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Group helps seniors with home repairs

Written By: [Andrew Cauthen](#) | 7/29/11 | Categorized in: [DeKalb News](#) |



Ellenwood resident Sarah Wyatt, right, talks with Peter Schneider, left, manager of Fix-It Connection, about the repairs on her house. The shingles on the Wyatts' old roof were crumbling and the rotting posts in the carport were being held together with duct tape. Photo by Andrew Cauthen

The roof on the Ellenwood house Sarah and Bill Wyatt have lived in since 1993 was embarrassing.

It had three layers of crumbling shingles. The wood was rotting. The Wyatts even resorted to covering parts of the posts in the carport with duct tape.

"If you saw the roof, it looked like the house should have been condemned," Sarah Wyatt said. "It was terrible."

That was before the roof and posts were replaced by a contractor chosen by Senior Connections, a non-profit organization that serves senior citizens by preparing and delivering 2,500 meals daily; providing 40,000 hours annually of in home care; and operating five DeKalb County senior centers.

Using funding from several sources, Senior Connections also provides home repairs for more than 200 homes.

When Wyatt heard about Senior Connections from a friend last year, she called the organization, but was told there was no money available to help her. Then she received a call from Senior Connections this year informing her that funds were available to cover the approximately \$13,000 to fix her house.

"Now, I'm not going to be embarrassed to invite somebody from my church," Wyatt said. "I've been calling everybody. The workers did a wonderful job"

The home repair programs are "all about keeping seniors independent," said Sally Eggleston, Senior Connection's chief marketing officer.

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Eggleston said her organization began the program when they discovered that seniors needing handyman services or more extensive home repair were getting ripped off and did not know whom to call.

Senior Connections has two home repair programs. In one program, the organization provides the repair services completed by licensed and bonded skilled workers. There is usually a waiting list for this program as funds are limited.

In the other program, called Fix-It Connection, seniors who can afford to pay for repairs can choose from contractors preselected by Senior Connections, which guarantees the work.

"We are able to work with these people to find an outlet to take care of their emergency," said Bonny Robichaud, chief financial officer.

Peter Schneider, manager of Fix-It Connection, said programs benefit seniors who are able to stay in their homes. And the community is benefitted when homes are not abandoned and property values are not lowered.

"It's a huge benefit to the taxpayer," Schneider said. "Sometimes we can't fix everything. But we certainly can help."

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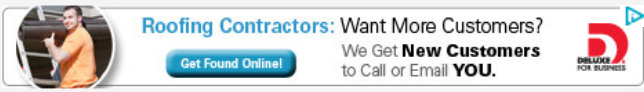

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