

# Restoring Homes and Neighborhoods with **BRIGHTEN**

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

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This fall, 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 September, 3 houses and one city park had restoration work completed by the **BRIGHTEN** program. More than 29 volunteers from volunteer groups, high schools, and local neighborhood families gave 164 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.



## *NCCC Returns to Help BRIGHTEN*

The National Civilian Community Corps is a branch of Americorps whose members are involved in direct service to communities with critical needs across the United States.

The BRIGHTEN program has recently received generous support from the Vinton Campus' NCCC team in July of this year, and the program was grateful to have them return again in late August and early September. For two weekends in a row, two different NCCC teams came out to work on several projects.

The first team painted the trim on a home and a porch floor at a client's house. They worked for a combined total of 36 hours.

The second team worked to paint the siding and a garage at another home, and put in 48 hours of work.

A big thank you goes out to the NCCC teams for helping BRIGHTEN restore the houses in the Wellington Heights neighborhood!



*NCCC volunteers and BRIGHTEN staff help to restore a house in Wellington Heights.*



*A VISTA member puts the finishing touches on window trim.*

## *9/11 National Day of Remembrance*

On September 10th, six NCCC members joined six VISTA members for the annual 9/11 National Day of Remembrance to help paint a house for the BRIGHTEN program. The idea of making September 11th a day of service and remembrance was started seven years ago by families of 9/11 victims, and was enacted into legislation in 2009. It's meant to be a day for the nation to come together in a spirit of compassion to pay tribute to those who gave their lives in service to others during the tragedy of 9/11 in New York, Washington D.C., and Pennsylvania.



*NCCC members from the Vinton campus stopped by to volunteer during the National Day of Remembrance.*

## *Metro H.S. Students Join the Park Renovation Project*

Eight Metro high school students spent a few hours during the morning of September 28th helping to trim trees and spread mulch at Poet's Park across from their school building.

The Cedar Rapids' Parks Department donated all of the mulch chips, and BRIGHTEN lent out weed trimmers and other tools for the project.

Thanks to the students and other city workers who helped to make this day possible!





*BRIGHTEN*

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Learn more about us and other  
AmeriCorps programs in Cedar Rapids.

[http://www.vistacorridorrecovery.org/  
index.php/brighten/](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.

