

# Community lends a hand to rehab Gifford home

By [Janet Begley](#)

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Photo by Frank Kimmel

FRANK KIMMEL • correspondent GIFFORD - Brenda Wheeler, left, with Vero Radiology, and Christina Bantz(cq), with World Changers, scrape old paint from the eaves of Colley's house. Madelyn(cq) Sears, Colley's daughter, works at the radiology company and several staff members turned out to help with the repairs. Bantz is with World Changers, which fielded about 100 volunteers to help with the work.



Photo by Frank Kimmel

FRANK KIMMEL • correspondent GIFFORD - Louise Colley, right, and Diane Pickhardt embrace Saturday morning in Gifford shortly before repairs to Colley's house begin. Pickhardt, housing coordinator for the Indian River Community Development Department, came to lend some hands-on help with the home repairs. "This is something personal," she said. photo taken on May, 17, 2008

GIFFORD — Louise Colley sat across the street from 4401 25th Avenue on Saturday morning and shook her head.

"Amazing, just amazing," she said as she watched 150 volunteers sweep, paint, hammer and rake the small place that the widowed great-grandmother has called home for more than 50 years.

Saturday's work party was just the first of four scheduled for Colley's house, which was destroyed in 2004 hurricanes. First up on the list Saturday was rewiring the home, along with yard clean-up and landscaping.

Joel Dramis, a building official with the city of Port St. Lucie, said he volunteers on projects like Colley's because it gives him a chance to reach out to the community.

"I feel that the more you give out, the more you get back," said Dramis, as he helped another volunteer, Joe Ferreira, on the wiring for Colley's kitchen. "Whenever I can make a person's day brighter by helping out, I try to do that."

Dramis said that the wiring at the Colley house was the worst he's ever seen.

"It's pretty bad," said Dramis. "There's a lot here to do, but this is somebody's home and we're going to fix it."

Colley's problems started with hurricanes Frances and Jeanne in 2004, adding her to the ranks of people needing storm repairs. But the contractors she hired proved not to be licensed, abandoned the job and left her with a home that was uninhabitable.

"For five years, I've been out of my home," said Colley, who has been living with family and friends while working as a companion for the elderly. "People would come by, say they could fix it, and then they would disappear with my money."

The work party on Saturday was coordinated by Every Dream Has a Price, Inc., a local nonprofit group that tackles projects like Colley's, where deserving people can get some much-needed, donated assistance. The volunteer group is led by Julianne Price, a Florida Health Department worker and Dennis Witherow, president of Regatta Construction of Vero Beach.

Price said that this is the second rehab project the group has undertaken this year. The first venture involved repairs at Helen Ausby's home on 35th Avenue that was also ravaged by the hurricanes. In 2007, the group took on an "Extreme Challenge," where two new houses were built for deserving homeowners over a weekend.

"You can see the need out there," said Price. "Somebody crosses your path and there's just no question that you're going to have to find a way to help them." The nonprofit organization builds, rehabs and revitalizes homes in needy parts of the community. The group, at 414 Concha Drive in Sebastian, needs volunteers and donations to continue its projects. Skilled volunteers such as plumbers, electricians, carpenters, roofers and painters are especially needed. For information, contact Julianne Price at (772) 713-6883 or log on to [www.everydreamhasaprice.com](http://www.everydreamhasaprice.com) to make an online donation.

