



Dulles PALS and Fort Bend CORPS to build new home for local family



Members of the Dulles PALS organization

By Diane Tezeno

Obdulia Estrada has worked as a custodian at Dulles High School for more than 20 years and will soon be opening the doors to a new home.

The Fort Bend Independent School District employee recently learned she would be receiving a new home at a special "Move that Bus" ceremony in January, coordinated by the Dulles High School PALS organization.

"Every time we mention the house, she starts crying," said Kay Slack-Beard, coordinator of the school's PALS program.

Estrada's new home is a collaboration between Dulles PALS and the Fort Bend CORPS "Hearts and Hammers" program.

"For the past 10 years, Dulles PALS students have been on a mission to help families in our community who live in deplorable housing conditions," PALS Coordinator Kay Slack-Beard said.

"These students have totally funded and built three Habitat for Humanity houses and have completed six "extreme makeovers," Slack-Beard said.

Last year, members of the Dulles High PALS organization raised

\$30,000 for the annual project.

Students will help paint, landscape and decorate the home in an annual project that has become a Dulles tradition.

"Not only PALS, but students from other clubs and organizations always want to help with our housing projects," Slack-Beard said.

The "Extreme Makeover"-type project will bring in contractors from Hearts & Hammers to build the home and handle all plumbing and electrical work.

Ron Castillo, executive director of the Fort Bend CORPS and a former Dulles High School student, also has joined the effort.

"Ron was a student in my health class when he attended Dulles, so this makes working with him extra special because he is also a member of our extended 'Dulles family,'" Slack-Beard said.

Estrada's old home was recently demolished by Hearts & Hammers contractors and the new home is slated to complete construction of the new home in the next three weeks.

The project represents a new beginning for the Sugar Land couple who have lived in a two-bedroom home with their three grandchildren, now ages 10 - 20, for the past several years.

Limited space in the home forced family members to sleep in one room, with no working heating or air conditioning system, and roof and plumbing problems.

"It is a blessing from God," Obdulia Estrada said of her new home, before breaking into tears. "It is also going to be more healthy for us," her husband said.

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The CORPS Report

Fort Bend CORPS Golf Classic



Hearts & Hammers Golf Classic

The Fort Bend CORPS will host its annual golf classic during the month of June 2010. Precinct 1 County Commissioner Richard Morrison will host the golf event and tournament proceeds will benefit the Fort Bend CORPS' Hearts & Hammers program and Capital Campaign. For more information, please visit www.fbcorps.org or call us at 281-313-2677 (CORPS)

Mission Statement

Fort Bend CORPS exists to revitalize low-income housing in neighborhoods in Fort Bend County by engaging public/private partnerships and community involvement.

Vision Statement

The Fort Bend CORPS was formed to be an organization that actively and compassionately delivers community revitalization and coordinates, supports and encourages others in this work so that low-income areas in Fort Bend County become functional and productive communities with housing and neighborhoods that are safe and decent.

Client Thank you

Thanks so very much for all the gorgeous ceiling fans and energy bulbs. You have been such a blessing to me. I wish you all the best and may God continue to bless you. The window screens look fabulous and hopefully will save on light bill.

Ms. Dashill
Missouri City

Energy Savings Tip

One of the best ways to save energy dollars is to use less air conditioning and heating.

Set your thermostat at 78 in the summer and 68 in the winter.

Each degree cooler or warmer will increase your energy use by 6 to 8%.

For instance, setting your thermostat at 72 in the summer could increase energy use by up to 40%

Fort Bend CORPS launches television commercial



In January 2010, Houston's Channel 55 launched a community effort to profile non-profits weekly in a Charity Profile segment. One of the goals of Houston's Channel 55 was to continue outreach in the community. So the television station has offered around the clock community messages.

The low cost community announcements will begin airing in March 2010 and continue until December 2010. Each charity profiled during the

segment will be guaranteed to air at least 2 times per week during some of the station's best programming.

Thank you to Lara Bell, Host of *Wild about Houston* and Houston's Channel 55 for their commitment to profile non-profit charities in the community they serve.

The Fort Bend CORPS' commercial provides telephone and website contact information for residents to call inquiring about services offered.

So, if your sitting in your favorite chair, sipping on your favorite beverage, tune into Houston's Channel 55. You just may see someone you recognize.

You can donate online at www.fbcorps.org. Click on the Donate button and help the CORPS further its mission.

CORPS renews contract to offer Free Energy Efficiency Program



The Fort Bend CORPS renewed its contract with CenterPoint Energy to offer its energy efficiency program aimed at low-income, elderly and disabled homeowners. The grant is provided by Agencies In Action and CenterPoint Energy.

It provides free assistance to lower energy costs through home repairs which includes attic and wall insulation, solar screens, compact fluorescent lamps and Energy Star air conditioners, ceiling fans and refrigerators.

The grant is available year-round to qualified Fort Bend

County homeowners.

An approximate savings of \$1,800.00 per household or \$150.00 per month is saved as a direct result of receiving the energy efficiency upgrades.

For more information about the program, please call 281-313-2677 (CORPS) or email us at info@fbcorps.org

FBJSJL Awards \$5,000 Grant to Fort Bend CORPS



Pictured left to right are Brandy Leonhardt, CORPS Fiscal & Program Director, Keely Aust, CORPS Community Development Program Director, Reesa Duffin, FBJSJL member, Brigit Engleman, FBJSJL President, Sharon Dimicelli, FBJSJL member and Ron Castillo, CORPS Executive Director.

