

Clean Sweep: Senior class service project gives spring cleaning new meaning

Written by Deb Egenberger
Friday, 30 March 2012 13:20 -



Students in Brady High School's senior class wanted to do a service project.

In fact, at the beginning of the school year they approached guidance counselor and class advisor Sandy Burke about the idea.

Their intention was to leave their mark on the village before graduating this spring and moving on to bigger things.

They had no idea what they might be getting into.

After long-time Brady resident Earl Ault had a heart attack last fall, he was

flown to Lincoln for a catheterization procedure.

Living conditions in his mobile home along Banner Road south of Brady were not conducive to rehabilitation.

"Honestly, his home was unlivable," said Robert Litzenberger, pastor of the Brady Community Church.

Ault's desire to go home sparked a community effort to clean up his property and get him back in familiar surroundings. In the meantime, Ault stayed with Durl and Helga Anderson in town.

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“There have been a lot of people involved,” Litzenberger said, “but without these kids, I don’t know that we could have pulled this off.”

Water and electrical services were restored to the mobile home earlier this month and Ault gave his blessing to a clean sweep.

That’s where the senior class comes in.

All 17 of them, donning rubber gloves and safety masks, rolled up their sleeves Friday morning to dig in on the biggest cleaning project they’ve ever seen.

Every item in Ault’s home was carried outside on the lawn.

While some of the students helped sort it all, others scrubbed the interior of the house, ceiling to floor and everything in between.

Ault, who has lived in the mobile home nearly all his life, said things simply got away from him.

“You live somewhere all your life and you don’t really notice anything is wrong until someone else decides there is,” he said.

By then, it’s overwhelming.

Ault said he tried to talk Litzenberger out of the cleaning project all together but the community and the class of seniors had other ideas, Litzenberger said.

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Once everything was sorted and cleaned, usable items went back inside.

The rest was bagged and hauled away.

At the end of the day, Ault settled into his clean and safe home, grateful for the chance to relax without unhealthy clutter all around.

The students left with a sense of satisfaction.

“This is a huge project,” Burke said, “bigger than I think any of them even imagined. But human nature took over and they realized that Earl couldn’t live here without their help so they dug in and got the job done. They’re just great kids, all of them.”

It was not a typical service project and Litzenberger said it would not likely have been completed without the class.

“They’re a pretty special bunch of kids,” he said. “They might not clean up their rooms at home but they were willing to come out here and scrub top to bottom. It’s just really neat to see.”

Litzenberger said Ault’s lease on the land runs out this fall and his mobile home will have to be relocated.