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Angels give home a heavenly makeover

By: JAMES A. FUSSELL

As Harvey and Kathryn Maxey watched from a car, a horde of volunteer construction workers swarmed over their 100-year-old Rosedale bungalow like ants on a sandwich.

On the porch. In the yard. On the roof. Ninety works, maybe more, participated in a \$20,000 renovation blitzkrieg that transformed the couple's home from sad to sensational in a single day.

"Amazing," 90-year-old Kathryn Maxey said as volunteers repaired, restored or replaced virtually everything for free. "Just amazing."

City Vision Ministries, a Kansas City, Kan., community development corporation, chose the Maxeys' home for its first "March With City Vision" renovation day. The agency is expanding services in the Rosedale area and soon will begin renovating four other area homes.

Daniel Denney, owner of DR Denney Enterprises, was just one of the many City Vision subcontractors who donated time and materials to the project.

"It's exciting to know that we're doing this for someone who can't afford it," he said. "I used to be the same way. Now that the tables are turned, I just wanted to give something back."

The Maxeys' house got the full treatment – new paint, roof, gutters, furnace, kitchen, flooring, front door, landscaping, and concrete work, and repairs to the porch, windows, wall and ceilings.

"How 'bout this?" said the president of the Hilltop Neighborhood Association, Wilma Trial, as she leaned into a car and held Mr. Maxey's hand.

Kathryn Maxey beamed an enormous smile.

"We just want to thank everyone who had a hand in it," she said. "I'd like to shake the hands of each and every one of them."

The house's concrete steps were crumbling, its roof leaked, its front door leaked cold air, and its furnace was more than 50 years old.

Kathryn Maxey was born in the house on Lloyd Street in the early 1900s. The couple have lived together in Rosedale for as long as they've been married – 69 years.

Harvey Maxey worked on a railroad Pullman car out of Union Station for 26 years. Kathryn Maxey worked as a ward clerk at the University of Kansas Medical Center for 23 years. The couple has outlived both of their children, and has one granddaughter.

As an air compressor hummed in the background and the smoky smell of hamburgers hung in the chilly air, Victor Ellison, a carpenter at D&C Construction in Kansas City explained why he was there.

“Well, we’re not over there fighting in the war, so I guess we wish we could do something over here,” he said.

Craig Moncrief, City Vision’s construction manager, pulled the project together. He secured subcontractors to donate a day. Lowe’s is the group’s national sponsor.

City Vision exists to help the community Moncrief said.

Harvey Maxey is glad it does. “There’s got to be a God somewhere,” he said with a trembling voice and grateful eyes. “And may God bless you all.”