

Restoring Homes and Neighborhoods with BRIGHTEN

Beautify Restore Improve up-Grade Homes to Empower Neighborhoods

Inside this issue:

Cedar Rapids Bank & Trust P.2

Youth Leadership Program P.2

Tenant's Rights Workshop P.3

NCCC P.3

Community Living: When Will Things Change for the Better? P.4

What is BRIGHTEN?

BRIGHTEN is a grassroots program that was started by the Community Corrections Improvement Association (CCIA), and is led by staff hired through the national service program Ameri-corps*VISTA (Volunteers In Service To America). VISTA recruits members who commit to serve full-time for a year while creating or expanding programs to bring communities out of poverty.

The main objectives of BRIGHTEN are to improve living conditions for families and increase

neighborhood pride. The program provides house painting, minor repair, and yard work to families who qualify through economic hardship, disability, or age.

BRIGHTEN is currently looking for more volunteers to join. Individuals or groups are welcome to volunteer any weekday or Saturday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Some groups spend an entire day with us, others stay for a few hours, but any amount of time is greatly appreciated!

No prior skills or experience



are necessary, and all volunteers will receive painting tips and a safety lesson prior to field work. BRIGHTEN offers an excellent opportunity for interested individuals to develop skills and make a difference!

Give us a call at [366-1673](tel:366-1673) to lend a hand and help your neighbor!

BRIGHTEN is:

- Staff 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.

What are BRIGHTEN's goals?

BRIGHTEN is based on the idea that people will live according to how others are living around them. As improvements are made to family homes that 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.



The longest yard: scraping the original paint off.

Cedar Rapids Bank & Trust joins BRIGHTEN for United Way's Day of Caring

United Way of East Central Iowa organized over 1,275 volunteers from 60 companies and agencies to participate in their 13th Day of Caring on May 12th of this year.

Seven members with Cedar Rapids Bank and Trust came out to help

BRIGHTEN prepare a home for painting.

They were extraordinarily helpful with the challenging work of scraping the original paint off of a house located in the SE neighborhood of Wellington Heights.

The homeowner and BRIGHTEN give a big thanks to Cedar Rapids Bank & Trust for providing us with volunteers!

The sides of this house were no match for the YLP group.



Youth Leadership Program (YLP) contributes 36 hours of service

A role that BRIGHTEN seeks to fill in the community is to promote volunteerism among youth under the age of 24.

The Youth Leadership Program (YLP) helped to provide twelve members (all under age 18) from the program for an exterior paint project on the SE side of town.

YLP is a seven-year prevention program that identifies at-risk youth

who have been identified by their school counselors as having leadership potential.

The kids completed 36 hours of work, and finished a significant portion of ground level scraping on both sides of the home.

Jennifer Johnson, their group leader, was overheard saying that working with the kids was a unique experience she will

not soon forget.

BRIGHTEN is extremely grateful for the work accomplished, and proud of the kids who participated.

We look forward to working with YLP on projects later this month!

Tenant's Rights Workshop: Looking for a Host

One aspect of being a member of Americorps*VISTA is that projects can be created to fill community needs that have been previously un-met or overlooked.

Although not directly related to the task of physically restoring homes, the Tenant's Rights Workshop was created this year in order to bring awareness to the rights people have when renting a home or

apartment.

The workshops will be led by an Americorps member who works with Iowa Legal Aid.

In order to draw enough people to the workshop, BRIGHTEN is looking for a host whose members or group already meets on a regular basis, and whose attendees have an interest in learning more about their rights as

renters.

Give us a call if your group or organization would be interested at 366-1673, or email us at crbrighten@gmail.com.



Come be a volunteer for a day with BRIGHTEN! There's nothing else like it in the world. Call 366-1673 and listen to us talk on and on about it.

National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) teams with 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 NCCC group visited Cedar Rapids from their home campus in Vinton, IA, and accomplished a wide array of projects during their stay.

They completed an assessment of homes that were affected by the flood of 2008.

Information flyers about the tenant's rights workshop were passed out door-to-door in the Wellington Heights (SE) and Moundview (NE) neighborhoods.

The team also completed almost 120 hours working to restore the exterior of several houses on the SE

side of Cedar Rapids.

"It was an enthusiastic, chatty group," says Matt Mulholland, their group leader. "They let absolutely nothing deter them from their task of helping the CR community!"

Thanks again to the incredible efforts made by the NCCC team.



With only a mere stick, this fearless NCCC leader stirs paint with the focus and strength of twelve volunteers.

BRIGHTEN



BRIGHTEN

*Saint Wenceslaus Church
1230 5th Street SE
Cedar Rapids, IA*

Phone: 319-366-1673

Cell: 319-540-4819

E-mail: crbrighten@gmail.com

We're on that fabulous yet distracting
invention the internet!

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



“Man did not weave the web of life, he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself.”

- Chief Seattle