

Restoring Homes and Neighborhoods with **BRIGHTEN**

(Beautify Restore Improve up-Grade Houses to Empower Neighborhoods)

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This summer, the BRIGHTEN program has been working to restore homes for disadvantaged families. Many of the homeowners are either unable to afford the resources, or unable to complete the work themselves due to a disability.

During August, seven houses had restoration work completed by the BRIGHTEN program. More than 69 volunteers from businesses, churches, and local neighborhood families gave over 570 hours of their own time and labor.

Many thanks from the BRIGHTEN staff to all of the volunteers who so generously gave their time and labor to the community! Your contributions to improving neighborhoods in Cedar Rapids are greatly appreciated.



Central Church of Christ Youth Group

The BRIGHTEN program was fortunate enough to have the youth group from Central Church of Christ volunteer for the July community work day.

Six youth members from the church arrived early on Saturday morning. They joined the grandkids of one of the homeowners, and painted the entire first level of two homes.

Although the weather was threatening rain, the clouds dissipated as the morning progressed, and it was a surprisingly comfortable day to work outside in July.

One of the homeowners was kind enough to provide a lunch of grilled burgers and bratwurst, along with drinks and chips.

The July workday concluded with a total of thirty-four hours of work successfully completed! The youth group members worked very hard and diligently, and the homeowners were impressed with the results.

BRIGHTEN wants to thank all of the volunteers from Central Church of Christ for giving their time and effort to help restore these homes!



Just another day in the life of Central Church of Christ youth group!



Breaking for lunch grilled by a BRIGHTEN homeowner...

Antioch Christian Church Youth Group

Fifteen members from the Antioch Christian Church youth group joined six BRIGHTEN staff members and four other members of the community for a BRIGHTEN work day on August 4th.

After a short briefing in the morning, the BRIGHTEN staff and volunteers spread out around the house—some balancing on ladders above the ground, others crouched on the porch.

The busy and rewarding work-day concluded at noon, with a lunch generously provided by the homeowner, who grilled smoked burgers and served them with chips and drinks for all twenty-five people.

In a short amount of time, the house had been transformed. The entire ground level and a large portion of the upper level had been successfully completed in the span of one morning.

The youth group was enthusiastic and extremely helpful, and the homeowner said he was very impressed with how much work was finished. A big thanks from our BRIGHTEN staff goes out to all of the volunteers who worked that day!



Much like a internet flash mob, Antioch's youth group swarms this BRIGHTEN house.



Wal-Mart Volunteers for August Workday

On Saturday, August 20th, the BRIGHTEN program held its monthly community workday, and benefited from a group of Wal-Mart volunteers who generously gave an entire day of their time. As one BRIGHTEN staff member reflected, “We had a very good turnout...I was very impressed by the number of volunteers, and how much the group accomplished in a short amount of time.”

A total of twenty-three volunteers from the Blairs Ferry Rd. Wal-Mart worked a total of 116 hours in just one day.

The homeowner noticed their efforts, saying “they were all good workers, and overall the program is great!”

The volunteers were able to put the entire first layer of paint on three houses within a seven hour time frame, bringing to mind the phrase “many hands make for light work.”

All of the volunteers were welcomed to a complimentary lunch of grilled burgers and hot-dogs. (Fareway grocery contributed to the workday by giving BRIGHTEN a discount on ground beef.)

This BRIGHTEN day boasted another success for the program, and we look forward to more great days to come in future!



Many hands make for light work!





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Check out our web-site, and help us help you help us (or vice versa).

<http://www.vistacorridorrecovery.org/index.php/brighten/>



What is BRIGHTEN?

BRIGHTEN is based on the idea that people will live according to how others are living around them. As improvements are made to families' homes which lack the resources to make the repairs themselves, other neighbors may be encouraged to make similar improvements. The program is dedicated to the idea of neighbors helping neighbors in order to create a sense of community well-being and self-sufficiency. BRIGHTEN also works to promote community volunteerism, and to create the opportunity for volunteer groups to connect that might not otherwise.

BRIGHTEN is:

- AmeriCorps members hired by the Community Corrections Improvement Association (CCIA).
- Revitalization of neighborhoods by restoring homes for families who don't have the resources themselves.
- Non-profit and completely volunteer based.