The Fort Bend Junior Service League (FBJSJL) presented a \$5,000 Community Assistance Fund (CAF) Grant to the Fort Bend CORPS, which will be used to fund two programs. The first is the CORPS' Hearts & Hammers Program which benefits low-income, elderly and disabled residents throughout Fort Bend County by helping them to complete desperately needed exterior and interior home repairs. The second program is the Neighborhood Cleanup Program, which establishes a safe and sanitary envi-

ronment by addressing blight that consume lower income areas throughout the county. FBJSJL accepts CAF applications throughout the year for grant funding up to \$5,000 per year. Applicants must be nonprofit organizations serving Fort Bend County with requests to fund a critical need, pilot program and/or expand a significant service to the community. For additional eligibility requirements or to download an application, please visit www.fbjsjl.com.

CORPS partners with local Church

The Fort Bend CORPS recently partnered with River Pointe Church for a neighborhood cleanup aimed at revitalizing the North Richmond area. The Neighborhood cleanup project, held on March 6, was a great success and an awesome experience for both volunteers and residents. As a result of the efforts, the 200 + volunteers removed six-40 yard dumpsters. The equivalent of 60 tons of refusal. In addition, numerous tires were sent to the recycling center.

As a direct result of the many volunteers, over 1200 hours of volunteer labor was performed in one day. Values at \$24,300.00 in volunteer labor. The gift the volunteers gave formed everlasting relationships in the North Richmond area. Continued growth will prosper as home construction revitalization efforts are being planned and "Friends of North Richmond" is formed.



Members of River Pointe Church during the North Richmond neighborhood cleanup

Gala Event a true success

The Fort Bend CORPS held its second annual Hearts & Hammers Gala themed "A Little Wild At Heart" on Friday, February 5, 2010 at Safari Texas Ranch. The gala event honored the five founding members of the CORPS. Honorees were Bob & Carole Brown, Herb & Emelia Appel, Bill & Susan Jameson, Barkley & Jill Peschel and David & Sharon Sabom.

The event was a true success. The CORPS raised monies to support its Hearts & Hammers program and its Capital Campaign.

Thank you to the many volunteers, event supporters, Board of Directors and Founders Council members for supporting and furthering our mission.

Hearts & Hammers Gala 2011 is scheduled for February 11, 2011 at the Texas Safari Ranch.



Fort Bend CORPS celebrates 10 years of service to the Fort Bend Community

Volunteers Wanted

Are you, your civic, church, school or business organization looking for a volunteer opportunity?

If so, the CORPS has many service opportunities that cater to your skill level. For more information visit www.fbcorps.org or email us at info@fbcorps.org.

Client Thank You

We are so very grateful for the responsive efforts made regarding the many repairs to our house. Know you are in our hearts & prayers for all good things a New Year can bring our new friends and neighbors.

Mrs. Rodriguez
Sugar Land, Texas

Founders Council Spotlight



The CORPS is looking for a few Good Founders Council Members

The Founders Council is a group of community leaders who are committed to excellence in Fort Bend County. These community and civic minded businesses, organizations and individuals recognize the need to give back to the community and assist those people who have no earning power, are living on low or fixed incomes and have home repair needs that they cannot afford.

In making a substantial and continued financial commitment to the CORPS, the Founders Council members demonstrate their strong support for the mission and programs of the CORPS, as well as their desire to affect positive changes in the Fort Bend community. Founders Council members commit to provide \$3,000 annually to the CORPS to ensure that the CORPS can operate its free home repair programs.

Benefits in becoming a Founders Council Member include:

- ◆ Name on CORPS stationary, publications and website
- ◆ Annual invitation to luncheon to report progress and results
- ◆ Yard sign listing Founders Council members at each Hearts & Hammers site
- ◆ Your lasting and visible impact on Fort Bend County.

For more information, contact the CORPS at 281-313-2677 (CORPS)



Is a full service commercial real estate company that has supported the CORPS for many years. Kolbe Curtice represented the Fort Bend CORPS during our building purchase. Thank you Kolbe for helping the COPRS further its mission.

www.curticecommercial.com

“Improving the Quality of Life One Home at a Time”

One Fluor Daniel Drive, MC 12
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Website: www.fbcorps.org



Fort Bend ISD employee Obdulia Estrada in front of former home

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and be installed with compact fluorescent lights.

Former Dulles graduate Greg Manthei, a current shop teacher at the school, is having his class build a picnic table for the family.

The couple’s new home will be dedicated in honor of former Sugar Land Mayor Lee Duggan, a major supporter of the Fort Bend CORPS Hearts & Hammers Program. “I am so honored that Dulles would want to build this house in my honor,” Duggan told an audience of students at the January “reveal” ceremony. “I love to give, especially to someone that is so deserving,” Duggan said.

Slack-Beard described the project as “more than just building a house,” but a “life changing experience” for both the family and students. “For my students to be a part of this is so rewarding to me and gives me a sense of pride that makes me want to go out and stand on the mountain top and tell how great kids are because they do so many good things,” Slack-Beard said.

Not only is the Hearts and Hammers Program building the couple a new home, it will be one of the first environmentally-friendly “green” homes built for low-income families in the area, according to Castillo.

“This is the first that we know of in Fort Bend County and we hope to build many more,” Castillo said.

The 910 square foot 3-bedroom, 1 bath fully weatherized home will be built with a solar panel attic ventilation system. The home also will contain an energy-star-rated air conditioning system, ceiling fans and appliances, a tank-less water heater

REMODELING?

Is remodeling in your future? The CORPS accepts any gently used materials or household items that are still in working condition. The CORPS will use them on future projects. Please help the landfills by donating any unused or gently used building materials and appliances to the CORPS. To donate please call 281-313-2677 (CORPS) or email us at info@fbcorps.org

For information on building material donations or appliances, contact Executive Director Ron Castillo at 281-313-2677 (CORPS)

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