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Milliken workers pitch in to give Glenn Springs boys a friendlier place to live

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Published: Friday, June 27, 2008 at 9:30 a.m.
Last Modified: Friday, June 27, 2008 at 10:36 a.m.



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Volunteers from Milliken, including Anne-Marie Neiser, left front, work on landscaping around the new facilities at Glenn Springs Academy in Pauline, Thursday afternoon, 6-25-08. Around 75 Milliken volunteers are helping five area United Way agencies.

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- [Glenn Springs Academy](#)

Swinging sledgehammers, slinging shovels and dripping sweat, about 25 Milliken employees teamed up Thursday in a landscaping effort at three soon-to-be open cabins at Glenn Springs Academy.

Michael Raney, CEO of Glenn Springs Academy since 2003, said the new cabins are part of an independent living program. The nonprofit, which was called the Spartanburg Boys' Home until September 2007, now houses 32 boys who were rescued from abusive homes. The cabins were first placed in December, and the group hopes to move into them in August.

"The whole project is the culmination of a lot of different groups coming together to create a better environment," Raney said. "No one person gave everything, but everyone gave something."

GSA Director of Development Kyle Boyles said Chip Smith of Blue Ridge Log Cabins donated one and a half of the cabins and said assistance from several in the community is helping the home better serve its boys at the 48-acre site where the Glenn Springs Hotel once stood.

"Groups are making sure that our guys are not living in second-class housing," Boyles said. "People say 'This is as nice as where I live or nicer.' "

Todd Danielson and Will McWhorter spearheaded Milliken's effort at GSA. The group continued a shrubbery planting project started by Leadership Spartanburg and constructed a steel-frame, gravel sidewalk to cover the hard red clay with a more domesticated appearance.

McWhorter praised the help that his group received from other companies, thanking Craig Bishop of Bishop Lawn and Landscape for the design and advice, Kelvin Fortenberry at Roebuck Wholesale Nursery and Landscaping and Ed McAllister at Southern Mulch for "big breaks" on prices.

The Milliken crew was part of about 75 workers from its Chemical Division Plastic Additive Business who spent the afternoon at five community sites. Milliken volunteers also redesigned some bedrooms at SAFE Homes-Rape Crisis Coalition, did some painting for Christmas in Action and the Upstate Family Resource Center and organized children's games at The Children Shelter.

Milliken's volunteers, who were on company time, were directed to the various organizations by the United Way of the Piedmont, which recently announced a 2007-08 fiscal fundraising campaign of \$4.9 million.

Milliken raised more than \$100,000 in that span and wanted to participate in team-building volunteer work.

"Milliken recently wrapped up a successful monetary campaign, and this completes an important component of our overall campaign," Milliken spokeswoman Melissa Evans said in a statement.

Transitional program

Boyles said the independent living program at Glenn Springs Academy will be designed to help the program's recent high school graduates as they prepare to obtain jobs or even pursue college. The program will provide some structure as the boys transition to men.

Boyles has several other projects planned. In the meantime, he will continue to be "a fun uncle" to the residents.

"I have the best job in the world," Boyles said. "There's not many jobs where you get 10 to 12 big hugs a day from people who really mean it."