

NEWSLETTER FALL 2010

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FINISHING THE CONLEY HOUSE

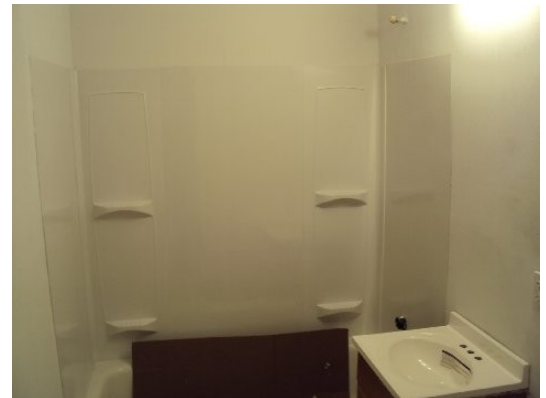
A finished product is great. We had a great deal of help from Bethel Church of Houston, Crosspoint and West University Baptist Churches, Team Effort, Generation 1, and members of our own Gateway House. In less than two months, it was Extreme Makeover: Agape Edition. We converted a duplex into a single family home and updated the interior. The process involved stripping floors, removing carpet, tearing out drywall, installing insulation, hanging new drywall, removing a staircase, extending floor joists, connecting appliances, laying the ductwork for air conditioning, re-wiring, framing windows and doors, hanging doors, painting and replacing flooring. I especially want to thank Courtney Gay, Paul Herndon, and Levi. Through their help, Agape received both the materials and the installation of new flooring throughout the house. This was amazing!!

For the first year of operation, seven Mission Year interns live in and minister from the Conley House.

Through hospitality and outreach, they demonstrate the love of Christ to our neighbors in the community. Every year thereafter, inner city young adults in the Gateway Program will occupy Conley House. The project is a threefold win for Agape. First, the house establishes permanency in the neighborhood. Second, the house is like a living endowment, saving us rent costs



Bathroom before



Bathroom After

Continued on page 2

Agape Board of Directors

Rick Rodekohl *Chairman*

Leia Carpenter *Treasurer*

Donna Sims *Secretary*

Del Blom

Rebecca Larkin

Chip Johnson

Jason Mercer

Douglas Roberts

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FINISHING THE CONLEY HOUSE cont.

and housing residential staff. Third, a house connects volunteers with Agape and the neighborhood while working side by side on a physical project. If your church would like to explore a partnership with Agape on a house in Third Ward, contact Kirk Craig at 713-658-1001.



NEW FACES IN AGAPE

Two years ago, staff meetings consisted of David and Kirk, which meant everything that Agape needed to coordinate or accomplish required at least one of them to be present.

Agape has happily transitioned to the next phase of growth by adding four new staff members: Neil Chowdhury, Emily DeLong, Sean Stewart, and Jonathan Steele. Each brings unique talents and experiences. Neil

serves as the office and business manager, which entails our insurance, accounting, check writing, purchasing, and some HR functions. Neil's service to Agape releases other staff to focus on direct service programs to the neighborhood. Emily and Sean serve as resident ministry leaders at the women's and men's Gateway Houses. By living with Agape's young adults, each one impacts the home environment in which habits, spirituality, and relationships take root. Additionally, Emily brings an architecture degree with a community design emphasis. As Agape builds more partnerships for community action, Emily's experience will inform and assist our strategy and implementation. Sean has experience working at a camp for troubled youth, and he is pursuing on a degree in child development. After one year as Mission Year intern with Agape, Sean now directs the Backyard Bible Club. Jonathan and his wife Taryn moved into the Third Ward last year and have been serving God faithfully through neighboring, gardening, and leading youth Bible studies. Jonathan has worked in church planting in Spain and continues to his pastoral studies through Fuller Theological Seminary's distance learning program. As urban missionaries, Emily, Sean and Jonathan each fundraise their salaries through personal support letters, which you can read on their staff pages. God has blessed Agape with talented and passionate staff, and we eagerly anticipate the growth ahead. Read more about all of our staff at

www.agapedevelopment.org/about/staff.



From L to R: Kirk, Emily, David, Sean, Neil, and Jonathan

SPECIAL THANKS TO A VOLUNTEER

The Agape Family deeply appreciates the service of all volunteers because they are indispensable to the effectiveness of Agape. However, I'd like to recognize one volunteer in particular: Harry Craig who served as project manager and general contractor for our house renovation. After closing on the Conley House in late July, Harry began work with a September 3rd deadline. Along with personally swinging hammers and hanging dry wall, he took on the tasks of recruiting volunteers; coordinating on-site workers, sub-contractors, and supplies; connecting utilities; and one of the biggest hurdles, overcoming city permitting issues. He worked at the house five to six days per week, and logged more hours than any three other volunteers combined. As my dad, he has served as a daily standard for work-ethic and servant leadership. A young man from Gateway House worked an entire day with him, and he remarked, "Kirk, yo' dad go hard!" I knew the young man saw a glimpse of the man who shaped me by his relentless energy to complete a task, in spite of fatigue and setbacks. I cannot imagine learning sacrifice, hard work, perseverance, and service without his example, and I want every son and daughter of Third Ward to have a father that "go hard." On behalf of Agape staff and Board, I thank God for men like my dad Harry Craig, because those men make the difference.



Harry and Kirk

By Kirk Craig

SOUTH COAST MEN'S RETREAT

Fatherlessness leads the list of poverty causes in America today. Fatherlessness was one many discussion topics at the first annual South Coast Men's Retreat in Biloxi, MS. Agape brought eight young men from the Gateway House and the Third Ward community, Psalm 23 Ministries from Atlanta brought 15 men, and 7 participants were local to Biloxi. The basketball tournament attracted most of the participants, and Agape's own Carl Winn won the Christ-like character award. Additionally, the young men experienced God through devotions, worship, and fellowship with peers who face the similar challenges and temptations. One Agape member received a strong word of exhortation about his attitude and life choices. Since that retreat, he has expressed true conviction patterns of sin in his life. Keep these young men from Third Ward in your prayers as they seek to defy the odds and lead a life pleasing to God.



