

SENIOR LIFESTYLES

'Dad'll Do' tackles the 'impossible' in homes

Parish handymen respond to needs

By Paul Fredette
Catholic News Service

ASHEVILLE, N.C. — "Dad'll do it." Those words — often said, hardly noticed — have a different meaning if you are an elderly or arthritic homeowner or a single mother, faced with chores that you don't have the ability or the experience to do.

That need led a young woman to suggest that her retired father, a member of St. Eugene Parish in Asheville, start up a small business using his skills to do "odd jobs" for people. All the red tape, budgets, schedules, personnel and insurance such a venture would involve put him off, but the idea was appealing.

The idea again surfaced at a meeting of the men's club of St. Eugene's. Before long, not a business, not a program, not even a committee, but a simple effort called Dad'll Do was underway.

"There is no president, no chairman of the board, there are no meetings and no money — so no one gets upset," says the chief organizer of Dad'll Do, who, like the other men involved, prefers to re-

main anonymous.

"We know our limitations," he added. "We don't bite off more than we can chew" or take on work that requires licensed professionals. And, he said, "we're all retired, so we hardly ever arrive at a job site before 10 a.m."

For two years now, Dad'll Do has been getting referrals, some from parish ministers. Quietly and without fanfare, eight "retired guys" and "George's pickup" have managed to respond to at least 30 requests for help.

The home of a disabled woman with severe allergies was rid of an infestation of bees. In the kitchen of a homebound diabetic, linoleum was replaced (and the floor repaired and sink reconstructed before the job was done). Elsewhere, a person anxious about her car's strange noises was relieved to be told it was her muffler and where to get it fixed.

The basement of an elderly couple about to sell their home was cleaned, with the contents sorted and disposed of between Goodwill Industries and the landfill. New runners for old replacement windows were obtained free of charge and installed for a widow living far in the country.

"It keeps us off the street," says one of the Dads with a self-deprecation that cannot mask the true satisfaction he obtains from helping those who cannot help

themselves.

Lately, water-damaged ceilings have been repaired and repainted, porch railings reset in concrete, lawn furniture scraped and repainted, and sliding doors reset on runners. Some jobs — like installing rods and hanging draperies, or changing washers and wall plugs — seem simple, until one realizes that a pair of arthritic hands is seldom sufficient for even the "easiest" task.

Some question the motives of the Dads. "Whenever you go into the marketplace and offer a service for free, people inevitably ask, 'Why are you doing that?'" one said.

The question provides an opportunity for a low-key, no-frills witness to the Gospel. Not by priests or nuns but by a civil engineer, a quality control supervisor, a technical services manager, a career military man and others, all over 60 years old.

"Every parish should assess the need for a group like this," said one Dad.

"The highlight of my life will not be going into a nursing home," he added. "The longer I can stay out of one, the better off I'm going to be."

"If such simple jobs can enable people who are otherwise capable of independent living to stay out of nursing homes a little bit longer," he said, "then let's screw in some light bulbs."

Area aging office plans seniors' bowling tourney

The Monroe County Office for the Aging and Marcel's Olympic Bowl have scheduled the 22nd annual Senior Citizen Singles Bowling Tournament and Luncheon for 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Wednesday, May 8, at the bowling center, 1350 Scottsville Road.

The tournament is open to all Monroe County residents 60 years or older. Prizes will be awarded for both handicapped and scratch bowling.

Entry fee for the event is \$5.75 per person. The fee covers three games of bowling, shoe rental, and a coffee and doughnut social hour. An optional luncheon will cost an additional \$3.25.

Preregistration is required by May 1. Registration forms are available at area bowling centers and at the Monroe County Office for the Aging, 375 Westfall Road.

For information, call 716/274-7823 Tuesdays, Wednesdays or Thursdays.

Groups offer education on hearing loss, devices

The Rochester chapter of Self Help for Hard of Hearing People (SHHH), Congregations in Ministry with the Elderly (COME) and Eliminating the Sound Barrier have mounted a joint effort called "One Voice" to help educate religious communities about the impact of hearing loss on people's spiritual lives and devices available to make communication more accessible.

It offers SHHH volunteers available to address hearing loss and strategies for coping with it.

One Voice also offers a team that can provide information about the most efficient and economical approach to purchasing and/or maintaining assistance devices and systems.

For information call COME at 716/454-1192, or Patricia Irr of SHHH at 271-1587.

WIN A DJ FOR YOUR NEXT EVENT!

By correctly answering this...

Name the famous tenor who sang with the Boys Choir of Harlem in Central Park.

Last Month's Winner: Nancy Tschieder of Webster correctly identified Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy of Company B as the Patty, Maxine and LaVerne wartime song re-recorded by Bette Midler.

Answer _____

Name _____

Address _____

City, State Zip _____

Telephone _____

RULES: ALL ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED BY MIDNIGHT, APRIL 22nd. Random drawing of correct entries will be held April 23rd by Catholic Courier Representatives. Entries must be returned to: Courier DJ Trivia, PO Box 24379, Rochester, NY 14624-0379. Winner will be notified by mail. Prize is a certificate for two free hours of DJ service at the recipient's convenience and must be redeemed within one year of issue date. Subject to availability. Prize is not exchangeable for cash.



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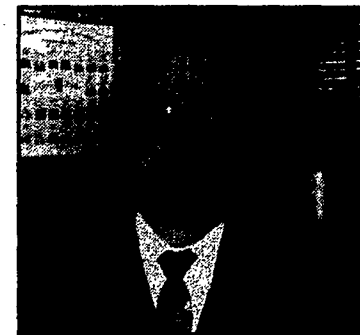
Call to arrange a no-obligation visit and complimentary lunch.

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Thoughts to Consider



EDWIN SULEWSKI
Funeral Director

What are some ways to help a child who has lost a parent?

First it is important to make sure the child is honestly included in all the information and planning. This means being honest about the death and answering the child's questions. It also means allowing but not forcing children to go to the funeral or visitation as they wish. Secondly, a child needs love and security. Let a child know they will be cared for, take an interest in schoolwork and include them in play. Some children resent being pressured to accept burdens beyond their reach. "Taking over for Dad or Mom" may be too much responsibility. Naturally, changes will occur but a child needs time and help in adjusting to them.

We have a new organ and have remodeled.

SCHAUMAN-SULEWSKI
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