

Hometown Hero

Teen project impacts lives

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SUBMITTED

Teens attending Camp Selah did a service project at Alice Perks' home on Litchfield Road recently. Kathryn Snapp, Will Greene, Caleb Lemper and Courtney Callender (kneeling) were among those helping with the yard work.

can't afford the resources.

"It's about giving back to the community," he said.

Camp Selah's Administrative Director Phil Charles said he wanted to provide a practical opportunity for the teens attending camp to do a meaningful service project. A board member provided Dykhouse as a contact to find out what Men of Vision needed help with this summer.

With the theme of "Impact Your World," the

combination camp, involving teens age 14-18, worked alongside Men of Vision during a three-day period (June 17-19) by sprucing up the home of Alice Perks on Litchfield Road.

"I greatly appreciated what the group accomplished," Perks said. "It was a whole summer's work in three day's time."

While at Perks home, the group, averaging 17 teens daily, worked by moving 10

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A camp experience at Camp Selah near Reading provides opportunity for teens to "impact their world."

This summer, during combination and senior high weeks, the camp is having a special program where teams of teenagers have opportunity to assist in an off-campus service project with Men of Vision.

Men of Vision of Hillsdale County formed several years ago. The men, affiliated with World Gospel Mission, help senior citizens who are unable to do repairs in their homes or apartments.

"We're a group of six to eight men who do things like painting, building porches and roofs," said member Bob Dykhouse.

The men donate their time and help those who

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yards of dirt around the home to alleviate a leaky basement. Landscaping involved removal of overgrown trees and bushes, along with general cleanup work in the yard.

Inside the home, drywall was hung, painting was done and a bay window was installed. Exterior siding and insulation were also part of the project.

"They worked their hearts out," said Cindy Dykhouse, wife of Bob Dykhouse and friend of the grandmother being helped. "So often you hear about teens doing things wrong and here they were doing things right. Giving

their time to help others was a great example for them."

Charles said he wasn't sure how the campers would react to the first-time project, but everyone seemed to have a positive attitude.

"The kids all saw value of doing something for somebody in need," Charles said, noting the camp may consider doing such projects again next summer.

For Youth Servant Leaders Taylor Wittenbach and Miranda Johnson, the experience was one they wouldn't trade.

While Taylor worked on drywall and insulation, Miranda worked outside in the yard, raking grass.

"It was exhausting, but a lot

of fun," Taylor said. "I watched the expressions on Alice's face and to see the joy that came from her was great. Her grandson, Michael, is so much fun to be around. Just going and serving was rewarding."

Miranda added that the Men of Vision workers appreciated the help as much as Alice did.

"I think they've been working there since last winter," Miranda said. "And, all the kids that helped said it was a great feeling getting to know each other better, to learn new skills and benefit someone else."

Camp Activities Director Shelley Scantlen said it was interesting to see how the

groups worked together to accomplish goals.

"They come from different backgrounds, but worked together," she said. "Overall, it was a great experience. Alice was completely grateful."

In July, senior high campers will share in a similar experience with another project involving a home in the Osseo area.

To find out more about camp Selah or about camp registration, visit the Web site at www.campselah.org or call (517) 283-2527.

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