

'Dr. Vee' hosts program at Birmingham Temple

Dr. Vainutis Vaitkevicius, familiarly known as Dr. Vee, will head Birmingham Temple's fourth "Encounter," an all-day cultural event on Tuesday, Oct. 29.

Vaitkevicius holds many titles and positions in the community: president emeritus of Karmanos Cancer Institute and director of Community Outreach for the Institute; professor emeritus of Wayne State University; and is serving a six-year term to the National Cancer Advisory Board, to which he was appointed by President Bill Clinton in 1994.

During his presidency of the Michigan Cancer Foundation, Vaitkevicius succeeded in bringing together four cancer centers in the Detroit area to merge into a single institute, the Karmanos Cancer Institute, one of the major cancer centers in the country.

In a casual and informal setting, Vaitkevicius

will discuss his areas of expertise, his life and education in Lithuania, his internment in concentration camps, his medical history and philosophy and his attitudes on the current health care system, as well as respond to questions from the audience.

"Encounters" is a special informal program at Birmingham Temple where attendees can become acquainted with noted figures in our area.

The program is 8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. with a break for lunch. Both lunch and continental breakfast are included in the registration fee which is \$30.

Birmingham Temple is at 28611 W. 12 Mile, between Ingham and Middlebelt roads, Farmington Hills. Reservations, which are limited, are due by Oct. 23. Contact Joyce Chersch at 810-788-9338.

Church members band together to fix houses for senior citizens

BY TODD WICKS
STAFF WRITER

Sixteen houses belonging to local senior citizens recently received minor facelifts, courtesy of Nardin Park Methodist Church.

As part of an effort to "mission" to others, volunteer groups made up of congregation members and area residents spent Sept. 29-30 fixing up homes in need of a little repair work.

"We called it a 'weekend of mission madness,'" said Karen Bolson, who served as media relations coordinator for the church. "Our intent was to help seniors in our church who couldn't do the work for themselves or couldn't hire it out."

It soon became a community effort, with volunteer numbers swelling to 112 and others pitching in. "There was a whole crew who helped with the food throughout the weekend," she said. "The Boy Scouts from Nardin Park also made a pancake breakfast Saturday morning."

The church found out what needed to be done by circulating worksheet requests and volunteer forms around the congregation, and then matched the task to the specialist, or the closest they had to one.

"We learned that citizens like to have clean windows," laughed the Rev. Karen Poole, one of Nardin Park Methodist's two pastors.

She listed some of their activities: "We painted garages, scraped and painted fencing, dug up shrubbery, trimmed trees, tilled a garden, patched a ceiling, and repaired a mailbox."

By the end of the program on Sunday, volunteers were eager to take on even larger tasks.

"It was amazing to me, all the qualified people we have in this congregation," Poole said. "They're electricians, they're carpenters, and they're looking for big projects."

"My vision for next year is to continue to extend it to a broader scope in the city. We'll absolutely do it again, and make some connections between those gifts and other people."

Nardin Park Methodist already has outreach programs as far away as Africa, Appalachia, and Costa Rica, but decided to focus closer to home this time.



PHOTOS BY MARIKA SINDOUCO/VALENTI SINDOUCO PHOTOGRAPHIC INC.

Busy time: Jackie Biddle of Farmington Hills was part of the contingent from Nardin Park Methodist Church that fixed 16 houses for senior citizens.

"Sometimes we overlook that we have mission needs right in our community," Bolson said. "That's where we were coming from, to help people in need."

The church even got the name of an older Hills woman from the city and put in extra time on her house.

"The people we did the work for really appreciated it," Bolson

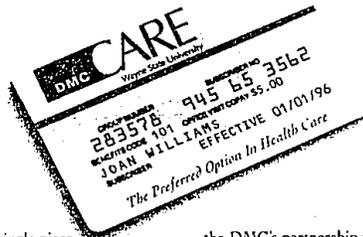
said. She said it was a moving experience for the helped as well as the helpers.

"Some of the people from our church who are now seniors have worked on projects like this in the past," Bolson said. "Some of them now had to make an adjustment and say, 'Yes, we need this help.'"



Generations together: Teenagers to seniors participated in the housing rehabilitation program.

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