

# An act of kindness

TWENTY VOLUNTEERS SPEND TIME, BIT OF SWEAT TO SPRUCE UP YOUTH HAVEN CAMPUS



Volunteers from Goldman Sachs Community Team Works, Wounded Warriors and Quarles & Brady came out to Youth Haven to beautify the campus.

By Laura Philbert  
Citizen Contributor

A day spent sprucing up the campus of Youth Haven, Collier County's only homeless shelter for traumatized youth, renewed the old adage that small things can make a world of difference.

Twenty volunteers from various walks of life such as bankers, attorneys, accountants and wounded war veterans recently tackled several projects to beautify the children's and teen's activity areas on the Youth Haven campus. The projects ran the gamut from refurbishing a decrepit basketball court to planting colorful beds of flowers, installing garden-area pavers, assembling five brand new picnic tables and doing interior painting.

"These are areas where children congregate for recreation or group therapy, or private areas where they can go to de-escalate with a mentor or peer," said Jinx Liggett, executive director of Youth Haven.

The most immediate beneficiaries of the hard work are the 19 children currently residing on campus, and the children who are receiving care and support at Youth Haven's Children and Family Counseling Center. The organization provides services to more than 2,400 children and family members annually.

According to Liggett, experiencing acts of kindness is foreign to most of these children and becomes a powerful teaching tool.

"I had a child walk the grounds with me because he couldn't believe it — that these volunteers would 'come to help us.' We are so appreciative of the positives for the children and the wonderful improvements to the campus," Liggett said.

Naples Children & Education Foundation (NCEF) — founders of Naples Winter Wine Festival — and Goldman Sachs' Community TeamWorks in Miami partnered to design the Youth Haven project. This is the fourth year Goldman Sachs CTW in Miami has completed a special project for underprivileged and at-risk children in Collier County. This year, in addition to its own employees, the Goldman Sachs CTW in Miami recruited volunteers from Quarles & Brady and Wounded Warriors for the day of labor.

"We are all so grateful for this united, inspiring effort at Youth Haven," said Anne Welsh McNulty, NCEF trustee and chair of the 2014 Naples Winter Wine Festival. "Each year has meant a significant transformation for a children's charity."

Todd Foege, a consultant to NCEF, helped organize the day of labor.

"They were an inspiring group of volunteers," Foege said. "One young man from Wounded Warriors is a double amputee, and he worked tirelessly. He never quit and never complained. He stumbled from fatigue a few times, but kept asking what else he could do to help. And that's just one example

of the tremendous sweat equity everyone put into the project."

Community TeamWorks is Goldman Sachs' global volunteer initiative that allows its people to take a day out of the office and spend it volunteering with local non-profit organizations. In 2012, more than 25,000 Goldman Sachs people from 48 offices around the world partnered with more than 950 non-profit organizations on a diverse array of community service projects.

Youth Haven, a nonprofit organization, is Collier County's only residential emergency shelter for boys and girls ages 6-17 who have been removed from their homes due to abuse, neglect or abandonment. Youth Haven also provides an array of home and community-based parenting education, child and substance abuse prevention programs, and onsite and community based emotional and psychological counseling. For more information, visit [www.youthhaven.net](http://www.youthhaven.net).

Naples Children & Education Foundation is dedicated to making a profound and sustaining improvement in the lives of underprivileged and at-risk children in Collier County. Through the Naples Winter Wine Festival, NCEF has raised more than \$110 million since 2001, making it the most successful charity wine auction in the world.

*Laura Philbert is executive assistant and human resources coordinator at Youth Haven.*