

Vernonia Says Good Bye to Some Good Friends

Vernonians said goodbye to the volunteers and staff from Christian Aid Ministries (CAM) at the end of April. CAM was in Vernonia from February through April, living here and working on reconstruction and repair projects with flood victims. There is a chance they will be back to help here again.

"We're hoping to come back in the late summer," said Willie Miller, Field Director of CAM's Disaster Response Services. "There is a good possibility that we will come and help pour about fifteen foundations and then help construct those new homes once the Flood Relief people are ready for us to help again."

CAM volunteers and staff have worked on about forty home projects in Vernonia and spent over 6,000 hours of staff and volunteer labor time helping the community rebuild.



"I'm not sure if this community understands how vital Christian Aid Ministries has been to our recovery," said Dan Brown who has worked closely with the CAM team in his role with Columbia County Flood Relief. "So many programs that we are attempting to receive funding from require a match, and we are able to use CAM's labor to leverage funding and increase the scope of our projects and our recovery."

"When we go into a community, it's as guests. We then partner with the community to help people get their homes back together," said Willie Miller. "When people are willing to make sacrifices, it's amazing what can be done."

"It takes three things for us to be able to create a project in a community- materials, money and manpower," explained Miller. "We provide the manpower, so once the community can provide funding for materials, we would gladly consider coming back to help. We know this community now, and we have a base set up, so I know we could make it work."

"I really admire these people from CAM and their servants' heart," said Dan Brown. "It is such a symbol of service- their willingness to give and to sacrifice. Many of the volunteers traveled here from all over the country to be here and help us in our time of need."

Two Vernonia Firefighters Receive Promotions

Dean Smith and Ben Davis, both lieutenants with the Vernonia Volunteer Fire Department, have been promoted to the position of Deputy Chief.

Smith, a mechanic at R&R Motor Company in Vernonia, has been a volunteer since 2003 and will be mostly responsible for building and vehicle maintenance. Davis, a professional Firefighter/Paramedic with Columbia River Fire and Rescue, has been a volunteer in Vernonia since 1999 and will take more responsibility for training.

"We know them from their past experience. They have both been steadily moving up through the ranks," said Vernonia Fire Chief Paul Epler. "These two gentlemen were ready to step up and take more responsibility."

"Because we work in an incident command structure, it's important to have qualified individuals ready to fill those roles," said Epler. "We had a large number of our volunteers who rose to the challenge during the flood. Dean and Ben really distinguished themselves and deserve this. We are now in the process of filling their lieutenant spots because we have other volunteers who deserve a chance to move up and fill these spots that are now vacant."

Smith and Davis just returned from specialized training at the Oregon Fire Chiefs Conference in Redmond in mid-April.

Schaumburg House Begins to Takes Shape

By Scott Laird

The house that is being designed, planned and built for Dean, Kendra and Syllas Schaumburg now has a design and floor plan. The plans were unveiled at a gathering of volunteers, friends and family at the end of March. Vernonia residents Casey Mitchell and Dana Hyde have been developing this project- raising funds, finding donations of materials, and securing pledges from contractors. Mitchell's co-worker at Community Action Team, Bruce Holz and Jim Perpich will act as project managers.

Schaumburg was severely injured in a logging accident this past summer. Just before he was scheduled to return home from the hospital in December, the Schaumburg's rental home was flooded during the Vernonia Flood. Since then the family has lived with Kendra's parents, and is now in another rental. Dean has undergone numerous surgeries and remains unable to care for himself.

Casey Mitchell organized the BBQ and gathering in March as a way for interested volunteers to get together and meet each other and begin planning construction. Dave Van Meter created the design and floor plan. Mike Pihl has donated the lot in Vernonia where the home will be built.

"Dave Van Meter did such a great job on the plans," said Mitchell. "He really took it seriously and worked hard to design a plan that got the most out of the lot and the most livable square footage in the house. He put a lot of thought and effort into the design."

The new home is a three bedroom, single level ranch which will be built to accommodate wheelchair access. It will feature an exercise room adjacent to the master bedroom and a roll-in shower stall. It will have a covered porch in both the front and back.

"The project is in real good shape right now, and I feel confident saying it will definitely be built," said Mitchell. "With all the donations and commitments we have, what we mostly need now is volunteer labor. What we need are people who might be willing to take responsibility for task parts of the project, like building a fence or deck, or painting, things like that. That will be such a help."

To volunteer to help with the project contact Casey Mitchell at 503-369-3133. To make a financial contribution, mail to: Schaumburg Building Fund, PO Box 174, Vernonia, OR 97064.



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