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112 Students gather in McDonough to renovate 17 homes in 3 days

MCDONOUGH, Ga. (June 24, 2009)—More than 100 student volunteers, flooded the Lemon Place neighborhood of McDonough June 25-27 to help complete 17 Fuller Center for Housing home renovations. One of those homes is an "extreme renovation" project.

The 112 middle school, high school and college students from across Georgia and Alabama are coming together as part of the River of Life Program of the United Methodist Church's North Georgia Conference. Each year, River of Life organizes work camps for their youth. This year the group is volunteering with The Fuller Center of Greater Atlanta.

Brittany Merkel, 15, is coming with the Northstar Youth group from Kennesaw, Ga. She'd heard this kind of project could be life-changing.

"I think giving back is the best quality anybody can have and I'm glad to be apart of this trip," Merkel said. "I hope I will be able to help impact somebody's life."

When River of Life coordinators contacted Mark Galey, president and co-founder of the Fuller Center of Greater Atlanta, they asked for projects near their host church Wesley Way UMC in McDonough. He set out to make it happen.

"We just started knocking on doors and telling people about the work of the Fuller Center," he said. Eventually he found 16 homeowners who qualified for the Greater Blessing program of the Fuller Center for Housing.

The Greater Blessing program allows for smaller-scale restorations to take place, without mortgages or loans. Each homeowner is given a Great Blessing Box containing

envelopes that allow, but don't obligate them to send donations to "pay it forward" to help other families in need.

Among the 16 renovation jobs is an "extreme renovation" for Lillie Miller, a 70-year-old widow who has lived in her home in McDonough for 54 years. She ran out of resources for upkeep and today it suffers serious termite infestation and roof damage.

"The floors were so rotted you could step through the floors and go all the way down to the dirt," Galey said. "You can see the transformation in her life—her spirit being restored along with her house."

The build site is located on the corner of Old Griffin Road and George Lemon Dr. in McDonough, Ga., 30253. A Fuller Center Banner will be visible to mark the site.

About The Fuller Center of Greater Atlanta

The Fuller Center of Greater Atlanta, faith-driven and Christ-centered, promotes collaborative and innovative partnerships with individuals, organizations, corporations, and religious groups of all faiths in an unrelenting quest to provide adequate shelter for all people in need in the Greater Atlanta area. To find out more visit www.atlantafullercenter.org.

About The Fuller Center for Housing

The Fuller Center for Housing, founded in 2005 by Habitat for Humanity founders Millard and Linda Fuller, is a non-profit, ecumenical Christian housing ministry dedicated to eliminating poverty housing worldwide. For more information visit www.fullercenter.org.

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