

## BELIEFS

## Values

# Christmas in April fosters neighbors helping neighbors

BY RENA FULKA

SPECIAL WRITER

They'll target homes within their own neighborhoods that have sunk into a state of disrepair.

And when the hammers, saws, wheel barrows, paint brushes, rakes and pruning shears have idled — two dozen Oakland County homes will have undergone a transformation meant to renew the dignity, safety and independence of the elderly, handicapped and disadvantaged citizens who live there.

"We don't just go in and repair. We do anything we can to improve the quality of their life in that house," said Waterford resident Ken Heinrich.

On April 26, Heinrich and hundreds of other volunteers will offer their time and talents in the true spirit of giving during a one-day home improvement blitz known as "Christmas in April."

The international, non-profit organization subsists at the local level on donated materials and 100 percent volunteerism. Indoor and outdoor renovations are offered at no cost to needy homeowners on the last Saturday in April each year. Funds are acquired from churches, civic groups, corporations, individuals, foundations and organizations.

Last year, 1,300 volunteers from all faiths and walks of life provided the heart and elbow grease to renovate 22 homes in 10 Oakland County communities, including Commerce Township, Walled Lake and White Lake. This year's efforts will be even more extensive and touch just as many communities.

"What is so unique about Christmas in April is that citizens can get out and help the community in one day and go back home with no further commitment," said Beverly Spoor, vice president of the organiza-

**"You are so exhausted by the end of the day, but the inspiration is so unbelievable you can't wait to sign the application again. It's that overwhelming."**

**Beverly Spoor**  
Oakland County President

tion's Oakland County unit. "It's neighbor helping neighbor. That's the fulfillment."

Volunteers include professionals skilled in areas like carpentry, dry wall, electrical, masonry, plumbing, roofing, and vinyl flooring. Other participants help with food service, general cleaning, errand running, painting, yard work, gardening and miscellaneous chores.

Applications are sorted according to skill levels and systematically designated for appropriate work sites. A special effort is made to keep group members together on location, where lunch is provided for volunteers age 12 and up. Each home undergoing repair work is assigned a captain and co-captain to coordinate work activities.

"And everybody wears a T-shirt. It builds camaraderie," said White Lake resident Denise Sanborn, branch manager of Old Kent Bank and president of Christmas in April/Oakland County.

Projects completed in previous years include remodeling and ramp-building for wheelchair accessibility, repairing floors that have caved in with age, re-connecting hoses to a water source, cleaning, trimming overgrown bushes and planting flowers for beautification. The workday winds down with a "come as you are" dinner for all volunteers and contributors from 5 to 11

p.m. at Milford High School.

"You are so exhausted by the end of the day, but the inspiration is so unbelievable you can't wait to sign the application again. It's that overwhelming," said Spoor, who recruits volunteers while working as the White Lake Township treasurer.

Shirley Snook, secretary of the White Lake Township building department, joined Christmas in April supporters three years ago when Spoor was on one of her recruiting missions. "Bov came down and said she needed someone to clean. And I can clean," said Snook, a White Lake Township resident. "Nobody says thanks at home. But when you get done there, it's so appreciated. They respond with tears."

"The personal involvement is unbelievable," said Spoor, who sees that all homeowners are prepared in advance for the day-long renovation of their properties. "They (volunteers) actually develop a friendship with these seniors and disabled people."

Christmas in April was founded in Texas in the mid 1950s and has grown to become a national organization headquartered in Washington, D. C. with 102 independently funded and managed affiliates. The Oakland County unit was organized in 1993, and renovated four houses the first year and seven the second. The workload tripled in 1996 as the program continued to gain popularity. A minimum of 22 houses will be rehabilitated this year. Groups can elect to sponsor a home for \$1,500, with 40 volunteers to work the site. Sponsored homes are designated with a yard sign bearing the group's name. Porta potties are located on all work sites.

