

# Repairs Save Home

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unlikely to have their next of kin around to help with home repairs and maintenance.

"I'm excited to see what they'll do," says Thelma Williams. "I have trouble getting down the stairs, and without a rail, it's dangerous for me."

Installing a handrail by her basement stairway could greatly reduce her chances of injuring herself in a fall.

Many senior citizens are injured every year in homes that have lurking dangers, be they loose tiles, unsafe stairs, or leaky roofs letting water on the floor for someone to slip on. Seniors are especially at risk of falling and not being able to get help, and thanks to this kind of community service, an older Portland resident can keep their home safe and increase their quality of



PHOTO BY OLIVIA OLIVIA/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Lynda Williams and her mother Thelma Williams meet up with Neil Kelly Co. Representatives Chad Ruhoff and Lisa Pickert, along with Community Energy Project In-Home Services Manager Roberto Rivera ahead of a volunteer home improvement project inspired the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday.

life, even perhaps extending their life expectancy.

The Community Energy Project has limited monies for smaller,

weatherization jobs but not major construction.

"We are funded by the Portland Housing Bureau to provide services

to people that are 55 or over, who are low-income, or people with disabilities who are also low-income," says Roberto Rivera, the in-home services manager for the Energy Project which is located on Northeast Alberta Street.

"Most of our work goes into single family dwellings. Our services vary depending on the needs the person or people have in that

untee service opportunities are ripe throughout Portland, but both Thelma and her daughter Lynda agree that this strikes them as one of the most concrete ways to help the community.

"This lets me keep my home," says Thelma, "and that's more important to me than anything else. It really means so much to me."

In the past year, the Community

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 — Thelma Williams

house."

For Neil Kelly, performing a community service in honor of the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday was part of its DNA.

"We are a Benefit Corporation," says Chad Ruhoff, vice president of energy service for Neil Kelly. "Our company charter is not just about the financial bottom line, it's about giving back to the community and taking care of our neighbors."

The company has pledged to tackle some of the larger repairs and home safety issues for Thelma Williams' home.

"We are grateful for support from Clean Energy Works and Energy Trust of Oregon to help make these repairs possible," Ruhoff said. "We want people to know there are resources and programs available to make their home healthier and more comfortable."

Martin Luther King Jr. Day vol-

Energy Project's In-Home Services Program (which includes their Senior Weatherization, Emergency Repair, and Extended Repair Programs) served 220 homes in Portland.

More than 50 percent of the homes services were owned by people of color, and 60 percent were extremely low income homes (categorized as families that make less than 30 percent the median family income). All funding for this program comes from the Portland Housing Bureau.

To see if you qualify, call Community Energy Project at 503-284-6827 to walk through the eligibility requirements. You can also learn more by visiting the Community Energy Project website at [communityenergyproject.org](http://communityenergyproject.org). You can also visit the website or call to volunteer or donate to future Community Energy Project endeavours.

## Employment Opportunities

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