

DATELINE: Sat 09/24/2005 10:34 PM

Sat., Sept. 24, 2005

THE HOUSE IS READY (Sort of)

Today was quite a productive day, with lots of finishing touches put on the house and yard. Except for the sofa, which is coming tomorrow morning, the house is furnished. And the kitchen cabinets and refrigerator are stocked with food.

We discovered a wonderful flagstone walkway under about three inches of dirt and debris. Thanks to Cindy Todd and her two boys Chris and Josh for uncovering the walkway. The sun room is finished and looks great! Eric Sullivan did an awesome job on the room.

I wasn't there. I had to work all day at DeKalb Medical Center at Hillandale, where we were holding a cancer screening event. So Nancy was in charge in my stead. Nena and Linda were on the scene managing the furnishing and decorating of the house. I showed up around 4:30 p.m. After most everything was done, so I had to get all this information second hand. But here are the highlights, from what I can remember (as always, please e-mail with any names and stories that I overlooked).

Carr Carothers saved the day. This visitor to Clairmont (we like to think of him as a prospective new member) replaced all the hoses and connections to the washing machine. Then he installed a new medicine cabinet and installed moulding around it. After he finished that, he went down to the Mt. Zion house and repaired the leaking water heater.

Robin Roberts was a veritable gardening machine. She pruned bushes to rejuvenate them, and obliterated weeds and small trees that were basically large, woody versions of weeds. Look for the hot pink ribbons on small trees in the yards of all three houses along Clairmont. These trees have been marked for extermination by Robin.

Nena Thompson and Ann McCoun raided Publix with a shopping list and bought everything on it but one item. Who wrote "wax paper" on the list, anyway? They packed the kitchen with food (along with lots of canned goods that have been donated during the week).

Janet Kennedy and Tricia Sale cleaned up the flower bed in front of the house. Barbara Dillon brought flowers and pine straw from Pike's for the flower bed. Then Janet went to work with the blower, creating a hurricane of her own.

Tom Pipkin and his boys Josh and Luke painted the trim in the sun room.

Linda Bennett and Alice Scott spent hours going through boxes upon boxes of donated materials to pick out the right stuff for this house and family.

In the morning, Elizabeth and Sarah LeDuc, Pam Scott, Tad Burden, Micah Miranda, Brad Rouse, in addition to the folks listed above, worked on the house and the yard, and moved furniture and boxes. In the late morning, Evan Secor, Ann McCoun, Marilyn Clayton, Bonnie Billington, Allison Spangler, Tricia and Larry Sale and their daughter Charlotte showed up and joined in.

So except for two minor inconveniences (the air conditioner broke and the gas isn't on yet), then, the house is ready to go!

SUNDAY DEDICATION

Tomorrow morning at the 11 a.m. Service, the congregation will be introduced to the Jasper family. After the service, I hear tell that we'll walk down to the house and have a prayer of dedication. Y'all come on down.

WORK CONTINUES WITH THE JASPERS AND THE CLAIRMONT HOUSE

Our relationship with the Jaspers doesn't end when the Jaspers cross the threshold. We will be following the family throughout the 12 months (or less) that they occupy the house. Allison Spangler, Tricia Sale, Janet Kennedy and Tena Stephens have agreed to serve on a continuing décor committee. They will work with the Jaspers and with the Building and Grounds Team to continue improving the condition of the house.

At the same time, we will work with the Jaspers to assist them with the process of finding permanent housing and accessing their benefits from FEMA and the Red Cross. We expect them to use this time and opportunity to save up their money to make a successful transition to their own housing, whether that may be here in Atlanta or back in New Orleans. Of course, it's too early yet for them to make any decisions of that magnitude.

THE OTHER HOUSES . . .

Emory Presbyterian Church's session will vote tomorrow morning on whether to adopt one of our houses to prepare it for an evacuee family. We should hear from them on Monday morning.

North Avenue Presbyterian Church is presenting this opportunity to their Diaconate Tuesday evening. Presbytery informed us Friday that one of their members took a house off the market to make it available to the Church for housing an evacuee family. They are working on that initiative now, but appear to be still interested in pursuing the opportunity on our block, as well.

This afternoon, a representative from Briarcliff United Methodist Church approached me about sponsoring one of the houses. They will bring a couple folks to look at the houses and report back to their church on their findings.

WHILE WE'RE WAITING ON THE OTHER CHURCHES

We will begin working on the next house anyway. We have enough furniture and other donations to at least start a house before turning it over to another church. And the property needs to be either salvaged or demolished. Before we do that, though, I'm going to take a few days off, and I'm going to let you all do the same.

This is your hurricane response coordinator, George Miranda, signing off.