

Perpetuating Hope- Exploring Urban Homeworks

Written by Marcia Humphrey
Friday, 15 October 2010 13:31



Hope is contagious. That is the first sentence that appears inside of the Urban Homeworks (UHW) brochure. Usually, you hear about the spread of a contagious condition, people start running away and it produces fear and panic. There is no need to worry this time-you'll want to catch this. Hope is at the heart of this community development ministry that provides dignified housing for lower-income families. Not only that, but Urban Homeworks helps to rebuild neighborhoods, reconnect people, and reweave a sense of community that has gone missing in many of our neighborhoods. It's done through partnerships with other concerned community members and organizations.

Sound impossible? I recently had the opportunity to attend their annual fundraising luncheon which highlighted the program's successes over the year, and while I was there, I caught something... (Hope, that is) and now I am trying to spread it on to you. I have a renewed hope that deserted, foreclosed homes are not the end of the story, and through organizations like UHW, homes will be rehabbed so caring families and professionals can breathe new life into their blocks. You are part of the equation and your help is needed too. Take the time to learn more about a Christ-based ministry that has been helping to spread hope for the past fifteen years. Visit www.urbanhomeworks.org.

How You Can Help and Spread Hope with UHW

1. Volunteer - Are you thinking that you have no valuable skills related to homebuilding or repair? That's fine. All skill-levels are welcomed and UHW will help you find a job that suits you. They even have opportunities for you to volunteer in their administrative office and you are welcomed to help as often as you'd like. In addition, if you and a group of friends-from church, civic club, school, etc-would like to volunteer, that would be great!

2. Give – If we say that we care about the challenges and struggles faced by our neighbors, then our actions should show it. Marketplace Home Mortgage seems to be stepping up to the plate as community partners. In addition to helping sponsor the fundraising luncheon, they felt it was their responsibility to donate a portion of their profits to UHW. Although resources are tight for most individuals, a simple, modest act of financial generosity can do wonders for you. UHW gladly accepts donations of any size.

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One of the things that most impresses me about Urban Homeworks is the very intentional way they help diverse people to connect; lower-income families, young professionals, construction workers/trainees, and volunteers. Once connected, we learn that we have more in common than we realized. It's not just about the rich throwing money at the poor for housing. It's more about how reconciliation, redemption, and hope are spread from one neighbor to another as we genuinely care for one another. Please do your part...be contagious. Enjoy!

Marcia Humphrey is an interior decorator and home stager who specializes in achieving high style at low costs. A native of Michigan, she and her husband, Lonnie, have three children.