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Good Neighbors

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On National Rebuilding Day April 26, volunteers from UD were part of a communitywide effort to spruce up 30 Dayton homes for homeowners in need.

One group — Karen Bull, director of IT business services in UDit; religious studies doctoral candidate Coleman Fannin; Jordan Rowan Fannin, a graduate assistant in the Fitz Center for Leadership in Community; and political science associate professor Grant Neeley — joined a city of Dayton team for work on a Kipling Drive home. They were led by Dayton Municipal Court Judge Bill Littlejohn, who received the Fitz Center's Mattie Davis and Joe Kanak Community Builders Award April 22.

"We assisted a homeowner in her 70s with various projects on her home," said Jordan Rowan Fannin, who is studying for a master's in religious studies from UD. "We did yard work, landscaping, stump and tree removal, exterior painting, roof replacement and modification, electrical and plumbing projects, drywall replacement, a termite issue, and other smaller projects during the day."

A team from Leadership UD, led by UD electrical engineering professor Brad Duncan, joined about 100 other volunteers for a large exterior painting project on Perrine Street in East Dayton. The UD cohort included Dean Halter, Karin Avila-John, Beth Flack and Phil Anloague.

"We had the biggest and most difficult house to paint, or so I have heard," Duncan said, "but save for some of the upper areas which we simply could not access, the house looks wonderful." The owner is a World War II veteran, Duncan said.

"He volunteered for the Marines when he was 17 years old and was almost immediately shipped off to the South Pacific," he said. "He turned 19 on Saipan and took part in the landing on Iwo Jima. ... He was visibly moved when I shook his hand, thanked him for all he had done, and told him our efforts of the day were an early Memorial Day gift for him."

The National Rebuilding Day event was coordinated by Rebuilding Together Dayton, whose office is in UD's Rubicon House on Brown Street. Through its Neighbor Care program, the group works year-round to aid homeowners in need, particularly the elderly, with repairs, modifications or assistance in order to be able to stay in their homes. The Fitz Center is one of Rebuilding Together Dayton's major sponsors.