

Make-over mavens

North Dallas Altrusans make a difference at Vogel Alcove

By MICHELLE MAY O'NEILL

Altrusa of Dallas spent Make a Difference Day Oct. 28 transforming the staff lounge at Vogel Alcove, a nonprofit childcare center for homeless children.

"For Make a Difference Day, we wanted to do something special for the staff and volunteers that make a difference in the lives of so many homeless children every day," Dallas Altrusan Angela Weber, chairwoman of the project and North Dallas resident, said. "We decided to do a renovation project inspired by the show *While You Were Out*, taking the staff lounge from its previous state of hodgepodge furnishings to a warm and welcoming place, over the period of a weekend."

Members of Altrusa Dallas and their families started by cleaning the room, taping and painting the walls for a fresh look and feel. Other members assembled furniture, slip-covered donated couches and painted an existing all-purpose table.

By the end of the weekend, the room went from a marine gray to a bright and happy yellow, from mismatched furnishings to denim sofas with coordinat-

ing throw pillows and valance. The staff and volunteers were surprised Monday morning to see the new room.

"Our staff lounge needed attention desperately," Charline Ferris, director of volunteers and donations at the Alcove, said. "Altrusa of Dallas stepped in and transformed the lounge from a drab room of makeshift furnishings to a happy, coordinated, comfortable oasis for our staff members and volunteers. Now, it is so beautiful."

Vogel Alcove was created in 1986 to meet a major need for homeless children and their families. In the first year, child-care services were provided to 11 homeless families. Now, the center has expanded and serves 113 children every day.

Make a Difference Day is the most encompassing national day of helping others — a celebration of neighbors helping neighbors — which takes place the fourth Saturday of every October. In 2005, more than three million people volunteered, accomplishing thousands of projects in hundreds of towns.

Michelle May O'Neill is president of Altrusa Dallas.



UPDATE NEEDED: Vogel Alcove staff kitchen area before the Altrusa Dallas makeover.



LOUNGE AREA: Vogel Alcove staff lounge before the Altrusa Dallas makeover.



AFTER EFFECTS: Vogel Alcove staff lounge after the Altrusa Dallas makeover.

PHOTOS SUBMITTED BY MICHELLE MAY O'NEILL



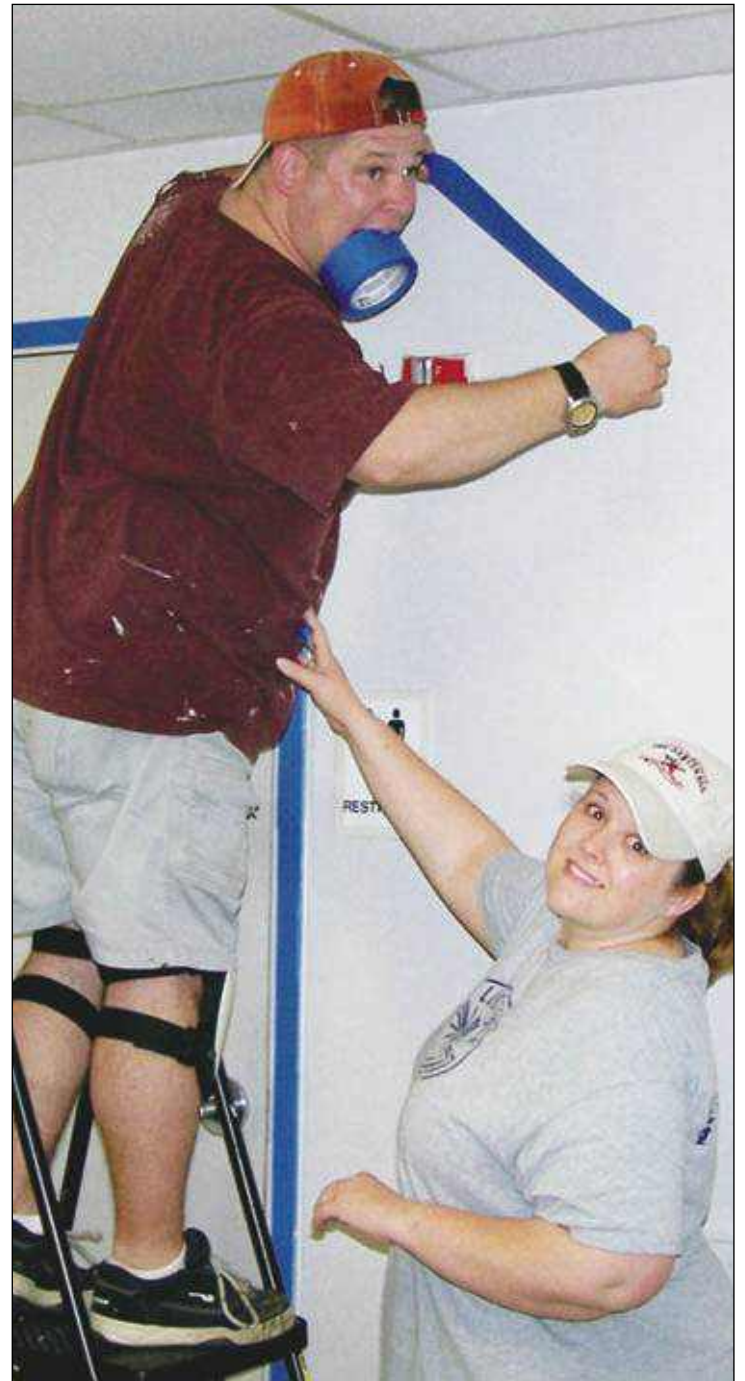
ADDING STYLE: From left, Angela Weber, MADD project chairwoman and North Dallas resident; Sidelle Illion, president-elect and North Dallas resident; Anne Reed; and Carolyn Harper, North Dallas resident, put the finishing touches on the staff lounge at Vogel Alcove.



FURNITURE BUILDERS: Altrusans Sidelle Illion, a North Dallas resident; Phyllis Meyerson; and Hon. Frances Maloney, retired Dallas Court of Appeals Justice and North Dallas resident, assemble furniture for the Vogel Alcove staff lounge.



HANDY SANDING: Altrusan Anne Reed sands and paints the all-purpose table for the Vogel Alcove staff lounge.



ADDING COLOR: Altrusa Dallas president Michelle May O'Neil and husband John O'Neil tape the walls to prepare for painting.



GATHERING AROUND: Vogel Alcove staff members enjoy the renovated staff lounge. PHOTOS SUBMITTED BY MICHELLE MAY O'NEIL