Among this year's contributors are Jim and Helen and materials are Kirk in the Hills Presbyterian Church in Bloomfield Hills;

See CHRISTMAS, B6



Staff Photo by LAWRENCE R. MCLELLAN  
Lending a hand: Shirley Snook, (clockwise from left) Beverly Spoor, Ken Heinrich and Denise Sanborn are key organizers for the Oakland County unit of Christmas in April, a one-day home improvement blitz that sends volunteers to the aid of elderly, handicapped and low-income neighbors.

## INTERNET ADDRESS DIRECTORY

Find these sites on the World Wide Web  
Brought to you by the services of O&E On-Line!

To get your business On-Line!, call 313-953-2038

ADVERTISING PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS	
Monoprint Plus	<a href="http://oeonline.com/monoprint">http://oeonline.com/monoprint</a>
APARTMENTS	
Amber Properties Co. (Royal Oak/Clewsion, Troy)	<a href="http://www.amberprop.com">http://www.amberprop.com</a>
APPAREL	
Hold Up Suspender Co.	<a href="http://www.suspenders.com">http://www.suspenders.com</a>
ART MUSEUMS	
The Detroit Institute of Arts	<a href="http://www.dia.org">http://www.dia.org</a>
ASSOCIATIONS	
Suburban Newspapers of America	<a href="http://www.suburban-news.org">http://www.suburban-news.org</a>
Suspender Wearers of America	<a href="http://oeonline.com/suspenders">http://oeonline.com/suspenders</a>
AUDIO VISUAL SERVICES	
Sidemasters	<a href="http://www.sidemasters.com">http://www.sidemasters.com</a>
AUTOMOTIVE	
Ramchargers Performance Centers	<a href="http://www.ramchargers.com">http://www.ramchargers.com</a>
The Tamaroff Group	<a href="http://www.tamaroff.com">http://www.tamaroff.com</a>
Universal Bearing Co.	<a href="http://www.ubc.com">http://www.ubc.com</a>
AUTOMOTIVE MANUFACTURERS REPRESENTATIVES	
Marta Mgmt. Services	<a href="http://www.martadragway.com">http://www.martadragway.com</a>
AUTO RACING	<a href="http://www.sidemasters.com">http://www.sidemasters.com</a>
Milan Dragway	<a href="http://www.gia3d.com">http://www.gia3d.com</a>
BAKING/COOKING	
"Jiffy" Mix - Chelms Milling Company	<a href="http://www.jiffymix.com">http://www.jiffymix.com</a>
BOOKKEEPING PRODUCTS	
BIG EZ Bookkeeping Co.	<a href="http://www.bigez.com">http://www.bigez.com</a>
BOOKS	
Apostrophe Communications	<a href="http://www.apostrophe.com">http://www.apostrophe.com</a>
BUSINESS NEWS	
Insider Business Journal	<a href="http://www.insiderbiz.com">http://www.insiderbiz.com</a>
CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE	
Livonia Chamber of Commerce	<a href="http://oeonline.com/livoniachamber">http://oeonline.com/livoniachamber</a>
CHILDREN'S SERVICES	
St. Vincent & Sarah Fisher Center	<a href="http://oeonline.com/evsl">http://oeonline.com/evsl</a>
CLASSIFIED ADS	
Observer & Eccentric Newspapers	<a href="http://class.oeonline.com/classifieds.html">http://class.oeonline.com/classifieds.html</a>
COMMUNITIES	
City of Livonia	<a href="http://oeonline.com/livonia">http://oeonline.com/livonia</a>
COMMUNITY NEWS	
Observer & Eccentric Newspapers	<a href="http://oeonline.com/frames/news.html">http://oeonline.com/frames/news.html</a>
COMMUNITY SERVICES	
Wayne Community Living Services	<a href="http://www.wcls.org">http://www.wcls.org</a>
COMPUTER GRAPHICS	
Logic, Inc.	<a href="http://www.logic-usa.com">http://www.logic-usa.com</a>
COMPUTER HARDWARE/PROGRAMMING/SOFTWARE SUPPORT	
Applied Automation Technologies	<a href="http://www.cappa-edg.com">http://www.cappa-edg.com</a>
BNS Software	<a href="http://oeonline.com/bns">http://oeonline.com/bns</a>
Starlock Systems	<a href="http://oeonline.com/starlock">http://oeonline.com/starlock</a>
Mighty Systems Inc.	<a href="http://www.mightysystems.com">http://www.mightysystems.com</a>

