

Habitat for Humanity sprucing up Tahoe homes

By Kathryn Reed

A letter from the landlord listed what needed to be done – or else.

Unable to do the work herself or pay for someone to do it, June Echeverri was worried. The 76-year-old's health doesn't allow her to maintain her yard like she once did. Her daughter who lives with her is on disability.



June Echeverri looks at how her yard is being re-done.
Photos/Kathryn Reed

Every spring Tahoe Verde has a spring checkup list for people living in the mobile home park. Echeverri didn't think she would be able to check anything off the list.

"I really didn't know what I was going to do," Echeverri told *Lake Tahoe News*. The answer came via an invitation from Habitat for Humanity to apply to be part of A Brush with Kindness, a program the El Dorado County chapter offers.

This is the first project on the South Shore the group has

done. They started Monday and wrapped up in a few days.

"This program is only exterior. We do minor repairs. It can't be for cosmetic reasons," Carolyn Meiers explained.

Meiers has been on the Habitat board in El Dorado County for four years. The next project is in the Bijou neighborhood. That house is scheduled to be painted in September.

"The caveat is the people have to do all the prep work. They are young," Meiers said. "It has to be scraped and brushed and ready for paint."

About a dozen volunteers worked from 8am to 4pm at Echeverri's home. Weeds were eliminated, fern-like plants split apart and replanted, sod eliminated, weed cloth put down, wood chips laid on top of it, a back yard water feature reconfigured a bit and more.

Landscaper Jim Doherty volunteered his efforts to remove the sod. This means no more mowing for the women.

The skirt was painted with donations from Dick Fuller Paints and Valspar Paints.

The hot water heater door was fixed and other repairs were made.

"This is a great example that there are people who care and will offer their time and energy," Echeverri said as the crew went about their work.

For the men and women working up a sweat she provided a bite to eat each morning, snacks, water and soft drinks.

Unity Church in South Lake Tahoe raised \$234 for the project – and supplied much of the labor. Meiers, along with Arlene Wolfe and Bonnie Driscoll make up Hope Lutheran's committee that is part of all of this.

JJ Stafford decided to spend part of his Tahoe vacation volunteering his time with this Habitat project. The 21-year-old from New York has been doing this type of thing since he was 13.

Seeing the gratitude in the homeowners and hearing them say “thank you” is how he is paid.

For more information about the local Habitat for Humanity chapter or volunteering, contact Carolyn Meiers at (530) 541.4654 or email sltahoehabitat@gmail.com. The process to qualify is a bit rigorous, with distinct income requirements, proof of homeownership, tax forms and about a four-page application to fill out.

ngg_shortcode_0_placeholder (Click on photos to enlarge.)