subsidized rent, attend weekly community meetings, be a member of a local church and show a desire to develop independence while a part of the ministry.

To help with repairs on three homes, more than 25 volunteers from [Metropolitan Baptist Church](#) and Northwest Baptist Church, both in Houston, participated in a workday as part of [City Reach Houston](#), a series of more than 20 outreach events held in conjunction with the Baptist General Convention of Texas annual meeting. The BGCT community development office provided funding for the efforts. Volunteers installed sheetrock and insulation and landscaped one of the yards.



Dave Dozier (bottom right photo), director of Hope House Houston, carves a turkey for a holiday meal with the residents.

Christian Miller, a youth worker at Metropolitan Baptist Church and a volunteer during the workday, said helping at the ministry not only provided a service to Hope House, but also helped his students see they can make a difference at any age.

“The good thing is that the age range can vary,” Miller said.

“We had adults all the way down to seventh grade. Some were very timid at first, but by the time we stopped, we were in a great group, and everyone had a job they were doing. They were definitely getting into the project and enjoying what they were doing.”

Miller also sees the groups’ involvement as a way to grow their faith and see God move in tangible ways.

“It’s been my experience working with the youth in our church that the kids who grow up in the church know all the stories of the Bible, but (times) in their lives where they can see God move or discuss this with others are really lacking,” Miller said.

“If we can continue with the movement and with what God has called us to do, which is loving others, I think we will be able to grow their faith through it.”

Besides having more churches and individuals volunteer time and skills to help repair the remaining homes, the ministry’s biggest need is to have a 200-foot hurricane fence rebuilt so the 1.5-acre plot where the houses sit can be enclosed and secured for the safety of the residents.

“That fence is vital, and we need to secure what we have as winter is coming,” Kennard said. “People tend to seek refuge in abandoned houses. We need to secure the wall, like in Nehemiah where he needed to rebuild the wall.”



Two volunteers from Metropolitan Baptist Church in Houston clean one of the three houses being renovated by Hope House Houston.

Eventually, Hope House Houston expects to renovate one of the houses as a community center, offering residents a place to wash clothes, learn computer skills and build relationships with other residents.

Kennard said that living on the property has presented an opportunity to provide a stable, loving relationship to people who may not have had that in the past.

“It is becoming a trusting community where we are slowly gaining respect,” Kennard said. “When you are with them, they sense you really care. They see you doing it out of the love of your heart that God has given.”

Ultimately, Dozier and Kennard want the residents to begin a relationship with Christ or experience that relationship on a deeper level. They want to produce Christians who are ready to care for others in the way they have been cared for.

“My vision is that ministry will come out of Hope House so that they will feel they have to go to the front line where we don’t look for safety or calm but where the ministry needs to be,” Kennard said.

“We want to produce ministers who aren’t afraid to get their hands dirty and to model Jesus.”

Dozier agrees, adding he desires to see people gain hope and stability in Christ so they will be able to help others out of the same situations they once faced.

“We are a bridge to the other side, helping people not fall through the cracks again,” Dozier said.