

Construction women, and men, lend a hand

Atlanta NAWIC chapter joins forces with Tool Bank



Volunteers paint at Beatrice Underwood's home

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Demolition begins at 773 Pryor Street

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July 16, 2005—Despite the ominous clouds that engulfed the Atlanta sky, a large group of volunteers from the Atlanta chapter of the National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC) braved the soggy weather forecast to be part of this year's Hands-on Work Day, sponsored by the chapter and facilitated by the Atlanta Community ToolBank.

Hands-on Work Day is an annual event, through which volunteers help fix the homes of those in need of a hand—or a few. This year the honor fell on two Peopletown's residents: Mary Hammett and Beatrice Underwood.

The group gathered bright and early on a Saturday morning at the Tool Bank warehouse on 55 Ormond Street, in Atlanta. After an extensive tour of their facilities, guided by Lisa Garcia—manager of the Home Repair Program (HRP)—the NAWIC volunteers headed for the first home at 773 Pryor Street.

The owner, Mary Hammett, a 90-year old widow, cares for her son who has been incapacitated since he suffered a stroke. Despite the fact that the home had a ramp in place, the inclination of it did not facilitate his movement on the wheelchair. Additionally, the condition of it—due to years of use and exposure to the elements—did not provide the required safety.

With hammers on hand and anything they could muster, half of the volunteers quickly took upon the task of removing the old ramp. At the same time, some volunteers, like Diane Taylor, were flexing their muscles by carrying the wooden beams that would soon become the support for the new ramp.

Among the many people assisting in



Mary Hammett and NAWIC volunteers after finishing the first part of the project

ToolBank

the project, were Noel Garcia (Lisa's husband) and Danny Overstreet, field director for Friends of Disabled Adults; a non-profit organization whose goal is to make life easier—and more accessible—to disabled individuals.

While the first half of the group worked on this home, the other half moved on to 124 Little Street—Beatrice Underwood's home. This residence was in dire need of a fresh coat of paint. During the previous week, another group of volunteers had primed the home's siding, so the NAWIC volunteers had the task of applying the topcoat.

Among the volunteers at this home was Renae Parent, account executive at

Arthur J. Gallagher Risk Management Services. This group was quick to mix up the paint, set up the ladders, and get to work on the home's exterior.

While the volunteers worked outside, I had the opportunity to speak with the homeowner about the great service being provided by NAWIC volunteers and the ToolBank. She was quick to point out that due to her arthritis, many of the home repairs have become daunting tasks for her. Luckily, she learned through friends of the ToolBank's services.

Beatrice has been living in the neighborhood for over 50 years and has seen the ups and downs of the area. Today, she seems happy with the many improve-



Flexing some muscles before construction

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ments taking place around her.

The Atlanta Community ToolBank, a 501(3) non-profit organization, provides the tools necessary (for a nominal fee) for groups and businesses wanting to lend a hand with home repairs, to those less fortunate. They in turn facilitate the process by finding a home for the volunteers to work on and provide guidance throughout the project.

For more information about the Atlanta Community ToolBank, call 404-880-0054.

To learn more about the Atlanta chapter of the National Association of Women in Construction and future events, dial 404-286-6010.