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improving lives, strengthening communities

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Young People Helping Young People
Texas Teens Spruce Up Montana Youth Homes

Helena, MT From Saturday, July 10 through Wednesday, July 14, the Margaret Stuart Boys Home and the Jan Shaw Girls Home, two Montana Youth Homes (MYH) facilities, will enjoy the labor and fellowship of ten Texas teens. These young people, part of a group of 40 from the Kingsland Baptist Church in Houston, were invited to Helena by Big Sky Fellowship. The Texas crew wanted the opportunity to contribute meaningful labor to our community and to see new country.

At both Montana Youth Homes' sites, the volunteers will tackle major landscaping projects: preparing a rock garden site at the year-old Jan Shaw Home next to Henderson Avenue and full-blown landscaping at Margaret Stuart Home on Miller Street, including gardening, weeding, and tree transplanting. Growing Friends of Helena members will introduce the Texas group to Montana weeds and flowers so that their work can be done with precision. Volunteers will also paint a deck and outside trim at the Margaret Stuart Home and assist MYH staff on organization and infrastructure projects.

Montana Youth Homes, a program of Rocky Mountain Development Council, provides boys and girls from all around Montana, ages 12-17, with a safe, family-like setting when abuse, neglect, or involvement with law enforcement prevents them from living at home. The Jan Shaw Girls Home and the Margaret Stuart Boys Home each accommodates eight residents. MYH is committed to guiding youth toward independence in a caring, home-like environment, empowering and supporting residents to become strong and responsible adults.

"We're tickled to host these young volunteers," notes Emily McVey, Montana Youth Home Program Manager. "We want our homes to be welcoming to the Montana young people who need shelter with us. And we want our houses to complement the Helena neighborhoods in which we're located." McVey also notes that current residents of both facilities will contribute to the work projects and enjoy the opportunity to hang out with the Texas teens. "It isn't just about getting help with some critical work," McVey says. "It's also about the benefit of encouraging Montana and Texas young people to share cultural backgrounds and experiences."

For additional information about this specific volunteer project, contact Americorps VISTA Volunteer John Lewis at Montana Youth Homes, jlewis@rmdc.net or 406-449-3038; for additional

information about Montana Youth Homes itself, contact Emily McVey, Program Manager, emcvey@rmdc.net or 406-440-3038. For information about the full group of volunteer young people from Texas, contact Dan Clark, Big Sky Fellowship, the6clarks@sbcglobal.net or 437-2201.

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