



THE HEART OF THE UA

Every charitable act is a stepping stone towards heaven.

—Henry Ward Beecher

Local 396 Takes Part In Extreme Makeover— “My Hometown, Mahoning Valley”

Business Manager Gary (Rabb) Marinelli and Business Agent Butch Taylor could not be more proud of their Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 396 in Boardman, Ohio, for taking part in the Greenford Christian Church—Big Reach Program. The project was sponsored by Extreme Makeover: “My Hometown, Mahoning Valley,” WYTV-Channel 33, an ABC affiliate, Big Reach Center of Hope, Western Reserve Building and Construction Trades, and Union Contractors Association of Eastern Ohio.

The Greenford Christian Church’s Big Reach Ministry is an ongoing program designed to help less fortunate families in the Mahoning Valley and surrounding areas. “With the loss of so many manufacturing jobs, northeastern Ohio has been devastated. Numerous families are desperately in need of the programs that the Big Reach Ministry offers,” stated Brother Marinelli. To date, the Big Reach and the Giving Tree programs have helped over 675 families and served over 3,000 individuals. During Christmas of 2006, the ministry reached out to help 570 families and over 200 children. As part of the Extreme Makeover project, a new facility was designed to enable the ministry to continue to help those in need.

Business Agent Butch Taylor said that “the \$2.3 million project was funded by donations from contractors, local area businesses, suppliers, and union building trades members.” Local 396 got involved when Komar Plumbing and Custom Comfort, its signatory contractors, spearheaded the plumbing and HVAC on this project. Mike Weikart, owner of Custom Comfort, and Jimmy Grantz, owner of Komar Plumbing, estimated the cost of supplies, equipment, tools and time was well over \$230,000. “We worked 16- to 18-hour days and then got up the next day to do it all over again for seven days in a row. It was extremely difficult but it was a tremendous experience working with all of the union contractors involved,” continued Brother Taylor.

The new center has adequate space to offer an ongoing stocked food pantry, a shop that offers clothing and necessities, and a classroom to offer tutoring and life classes to assist individuals in improving their lives. “This will allow us to have classes and teach people things that they need to learn, to help find jobs and offer other assistance that they need to get out of those poverty areas that they may be in right now,” stated Bruce Rhodes of Greenford Christian Church.

Once the Extreme Makeover project was targeted, the project site was prepared. Contractors came together to complete the entire project in just one week, a job that would normally take six months to do. The Big Reach Center of Hope project got underway on September



Bottom row pictured from left to right are: Butch Taylor Jr., Jimmy Grantz, owner of Komar Plumbing, Kevin Gerzetch, Rabb Marinelli, Chuck Day. Top row pictured from left to right are: Gerald Butler, Ralph Master, Mario Larocca, Jay Wilkes, Joe Sedinger, Rick Boyarko, Tom Cardinal, Ray Ross. Not Pictured: Lonnie Potts, A.J. Burnett, Bob Simione, Roger Weikart, Mike Weikart, owner of Custom Comfort, Mike Buda, Mark Blose, Lou Chine, Kirk Bregar, Jason Miodrag, Jerry Everett, Dennis Kopnisky, Dan Bullen, Laurance Page, Steve White, Eric Gongaware, Andy Sinchak.

15, 2006. The volunteers worked tirelessly around the clock to get things done.

Business Manager Rabb Marinelli commented, “It was a proud moment for the Mahoning Valley to be involved in the Big Reach Project at the Greenford Christian Church. All the Western Reserve Building Trades came together to erect a freestanding building in seven days on what was a cornfield. As business manager of Local 396, I cannot express my sincere thanks and gratitude enough to all members of Local 396 who helped on this project, along with our signatory contractors and supply houses who gave of their time and money. The Big Reach Project became a reality because of everyone’s unselfishness and willingness to work hand and hand to make this a success.”

The building was formally dedicated on Saturday with a ribbon cutting and a fireworks celebration. Everyone from Local 396 who worked on the Big Reach Program—Extreme Makeover should be commended for their pride and workmanship devoted to this project. “Your spirit of charity and volunteerism is remarkable, and I thank you for being a part of this worthwhile project,” wrote State Representative John Bocchieri in a letter drafted to Local 396 on the completion of the project. As in so many locals in the UA, the members of Local 396 take pride in giving back to their community, dedicating their time and skills to further enhance the lives of others.

If you, or someone you know, has given generously of their time and labor for a good cause or has been involved in extraordinary charitable activities, we want to know about it.

All submissions for this page should be made through your local business manager, who will forward them to the office of General Secretary-Treasurer Patrick Perno.

Please include as much information as possible, as well as photographs, preferably in color.