## COMPUTER PRODUCT REVIEWS

## HONORING HANDICAPPING SOFTWARE

CyberNews and Reviews	<a href="http://oeonline.com/cybernews">http://oeonline.com/cybernews</a>
EDUCATION	
Fordson High School	<a href="http://oeonline.com/~fordsonh">http://oeonline.com/~fordsonh</a>
Global Village Project	<a href="http://oeonline.com/gvp.htm">http://oeonline.com/gvp.htm</a>
Oakland Schools	<a href="http://oakland.k12.mi.us">http://oakland.k12.mi.us</a>
Radiant Union Blue & Gold Club	<a href="http://oeonline.com/~nubclub">http://oeonline.com/~nubclub</a>
Reuther Middle School	<a href="http://oeonline.com/~rms">http://oeonline.com/~rms</a>
Western Wayne County Mental Health Group	<a href="http://members.aol.com/wywcgroup/index.html">http://members.aol.com/wywcgroup/index.html</a>
ELECTRICAL SUPPLY	
Caniff Electric Supply	<a href="http://www.caniff.com">http://www.caniff.com</a>
Progress Electric	<a href="http://www.pe.com">http://www.pe.com</a>

## ELECTRONICS ENGINEERING

Quantech, Inc.	<a href="http://www.quantech-inc.com">http://www.quantech-inc.com</a>
ENVIRONMENT	
Resource Recovery and Recycling	<a href="http://oeonline.com/rmasc">http://oeonline.com/rmasc</a>
Authority of SW Oakland County	

## EYE CARE/LASER SURGERY

Greenberg Laser Eye Center	<a href="http://www.greenberges.com">http://www.greenberges.com</a>
----------------------------	---

## FROZEN DESSERTS

Sorbet Sorbet	<a href="http://www.sorbet.com">http://www.sorbet.com</a>
---------------	---

## GENEALOGY

Smith-Battard Publications	<a href="http://oeonline.com/mclegio">http://oeonline.com/mclegio</a>
----------------------------	---

## HAIR SALONS

Heads You Win	<a href="http://www.headsyouwin.com">http://www.headsyouwin.com</a>
---------------	---

## HEATING/COOLING

Mechanical Energy Systems	<a href="http://www.mes1.com">http://www.mes1.com</a>
---------------------------	---

## HERBAL PRODUCTS

Nature's Better Way	<a href="http://oeonline.com/nbw">http://oeonline.com/nbw</a>
---------------------	---

## HOME IMPROVEMENT

Home Advantage Referral Service	<a href="http://oeonline.com/homeadv">http://oeonline.com/homeadv</a>
---------------------------------	---

## HOME SPECIALTIES

Stewart Specialty Tiles	<a href="http://www.stewarttiles.com">http://www.stewarttiles.com</a>
-------------------------	---

## HOME INSPECTIONS

ONS Inspection	<a href="http://www.gia3d.com">http://www.gia3d.com</a>
----------------	---

## HOSPITALS

Boston Health Care Continuum	<a href="http://www.bostonhosp.org">http://www.bostonhosp.org</a>
------------------------------	---

## HYDRAULIC AND PNEUMATIC CYLINDERS

St. Mary Hospital	<a href="http://www.stmaryhospital.org">http://www.stmaryhospital.org</a>
-------------------	---

## INDUSTRIAL FILTERS

Elkair Corporation	<a href="http://www.elkair.com">http://www.elkair.com</a>
--------------------	---

## INDUSTRIAL SERVICES

Michigan Metrology	<a href="http://www.michmetro.com">http://www.michmetro.com</a>
--------------------	---

