



## **Transforming places and lives Rebuilding Together returns to Pacifica**

**By Jean Bartlett**

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On April 28, 2012, the Family and Children's Services building in Palo Alto, home to integrated programs which address the health and human services needs of children, adults, and families in Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties, got a much needed new coat of paint. Same date, heading north on the Peninsula, the inside of the Brisbane Community Center was given a whole new look, as was the park behind the Center and library. In Pacifica, on the same day, a homeowner beamed with happiness as volunteers replaced a rotted fence and retaining wall, dealt with interior mold issues, replaced a ceiling, pumped out long-standing water from under the house and painted the home's entire interior.

These were just three of last year's 67 projects led by Rebuilding Together Peninsula, which mobilized 3500 volunteers in 15 Peninsula cities, to provide free repairs – including painting, weatherization and safety upgrades, plumbing and electrical work, roof repair, roof replacement, wall repair, home and garden cleanup – to 47 homes and 20 community facilities. Rebuilding Together Peninsula (RTP), [www.rebuildingtogetherpeninsula.org](http://www.rebuildingtogetherpeninsula.org), is a nonprofit organization which brings together community groups and corporate sponsors to provide free repair work for low income homeowners as well as nonprofit facilities such as schools, daycare centers and shelters. They are the local affiliate of the national Rebuilding Together network, which began in 1973 under the name "Christmas in April."

This year, on April 27, RTP volunteers and partners will revitalize and rehabilitate 50 homes and 25 community centers for Peninsula neighbors in need. The Boys & Girls Clubs of North San Mateo County, which operates clubs in five locations – three in South City (South San Francisco, Paradise Valley and Sunshine Gardens Elementary School) and two in Pacifica (Pacifica Club on Yosemite Drive and Ingrid B. Lacy Middle School) – will be among the community center recipients.

Sharon Dolan, executive director of the Boys & Girls Clubs of North San Mateo County (NSMC), is a huge fan of Rebuilding Together.

"Almost every year they do some major thing at one of our Clubs," Dolan said, recalling the new kitchen they built three years ago at Paradise Valley. "We love them! They are the main reason why our buildings are still standing!"

Dolan said that the nonprofit's goal for the total 2500 children they serve at their individual sites, is for each child to feel good about themselves.

"Our vision for the kids includes three main things. One is every child has a positive sense of self, and that's the environment we create for the kids. Secondly we focus on academic success. We have homework and tutoring support, quiet homework time and we really involve ourselves in making sure that every child learns to read by third grade. The third thing we focus on is physical activity, every day, keeping in mind each child's interest in group sports or individual fun activities. There is something for everyone."

Dolan noted that the work that RTP does in making their facilities look good and stay in good working order, really adds to the kids feeling of well-being. It's nice to see how much people care.

Pacifican Denise Morris is the Pacifica Area Director for Boys & Girls NSMC. She said that Rebuilding Together Peninsula volunteers have already begun their project work at the club's Yosemite location. Three firefighters did some sheetrocking and taped and textured so that the walls would have a chance to dry before painting. (Firefighter Jeff Dominici is the assistant construction captain.)

"Bill Provence is the RTP Construction Captain," Morris noted, "and he is bringing volunteers from St. Peter's Parish, St. Andrew's Church, New Life Christian Church and from the firefighters of Pacifica."

Provence has been involved with RTP since 2008. "I started out filling in and ended up falling in," he laughed. "But it's a great cause and they do some great work. Also individuals should be aware of RTP's Safe at Home Minor

Home Repair Program. That is volunteered year-round and addresses minor repair needs for seniors, families, and individuals with disabilities, before those repairs become serious safety or deferred maintenance issues."

Morris gave a summary of the work RTP volunteers are doing at the Yosemite Boys & Girls Club – lots of painting and wall repairs throughout the building, including the band room with its 9-foot ceilings, replacement of multiple door locks and a cracked window, water damage repairs in the fourth grade homework room, sheetrock work also throughout, new carpeting in the downstairs' office, and work on rain gutters as well as fascia board replacements.

"We are all so grateful to Rebuilding Together and to all the volunteers and businesses who are making our 'wish list' happen," Morris said "In the past two years, this is the second time Rebuilding Together Peninsula has come to help us. The kids are absolutely thrilled. They are doing a thank you project."