

Students work to open housing for the poor

By Wayne Peal
staff writer

Parts of Detroit's Jeffries Housing Projects are a step closer to re-opening, thanks in part to a group of Madonna University students, including Tim Nodon of Farmington Hills.

The students began working at the stark, red brick complex, just west of the Lodge Expressway near Martin Luther King Boulevard, before Thanksgiving and are scheduled to spend several coming Saturdays finishing the job.

"We've been stripping off paint and doing cleanup work," said Joanne Hinds of Northville, one of the six Madonna students.

"What we're doing is prepping for the major work to come," added student adviser Kim Gyuran, who has joined the students.

Students have been working in conjunction with Habitat for Humanity, the national volunteer home building organization that lists former President Jimmy Carter among its members.

"We're trying to renovate two buildings," Habitat for Humanity spokeswoman Elizabeth Pierce said. "There are about 72 units we hope to have open for low income families, elderly people and singles."

Workers hope the buildings will be ready for occupancy by Dec. 15, Pierce said. Those moving in are expected to include people who were recently deleted from state welfare rolls.

The Madonna students are among five groups assisting in the project.

In addition to scraping paint, the Madonna volunteers have also been clearing away dust and debris and moving out old, abandoned furniture, among other tasks.

The work can get messy, Gyuran said.

"I REMEMBER peeling paint off one wall and ending up peeling off pretty much the whole wall," she said. "I said, 'That's enough for here.'"

But she said it's also satisfying. "I know we've had a lot of other people volunteer since we began working," Gyuran said. Volunteers need not be affiliated with Madonna, she added.

The Madonna group also includes Todd Martin and Keri Northway of Redford and Suetie Beauchamp of South Lyon. Volunteers represent three student organizations, including the college social work club.

Group members plan at least two

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— Elizabeth Pierce
Habitat for Humanity

more visits to the site, spending as many as seven hours a day on the job. As far they know, it's the first time Madonna students have been involved in this type of project.

Once the Madonna group completes its work, others will add new plumbing, heating and wiring, to make the site livable once again.

Those interested in helping out at the Jeffries Projects or other Habitat for Humanity work sites can call 521-6091 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. weekdays.



A red ribbon day

Nissan gave Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) a boost of support last week, distributing 10,000 of the familiar red ribbons that are part of MADD's "Be One On For Safety" campaign to employees in the U.S. and Canada. John Calandro (above, left)

distributes ribbon to Suzanne Gust (center), as Pat Hauser (right) looks on during a ceremony at the New Nissan Research & Development Technical Center in Farmington Hills.

Twice a week is better



In the same boat

Maple Elementary School third-graders Mason Duke (left) and Jonathon Backos seem headed for Plymouth Rock during a rehearsal of their skit entitled "Thanksgiving, In Search of Liberty." It was performed Nov. 25-26. The youngsters shared how their ancestors came to America. Maple, part of the Walled Lake District, draws students from northwest Farmington Hills.

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