

June 24, 2001

Section: NEWS

COLUMN

DIGEST

Edition: CITY FINAL

Page: A02

Column:INSIDER

Nazarene youths build goodwill on trip

JOHN STRAUSS

Any house gets tired after a while. Live in one for 48 years like Jane Mindach and see for yourself.

Her Eastside home needed paint. A wooden fence sagged with age, and her concrete driveway was crumbling.

So she was glad when volunteers from the Church of the Nazarene, in town for a 10-day convention, offered to help with repairs. At one point, on a hot morning last week when it was uncomfortable to stand outside, much less work construction, she was speechless.

"I glanced over and saw all the people who were working at my house, and that shook me up and made me cry," she said.

"It's just such a wonderful thing to think that people would do that."

She's 82 years old. She raised five children, lost her first husband to a heart attack, married again and was widowed again. She still works as a kindergarten classroom assistant with Indianapolis Public Schools, helping teach long after most people would have retired.

"I've always worked with children, and that's what's helped keep me young."

It figures that somebody who loves young people so much would be helped so much by children on a mission.

That's who most of the church volunteers were in the "One Heart, Many Hands" program at her house last week. They put in a new driveway, shored up her fence, painted and made other repairs.

"They're just lovely. They're great people," she said. "You always hear what the bad kids are doing. You never hear about the good kids."

Her home was one of 130 houses that were helped. The supervisor on the driveway job was Dave McGaffey, a 28-year-old church youth pastor from Iowa City, Iowa, who has experience working with concrete.

It's kind of a challenge to teach beginners this trade, but the volunteers are eager. They're probably saving Mindach more than \$5,000. It was a way of saying thanks for the hospitality of the folks in Indianapolis.

McGaffey watched the tears come to her eyes.

"I thought that was just an answer to me -- that yeah, this is where we're supposed to be," he said.

Lake Monroe Mellencamps

We've gotten a good look inside John Mellencamp's home on Lake Monroe, thanks to this month's Architectural Digest.

Mellencamp and his wife, Elaine, bought the 56-acre property five years ago. The singer, just finishing his 17th album, tells the magazine that creative acts all begin in the same place.

"Whether you're writing a song or a story, or painting on a blank canvas, or decorating an empty house, you start with nothing and you try to make beauty."

Insider runs Sunday, Monday, Wednesday and Friday. John Strauss appears on WIBC-AM (1070) on Mondays at 5:50 p.m., WTHR-TV (Channel 13) on Tuesdays at 5:15 p.m., and on WTPI-FM (107.9) on Thursdays at 7:30 a.m. Contact Strauss at (317) 444-6208 or via e-mail at john.strauss@starnews.com

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