

Charity organizations helping children

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DENVER - Thousands of people drive by the big brick building near Colorado and Colfax and never even notice it.

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The Denver Children's home have been a safe place for kids in need for 130 years. It is a refuge for those who need it the most. The big brick building is nearly as old as the organization that calls it home.

Executive Director of Development for the Children's Home Rebecca Hea says, "this building is 105 years old and we have a maintenance guy, one person, so we rely completely on volunteers to come in from the community and take care of our kids that are so often forgotten."

That's why she and the kids call Saturday, "unbelievable."

They woke up to the sounds of saws and hammers and voices of volunteers working in every corner of the building.

15-year-old Mike Berg has been staying at the home for 2 months. He said, "To wake up in the morning and hear all the construction, all the people laughing, it's not what you expect around here."

Berg said, "All the kids here I can say have had hard times. We are working hard to get through them."

The kids, ages 8-16, who call it home have suffered the most severe trauma, abuse or neglect. They say they never expected so many people to come spend a day working to help them.

Mike Berg said, "It is so cool. They are just here working hard, doing what they can for the school and it's pretty awesome considering we don't have that much."

More than 35 volunteers landscaped the outside. They spent hours cleaning and organizing the art room, the closets, the storage areas and the garage. They hauled out old broken equipment and furniture - thousands of pounds of it.

Rebecca Hea told them, "you guys rock, you are so awesome, 3700 pounds that is way cool!"

Johnny Hurley is 14-years-old. He has lived at the Denver Children's home for 2 years. He said, "If it wasn't for them this place would probably look like a junk yard." He said, "I've never known

anyone who would work so hard just for us."

Rebecca Hea said, "Often times what happens with volunteers is that we'll have a group and they'll say we'll have like 30 and then 3 come. Today the freedom foundation were turning people away because they had so big of turnout they brought a bus. They actually brought a bus full of people."

Hea says, that means a lot to the kids who very often feel like they are forgotten.

Mark Duke is the executive Director of the Freedom Foundation which is a children's charity that works to support families and children in need.

Duke said, "One of the biggest things we want to do is to show the kids that we love them and that it's unconditional love so we are giving to them expecting nothing in return. That is what the Freedom Foundation is all about."

Andre Buckner is with the Greg Buckner Foundation who also helped with the volunteer effort. He said, "If they can see that people do care about them and are making efforts to improve their lives then they'll step up and do more for themselves as well." Some students from the School of Mines Blue Key Honor Society also volunteered.

Hurley said, "It just feels really good to know they are helping our school and our group home. It feels good that they are helping us."

The kids at the Children's Home and all of the volunteers say it is a day they will never forget.

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