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Church sponsors Mission Possible

By **MEGHAN DURBAK**
Tribune staff writer

Sarah Lubben attempted to remain in the shade as she scaled the roof of the two-story house.

With a bucket of bleach in one hand and a brush in the other, she went to work removing any signs of mold she could find.

"I was actually sort of worried about this week," the 17-year-old said. "You would think coming here and working all day would be boring. But it's actually the most fun I've had all summer."

Lubben was one of 70 teens and adults working on the Mission Possible VI Servant Event, sponsored by Lutheran Church of Our Redeemer. Volunteers come from Ohio, Illinois, Missouri and Michigan.

The Mission Possible volunteers busied themselves renovating 13 homes in Kokomo. About 15 of the volunteers spent Thursday pouring concrete in Holly and Justin DeWitt's back yard.

Seated in her motorized wheel chair, Holly expressed her gratitude.

The Mission Possible team poured a new foundation for her garage, rebuilt the deck and extended a sidewalk allowing Holly to move from her house to the garage and front porch without struggling.

"To be able to get from the house to the garage without flipping my chair — what a concept," Holly said.

Born with a brittle bone disease, Holly has been in and out of wheelchairs most of her life. When she and her husband purchased their current home, they didn't realize how difficult it would be to make the house handicap accessible.

"We were looking for a fixer-upper in a nice neighborhood so our son could go to a good school," Holly explained.

After refinancing their home to fix the initial problems, little money was left to fix the garage or make sidewalks.

With the new improvements, Holly will be able to move around with more ease and keep up with her 5-year-old son, Sebastian.

"I'm hoping this is the start of a new beginning," she said.

The youth group didn't stop with regular construction. They also set about improving the facade of the home, painting, scraping and washing windows.

Kathryn Lowden, 17, could be seen hanging out of Holly and Justin's upstairs bathroom window. A bucket of paint in one hand and brush in the other, she adjusted herself into a position where she could paint the trim.

Spotches of brown paint marked her arms and legs.

"The paint drips on you," she said. "You have to lay down so you can get the roof hanger."

It was Lowden's second time helping with the mission.

"I love doing this, going out and doing mission work," she said.

Kathy Tucker, project coordinator, said this week-long event helps both the youth and the community.




"This is life changing. It's a living testament to their faith. They are aware of how they can affect their community and they get

Photos



Up high: Elise Sholtis sits on the roof Thursday and paints part of the second story of a home on West Maple Street. She was working with the Lutheran Church of Our Redeemer's Mission Possible project. Volunteers from Redeemer and other Midwest churches came together to complete construction projects for those who could not afford to otherwise. **None/KT photo by Erik Markov** (Click for larger image)

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It also helps homeowners with self esteem and improving their quality of life.

"We do this because we love the lord and it's our way of giving back," Tucker said.

Holly and Justin agree.

"It's like a giant weight has been lifted off our shoulders," Justin said.

"This has really given us a second wind," Holly said. "We don't feel like we're by ourselves anymore."

For more information or to help Mission Possible, call (765) 453-0969.



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