

## Local

DAY OF CARING | Beautification project donates labor to people in need



SHANE KEYSER | THE KANSAS CITY STAR

During the 15th annual Day of Caring, volunteers (from left) Greg McWhorter, Paul Williams and Bob Climpson made much-needed repairs to this home in Kansas City, Kan. Up to 3,000 people took part in the event, making repairs at 186 properties.

## Uplifted by volunteers' efforts

**Workers fan out across the area to improve deteriorating properties.**

By SCOTT CANON  
The Kansas City Star

Sawdust and paint fumes filled the air amid the sounds of nail guns and whirring power tools.

All to the delight of Jeanette Day.

"This is nice," she said. "This is so nice."

A couple of dozen people swarmed around her house Saturday, replacing her front and back porches and covering over mismatched and fading coats of white and green paint with one fresh layer of brown.

The work should clear her Kansas City, Kan., home of code violations and make her eligible for a grant that would replace her leaking roof.

That effort — undertaken by volunteers from the Coalition for Independence and workers from QuikTrip — was one of 186 projects across the Kansas City area Saturday involving more than 3,000 people who pitched in on the annual Day of Caring.

Saturday marked the 15th yearly effort of United Way and Combined Federal Campaign, when volunteers pick up hammers, paintbrushes and various other tools of rehabilitation for a community.

offensive.

Over the years, the effort has represented more than \$5 million in donated labor and improvements to homes and non-profit businesses.

"Part of the trick is spreading people out far enough so you don't get too many at one place tripping over each other," said Ron Howard, a United Way spokesman who was helping out at the Day house.

Fifty-year-old Jeanette Day moved into the home — one carpenter guessed it might be nearly 100 years old — about 20 years ago with her husband. He died about 15 years ago. Now she lives there with her grown son, Randall. Both are disabled. So money is tight and repairs are difficult.

Her aging roof had been leaking into the kitchen and a bedroom in the rear of her house, so she put a tarp on top of the house. One day she returned from a doctor's visit and found a certified letter from the Unified Government of Wyandotte County and Kansas City, Kan., citing her for code violations.

With help from the Coalition for Independence — a non-profit group that helps people with physical, mental and cognitive disabilities live on their own — she learned that her home was eligible for a grant to

## CARING: A day for volunteers

FROM B1

replace the roof.

But there was a catch: The house was ineligible for the city's roof money as long as it was in violation of other housing codes. Her front porch was falling down. That rear deck had become so unstable that Day boarded up her back door. A paint job was long overdue.

In stepped QuikTrip and the Coalition for Independence, first ripping down the old porches last week and then pouring concrete footings on Wednesday. They ended the week with crews building things anew and slathering paint and stain on the exterior.

"Now she can get the new roof," said John Heny of the Coalition for Independence. "And she can stay in the house."

To reach Scott Canon, call 816-234-4754 or send e-mail to scanon@kcstar.com.