

Newport Beach-based nonprofit provides help for the helper

Dozens of volunteers for NLYM do repair work for The Lighthouse Church in Costa Mesa, which offers a swath of services for the homeless.



Hunter Wetton, left, Will Johnson, Cole Martin and Charlie Evans paint the entry way of The Lighthouse Church in Costa Mesa on Saturday. (SCOTT SMELTZER, Daily Pilot / February 9, 2014)

By Jeremiah Dobruck

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A 12-foot-tall piece of brown paper covered in blue writing was taped to a wall in The Lighthouse Church's auditorium Saturday morning.

"How are we doing on that list?" asked Tim Zimmerman, who was working with his two sons sweeping up the last bits of debris from their work pulling up carpet from the auditorium's stage.

They were part of a group of about 60 boys and their parents who were working through 14 items on the paper, such as removing the carpet from the chapel floor, painting fences, and installing shelves for a wardrobe room that holds donations for families in need.

The crew had been working since 8 a.m. as part of a service project organized by the National League of Young Men, a Newport Beach-based nonprofit

NLYM, which was founded in 2007 and has since expanded to four chapters across Orange County, finds service opportunities for young men, often working with their mothers.

Saturday was their first time working at Lighthouse. The Costa Mesa church offers a swath of services for homeless in the city.

In fact, NLYM served breakfast and lunch for hungry residents before they went on to the work of landscaping, painting and other remodeling for the ministry.

"We've never had this many boys volunteer in one day," said Chris Alessi, NLYM's vice president of philanthropy.

The day of service kept growing as Alessi organized it.

Mothers of NLYM raised \$3,000 to buy new carpeting for the church that will be installed Tuesday.

Home Depot and Cabinets Plus offered to donate thousands of dollars of supplies and labor from some employees.

And, Alessi said, an NLYM member stepped up to buy a washer and dryer to replace the Lighthouse's.

Pushing a broom in the auditorium, 15-year-old Alex Michaelsen said this was one of his first service projects with NLYM.

Michaelsen, a freshman at Newport Harbor High School, said he was glad to do the work especially after meeting the people he was helping face-to-face when he served food in the morning.

"It makes me feel good that it brightens up their day," he said.