## INSURANCE

J. J. O'Connell & Assoc., Inc. Insurance	<a href="http://www.oconnellinsurance.com">http://www.oconnellinsurance.com</a>
--	---

## INTERACTIVE CD ROM PUBLISHING

Interactive Incorporated	<a href="http://www.interactive-inc.com">http://www.interactive-inc.com</a>
--------------------------	---

## MARKET RESEARCH

Quality Controlled Services, Inc.	<a href="http://oeonline.com/qcs">http://oeonline.com/qcs</a>
-----------------------------------	---

## MORTGAGE COMPANIES

Mortgage Market Information Services	<a href="http://www.interest.com/observer">http://www.interest.com/observer</a>
--------------------------------------	---

## MORTGAGE

Village Mortgage	<a href="http://www.villagemortgage.com">http://www.villagemortgage.com</a>
------------------	---

## NEWSPAPERS

GAGGLE Newsletter	<a href="http://oeonline.com/gaggle">http://oeonline.com/gaggle</a>
-------------------	---

## PAINTING

At Kahn Painting	<a href="http://oeonline.com/alkahn">http://oeonline.com/alkahn</a>
------------------	---

## PARKING MANAGEMENT SERVICES

National Garages, Inc.	<a href="http://www.nationalgarages.com">http://www.nationalgarages.com</a>
------------------------	---

## PARKS &amp; RECREATION

Huron-Clinton Metroparks	<a href="http://www.metroparks.com">http://www.metroparks.com</a>
--------------------------	---

## POWER TRANSMISSION

Bearing Service, Inc.	<a href="http://www.bearingservice.com">http://www.bearingservice.com</a>
-----------------------	---

## PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR

Profile Central, Inc.	<a href="http://www.profile-usa.com">http://www.profile-usa.com</a>
-----------------------	---

## PROFESSIONAL JOB PLACEMENT FIRMS

Dickson Associates	<a href="http://www.dicksoninfo.com">http://www.dicksoninfo.com</a>
--------------------	---

## REAL ESTATE

REALnet	<a href="http://oeonline.com/realnet.html">http://oeonline.com/realnet.html</a>
---------	---

## REAL ESTATE

Jenns Batsan	<a href="http://www.millstings.com">http://www.millstings.com</a>
--------------	---

## Birmingham Bloomfield Rochester

South Oakland Association of Realtors	<a href="http://www.juststated.com">http://www.juststated.com</a>
---------------------------------------	---

## CENTURY 21 at the Lakes

Century 21 at the Lakes	<a href="http://oeonline.com/realnet.html">http://oeonline.com/realnet.html</a>
-------------------------	---

## Chamberlain Real Estate

Chamberlain Real Estate	<a href="http://www.chamberlainrealtors.com">http://www.chamberlainrealtors.com</a>
-------------------------	---

## Colwell Banker Schweitzer

Colwell Banker Schweitzer	<a href="http://oeonline.com/colwell.html">http://oeonline.com/colwell.html</a>
---------------------------	---

## Marcia Gies

Marcia Gies	<a href="http://aia.oeonline.com/gies.html">http://aia.oeonline.com/gies.html</a>
-------------	---

## Hall &amp; Hunter Realtors

Hall & Hunter Realtors	<a href="http://aia.oeonline.com/hallhunter.html">http://aia.oeonline.com/hallhunter.html</a>
------------------------	---

## Heritage Real Estate Better Homes and Gardens

Heritage Real Estate Better Homes and Gardens	<a href="http://oeonline.com/realnet.html">http://oeonline.com/realnet.html</a>
---	---

## Langard Realtors

Langard Realtors	<a href="http://www.langard.com">http://www.langard.com</a>
------------------	---

## Max Brook, Inc.

Max Brook, Inc.	<a href="http://oeonline.com/realnet.html">http://oeonline.com/realnet.html</a>
-----------------	---

