

# Volunteer labor helps families

Jason Grigsby  
For the Oregon Daily Emerald

Twenty Alpha Phi Omega and 13 Student University Relations Council members ripped off shingles and demolished ceilings Saturday at St. Vincent DePaul's home ownership program.

The HOPES III program relies on volunteer labor to cut the costs of refurbishing homes for low-income families.

"Everything volunteers do reduces the cost to those who will live here," said Terry Webster, Housing Project Coordinator. "It would have cost a significant amount of money to get a demolition contractor to take off all that siding."

SURC vice-president Laura Kebbe also emphasized the importance of volunteers.

"We do not seem to do it (volunteer work) enough," Kebbe said.

United Way Volunteer Connection gave Kebbe a list of opportunities from which to

choose. She decided to dedicate four hours for removing siding, nails and plasterboard. Amy Heyden, a member of both groups, asked Alpha Phi Omega to help SURC.

"Amy brought it to Alpha Phi Omega as a project for 10 people. It exploded into 20 people," said Alpha Phi Omega Service vice-president, Sheehan Ilarina. "We had fun. We got to take out all our aggressions, be with everyone, and get into the mud."

When HOPES III work cannot be done by volunteers, funding for subcontracted repairs comes from both St. Vincent DePaul and the Housing and Urban Development Department. Anticipated federal cuts worry organizers about future funding for the program, but Webster said that the money to finish this project is already guaranteed.

The project contains a unique three-year trial period before the actual purchase. A selection committee sent out 500 applications to find families that quali-

fy to buy the homes. Typical families have between 70 to 80 percent of the median income level, but are unable to buy a house at full price. Families lease the homes for three years, and a portion of the paid rent is used to get a bank loan after the trial period ends.

The houses are often moved from other locations and sell below the market value.

"House moves are cost effective when compared to the cost of building a new home, said Rebecca Larson, volunteer coordinator for St. Vincent DePaul. "It's like recycling."

Student University Relations Council works on several campus activities in conjunction with the Alumni Association. Alpha Phi Omega is an ASUO student service program.

"Service projects are a blast. It is an excuse to get dirty and have fun," said Seth Skinner, Alpha Phi Omega member. "It may be idealistic, but this is a way for me to make the world a better place in a small way."

# Growing program in search of leaders

Patrick Minford  
For the Oregon Daily Emerald

The Freshman Interest Group program is looking for student leaders interested in getting involved with the University and helping new students.

FIG leaders coordinate weekly meetings with their groups, as well as work with other FIG leaders, professors and faculty, and FIG coordinators.

In exchange for their hard work, experienced FIG leaders say they are amply rewarded.

"FIG leaders gain public speaking and organizational skills, and leadership experience," said undergraduate coordinator Sage Dallas, who has been a FIG leader.

"It's a good way to meet other people," said FIG Leader Michele DeMoss. "It's also a great way to help students and get involved with the University."

Other nice incentives FIG leaders are the two upper-division credits and the \$150 cash award they earn.

The FIG program is designed to ease new stu-

dent's transition from high school to the University.

FIGs consist of about 25 first-term freshmen jointly enrolled in three courses that share a particular area of focus. One of the classes is for the FIG members only, giving them a chance to get to know each other. The FIGs also have weekly meetings outside class for the first half of fall term.

The FIG program helps new students academically because it lets them "connect with the University," said coordinator Jack Bennett.

The University is expected to double the number of FIGs in the next two years because administrators believe so strongly in the program, Bennett said. The program's expansion means more student leaders are needed.

"We strongly need a large pool of applicants to apply for leadership positions," she said. "Student [leaders] make the program work."

The deadline to apply for FIG leader positions is Tuesday. Anyone interested in getting involved can apply at Academic Advising and Student Services in 164 Oregon Hall.

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