

City and volunteers spruce up bungalow in time for 17th annual BungalowFest



Charlie Frago, Times Staff Writer

Wednesday, November 4, 2015 1:51pm

ST. PETERSBURG — Erma Hannah needed some help.

But the retired school cafeteria cook didn't ask for anyone to paint her home and perform other repairs to bring it up to code.

Instead, a public-private partnership of neighborhood volunteers and a city team of fixer-uppers reached out to her and spruced up her home for free this year.

"I appreciate everything they did," said Hannah, 67, sitting in the living room of her 1935 bungalow at 2925 Second Ave. N in Historic Kenwood.

Living on a fixed income made it difficult to pay for the repairs herself, but a city codes enforcement inspector alerted the neighborhood team or "n-team" at City Hall, which works out of Neighborhood Affairs administrator Mike Dove's office.

The city pays for the repairs after determining that the homeowner is not physically or financially able to fix up their home on their own, Dove said.

The city coordinated with the Historic Kenwood Partnership and Youth Build, a nonprofit that works with at-risk youths on building projects. Neighborhood churches like First United Methodist and The Foundry also participated.

Youth Build built a wooden deck and the Kenwood partnership painted Hannah's house. Another Kenwood volunteer group planted flowers and did other landscaping.

Such public-private coordination has worked well, Dove said. Last year, 160 properties received help from the "n-team," which usually spends between \$800 and \$1,200 on a property. Often, corporations donate time or materials.

"The idea is to stimulate volunteerism," said Dove, who started the program more than 20 years ago.

La Auna Lewis, Historic Kenwood Partnership's chairwoman, said her group has worked on seven homes this year.

"It's been a snowball effect. Entire blocks have taken up the routine," she said.

People who have had their homes repaired often will volunteer to help on other properties, but it's not a requirement, Lewis said.

The group has started to expand its efforts to North Kenwood and across Central Avenue to the Palmetto Park neighborhood.

Kenwood real estate values have skyrocketed in recent years as restored bungalows on tree-lined streets have become a destination neighborhood.

It's a far cry from the struggling neighborhood that started BungalowFest 17 years ago, said Bill Heyen, former president of the neighborhood associations.

Recently, homes have been selling for \$350,000 and higher. The neighborhood became trendy about 10 years ago, took a hit in the recession, but is smoking hot again, Heyen said.

He expects about 700 people to buy tickets for the home tours.

"Many people take the tour and end up buying a home," Heyen said.

They won't get a chance to see the inside of Hannah's house. She's not comfortable with "people off the street" poking through her house. And she has no plans to sell.

The tour will stop on the outside of her house to showcase the rehab work, Heyen said.

This year's BungalowFest is Saturday. Eight homes will be open to people who buy tickets (\$15 pre-sale, \$20 on Saturday on sale in Seminole Park). Three home artist studios will also be on the tour. Last year, the City Council approved a zoning overlay that allowed artist studios in homes in the neighborhood.

Contact Charlie Frago at cfrago@tampabay.com or (727) 893-8459. Follow @CharlieFrago.

City and volunteers spruce up bungalow in time for 17th annual BungalowFest 11/04/15
Photo reprints | Article reprints

© 2015 Tampa Bay Times

1

Tweet

8

9



Commenting Guidelines



Abuse Policy

Articles and offers from around the Web

Ads by Adblade