## Ralph Manuel Associates

Ralph Manuel Associates	<a href="http://oeonline.com/realnet.html">http://oeonline.com/realnet.html</a>
-------------------------	---

## Sellers First Choice

Sellers First Choice	<a href="http://www.sellersfirst.com">http://www.sellersfirst.com</a>
----------------------	---

## Showcase of Distinctive Homes

Showcase of Distinctive Homes	<a href="http://aia.oeonline.com/showcase">http://aia.oeonline.com/showcase</a>
-------------------------------	---

## Bob Taylor

Bob Taylor	<a href="http://www.bobtaylors.com">http://www.bobtaylors.com</a>
------------	---

## John Toye

John Toye	<a href="http://www.toye.com">http://www.toye.com</a>
-----------	---

## RELOCATION

Conquest Corporation	<a href="http://www.conquest-corp.com">http://www.conquest-corp.com</a>
----------------------	---

## RESTAURANTS

Birmingham Restaurant Collection	
----------------------------------	--

## Albans

Albans	<a href="http://oeonline.com/dineout/albans.html">http://oeonline.com/dineout/albans.html</a>
--------	---

## The Community House

The Community House	<a href="http://oeonline.com/dineout/communityhouse.html">http://oeonline.com/dineout/communityhouse.html</a>
---------------------	---

## Midtown Cafe

Midtown Cafe	<a href="http://oeonline.com/dineout/midtowncafe.html">http://oeonline.com/dineout/midtowncafe.html</a>
--------------	---

## Norman's Elton Street Station

Norman's Elton Street Station	<a href="http://oeonline.com/dineout/eltonstreet.html">http://oeonline.com/dineout/eltonstreet.html</a>
-------------------------------	---

## Ocean Grill

Ocean Grill	<a href="http://oeonline.com/dineout/oceangrill.html">http://oeonline.com/dineout/oceangrill.html</a>
-------------	---

## Old Woodward Grill

Old Woodward Grill	<a href="http://oeonline.com/dineout/owg.html">http://oeonline.com/dineout/owg.html</a>
--------------------	---

## Peabody's

Peabody's	<a href="http://oeonline.com/dineout/peabodys.html">http://oeonline.com/dineout/peabodys.html</a>
-----------	---

## Phoenixia

Phoenixia	<a href="http://oeonline.com/dineout/phoenixia.html">http://oeonline.com/dineout/phoenixia.html</a>
-----------	---

## Rugby Grill

Rugby Grill	<a href="http://oeonline.com/dineout/rugbygrill.html">http://oeonline.com/dineout/rugbygrill.html</a>
-------------	---

## Slews Backroom

Slews Backroom	<a href="http://www.slewsbackroom.com">http://www.slewsbackroom.com</a>
----------------	---

## RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES

Presbyterian Villages of Michigan	<a href="http://www.pvm.org">http://www.pvm.org</a>
-----------------------------------	---

## SHOPPING

Birmingham Principal Shopping District	<a href="http://oeonline.com/birmingham">http://oeonline.com/birmingham</a>
--	---

## SURPLUS FOAM

McClough Corporation	<a href="http://www.mclough.com">http://www.mclough.com</a>
----------------------	---

## SURPLUS PRODUCTS

Harry's Army Surplus	<a href="http://www.harrysurplus.com">http://www.harrysurplus.com</a>
----------------------	---

## TECHNICAL EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

ACRO Service Corp.	<a href="http://oeonline.com/~acro/acro.html">http://oeonline.com/~acro/acro.html</a>
--------------------	---

## TOYS

Toy Wonders of the World	<a href="http://www.toywonders.com">http://www.toywonders.com</a>
--------------------------	---

## TRAINING

High Performance Group	<a href="http://www.oeonline.com/~hpg">http://www.oeonline.com/~hpg</a>
------------------------	---

## UTILITIES

Virtual Reality Institute	<a href="http://www.vrinstitute.com">http://www.vrinstitute.com</a>
---------------------------	---

## WELD GUN PRODUCTS

Detroit Edison	
----------------	--