



improving lives, strengthening communities

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 13, 2009

Spring Clean Up Scheduled for 44 Helena Homes 10th Annual Spirit of Service - May 19th

Housing

Head Start

Rocky Mountain Preschool

Energy Share

LIEAP

Weatherization

Mental Health Crisis Planning

Kids Management Authority (KMA)

Agency on Aging

Daily Dinner Clubs

Foster Grandparents

Meals on Wheels

Retired & Senior Volunteers

Senior Citizen Centers

Senior Companions

Senior Transportation

Helena, MT On Tuesday, May 19th, look for a red t-shirt-clad army of workers participating in Helena's tenth annual Spirit of Service (SOS). Helena businesses and nonprofits sponsor this annual spring community service project. Over 250 employees will devote the day to trimming, weeding, scrubbing, sanding, and painting for 43 homeowners who are not physically able to tackle such chores themselves. "It's a labor of love," says project coordinator Rose Felter. "We're fortunate to live in Helena, to have employment and health. We look forward to the opportunity to give a little something back."

Sponsoring organizations and homeowners have been mapping out chores and choosing paint colors together for several weeks. Sponsors provide cash support, tools, materials, and the work crews for the homes they tackle. All SOS assistance is free to homeowners. Typically, crews remove trash, clean-out rain gutters, cut grass, trim hedges, wash windows, and paint—all exterior tasks. "We assist a different group of properties each year. And this spring, forty more folks applied for help than we can serve," notes Felter. "We wish we could do more."

This year's SOS crews look forward to helping Helena's favorite box boy and sports aficionado, Bengal Billie. Billie and his sister applied for home maintenance help they weren't able to tackle on their own. Crews from Student Assistance Foundation and St. Peter's Hospital consider it a gift to be able to lend a hand. "Billie's a Helena icon," Felter said. "He's shared his exuberance with all of us at grocery checkout counters and games for years. It's time for us to help him out."

2009 partner organizations include Anderson ZurMuehlen and Company, Employee Benefit Resources, Rocky Mountain Development Council, the City of Helena, Wal-Mart, Heritage Propane, Morrison-Mairerle Inc., American Federal Savings Bank, Student Assistance Foundation, and, as a new member, St. Peter's Hospital.

Other businesses participate by donating the variety of supplies and food it takes to pull off the event. This year the Helena Building Industry Association is involved for the first time, and has assumed responsibility for three special projects. Through HBIA's involvement, SOS will not only take on more homes than ever before, but will also tackle three homes that need more work than SOS work groups can normally get done. "We're really excited to have the opportunity to help," says Rob Martin, HBIA president. "In addition to individual workers, two builders are providing their full crews. And we're ready to help in the future, too."

For further information about the SOS event including homeowners and work crews to interview, contact Rose Felter at Rocky Mountain Development Council, 447-1680 or cell, 461-2471.

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