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## Elbow grease applies for rebuilding community

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**Post-Tribune correspondent**

CHESTERTON -- Hundreds of alarms clocks went off early all over town Saturday morning, rousing volunteers for the 12th annual Duneland Rebuilding Together.

"We try to have a sunup to sundown workday. There are about 450 volunteers this year," local Rebuilding Together president Heather Ennis said.

With last-minute deletions and additions, this year's effort covered nine houses and three community projects in Chesterton and Porter.

"Welcome to a day of making our community a better place to live. We will do over \$150,000 worth of work today," Ennis said at the breakfast for volunteers at Chesterton High School before they headed out to job sites in their cars and Duneland school buses.

She said in addition to material and monetary donations, each project was funded by a sponsorship of \$1,000 or \$2,000 from local businesses and banks, civic groups, and churches.

"I'll spend the day traveling around, making sure everybody's keeping things tidy, using power tools properly, and following safety procedures," safety coordinator Kevin Murray, a Chesterton volunteer firefighter, said.

Work crews hit the ground running under lowering clouds, rumbles of thunder, and scattered raindrops, but heavy weather reported in Illinois stayed away into the afternoon.

Tom Kuehl, president of the Roataract Club at Purdue University North Central, headed the gang raking, planting and painting at the Duneland YMCA.

"We had four members helping last year, but this year PNC has 30 at all the sites, including the dean's leadership group and the Contractor Club. We're just trying to do our part."

Team captain Joyce Lantz, a YMCA board member, said they would be landscaping around the building and getting the pool ready for summer.

Perhaps the most active site was the home of an elderly woman at the corner of Indiana Avenue and Fifth Street, with two men putting in a drainage pipe, four more replacing a fence and laying down garden rock and edging, and others doing plumbing repairs in the kitchen and bathroom.

"She'd been filling a pan in the bathtub and taking it back to the kitchen to wash her dishes. This is the most rewarding part, after two days of planning so we can get everything done in one day," team captain Brian Erxleben said.

Volunteer coordinator Dianna Gill said each site also had an "ambassador" as liaison between the organization and the homeowner and a go-fer to fetch supplies from Hopkins Ace Hardware in Chesterton and the Michigan City Menard's, which gave discounts on project items.

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