

FRIDAY



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HomeAid helping homeless families find 'dignified' homes

By Peter Marcus
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One Colorado non-profit is determined to build "dignified" housing for homeless families so that they may rebuild their lives.

HomeAid, a national organization with one branch in Colorado, has developed direct relationships with the building industry to offer physical support to the homeless.

"The response from the building industry has been amazing," said HomeAid Colorado Executive Director,

Laura Brayman. "I'm amazed at how generous they've been. Sometimes it's taken no effort."

By working with "reputable" care providers, HomeAid Colorado determines what structural needs may exist and then find builders to turn a dream into reality.

"We find out what [the builders] do and then we solicit them to be the builder for our projects," said Brayman. "It might be a youth project for a women's shelter, might be a veteran's shelter, whatever the population that comes our way."

Brayman said 73 percent of materials and services are donated and added that

the rest is a combined fund raising effort between the care provider and HomeAid Colorado.

"We usually do better and then the care provider keeps the extra funds," said Brayman.

Currently, the organization works primarily on transitional housing which Brayman defined as housing for people who need a temporary residence while they work on putting pieces of their life back together.

"We build shelters so that we can get more people off the streets and into shelters," added Brayman.

The organization recently completed a project in Boulder where they built a tri-plex family shelter for the Emergency Family Assistance Association.

The program has gotten so much attention that a 2004 project in Arvada was featured on popular ABC reality television series, "Extreme Makeover." The show works with contractors and builders to build or refurbish homes for people who have been disadvantaged.

The project in Arvada built a duplex for the Colorado Horse and Families network.

"[Extreme Makeover] did over the

top stuff like they built a basketball court and community center," said Brayman.

HomeAid Colorado, however, handled all the details like finding builders, donations and care providers for the episode which aired in February of last year.

In June, HomeAid Colorado will begin work for the Third Way Center, a care provider for mentally ill youth. They will build four units and 32 beds.

"I consider myself outside of the building industry and the work has been very enlightening," said Brayman. "I thoroughly enjoy my job."