



For immediate release

Volunteers Build Playground for Local Charity

*AmeriCorps Group Collects Funds, Builds Outdoor Playground for
Rescue Mission's Bethel Village for Women and Children*

Though the temperatures top 90+ degrees in Panama City, local AmeriCorps' sweat begins to pay off on a playground for underprivileged children at a recently opened residential recovery program.

The playground is located at the Rescue Mission's Bethel Village for Women and Children.

Today, the group began building the sturdy wooden frames and installing plastic playground materials.

They anticipate finishing the project Monday.

The group works with Florida State Parks and is based at St. Andrew's State park. While most of their projects are environmentally based, they must complete a civic project during their 11-month stay in the program.

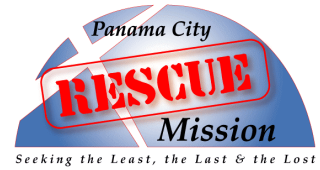
"It's just a way for us to get involved in the community in which we live during the program," Aurora Klein, AmeriCorps member said.

Ten members moved to Panama City in January from as far as Oregon and as close as Tallahassee, Klein said.

The group solicited donations in total of \$1350 from St. Andrews Concessions, Bay County Waste Management and other individuals.

"Our original plan was to complete a project for Habitat for Humanity at their new offices on 11th Street, but other plans were made for that space. Corrine Coleman, their Executive Director, suggested we work with the Rescue Mission, as she had recently heard of the new home through a board member."

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When the Mission noticed increased homeless women with children, it began more than a year ago planning to open a home like Bethel Village. Land was acquired earlier this year and volunteers have since worked to complete renovations and adopted rooms to equip it for up to 20 women and children in recovery.

“It just began with a vision that, thank God, moved in people’s hearts to make a reality,” Development Director Amanda Harris said. “It’s finally here and we are excited about the lives that will be changed through this program.”

Harris cites the Mission’s Men’s “Power to Choose” Recovery Program and the proven results at helping individuals stay clean from substances and begin life anew through their 6-12 month program.

“Faith based programs just work,” Harris said. “It’s the power of God.”

Because the Mission does not accept government funds, the Mission will hold a breakfast Wednesday July 28 at 8 AM at the First Methodist Trinity Center to raise funds for the home. For more information, please contact Amanda Harris at 215-9007.

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