



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Stuart Nelson, president of Brown Industries, installs a new Little Free Library as part of "Make a Difference Day."

'Make a Difference Day' projects improve the community

**SUBMITTED BY UNITED WAY OF
NORTHWEST GEORGIA**

For the past 18 years, United Way of Northwest Georgia has celebrated "Make a Difference Day" on the fourth Friday and Saturday in October. This year was no exception, with \$10,000 in grant funding provided by Brown Industries and Phenix Flooring, and a total of 11 projects completed.

Brown Industries has been hard at work in designing and manufacturing 27 new Little Free Libraries to be installed in existing locations in Dalton and Whitfield and Murray counties. The existing Little Free Libraries, which offer free books to community members, are in need of replacement due to being weather-worn. Brown Industries saw the need for a Little Free Library that can withstand the elements. The new design and material will allow for better air flow inside and still be able to stand up to the wind, rain and snow.

Due to the weather, projects at Carter Hope Center and United Way of Northwest Georgia projects were postponed. In addition to being a presenting sponsor of "Make a Difference Day," Phenix Flooring donated

100 square feet of flooring to United Way Community Partner, Carter Hope Center. Phenix Flooring associates will also paint two porches at the women's residence to ensure that they are weather resistant. This project will ensure that Carter Hope Center is able to continue providing life-changing treatment for their residents as they work to get their lives back on track.

United Way of Northwest Georgia is honored to participate in "Make a Difference Day" each year.

"We are committed to creating a brighter future for our community," United Way President Amanda Burt said. "Brown Industries and Phenix Flooring's sponsorship has ensured that countless lives will be improved through these volunteer projects."

The United Way Young Leaders Society helped ensure that homebound individuals in the community can remain safe in their home. They installed storage and coolers that will provide necessary space for the housing of emergency food and resource items for seniors in need. This project will allow the staff and volunteers of the Murray and Whitfield county Meals on Wheels facilities to deliver meals to their clients more efficiently. Young Leaders Society

members also delivered meals and goodies with a smile to the clients of Whitfield and Murray Meals on Wheels.

The United Way Women's Leadership Council worked to help promote literacy at United Way community partner, Whitfield County-Dalton Day Care Center. The center needed to expand its homemade book collection to enhance their classroom libraries. Early literacy is an essential part of preparing children for reading readiness as they enter school and that's why the Women's Leadership Council decided to raise their hands and start cutting, gluing and laminating to create these books. The children now have new picture books to help them learn about our community and a variety of subjects.

Together with the Dalton Fire Department and community volunteers, American Red Cross canvassed neighborhoods near the Mack Gaston Community Center to install smoke alarms, replace batteries in existing alarms and provided fire prevention and safety education. The "Make a Difference Day" funding provided 100 new smoke alarms.

➤ Please see **DIFFERENCE, 2C**

Difference

➤ *Continued from 1C*

For the past five years, the United Way of Northwest Georgia Volunteer Center Cabinet has partnered with the Dalton State College School of Social Work to provide funding for a project. Five groups of students from the senior class presented their project proposals to cabinet members. Each group developed a project plan with a budget of \$250. For this year's project, the cabinet funded the Highland Rivers outdoor sitting garden makeover project. The students repainted the gazebo and picnic tables, created new benches out of pallets and wrote inspirational words

on rocks. This revitalized area gives Highland Rivers clients and family a safe place to enjoy nature.

In addition to the above project, two cabinet members decided to fund two other projects that were presented that day. Stuart Nelson, president of Brown Industries, funded \$250 for the project at Greater Works Dalton. Students painted, reorganized the pantry and sorted clothing donations. An anonymous donor funded \$250 for the project at Morris Innovative High School. After learning about depression and suicide prevention in local high schools from United Way Community Partner, Family Frameworks a group of students decided to take action. The students put vinyl lettering of inspirational quotes as well as the suicide hotline number on the stall walls in all eight

restrooms.

Dalton High School joined in on the fun of "Make a Difference Day." Teacher Hailey Brock brought her students to Salvation Army to participate. Together they packed food boxes, sorted through donations at the thrift store and completed many needed projects around the Salvation Army Campus.

This year was the 24th annual event of the Conasauga River Watershed Clean-up. Volunteers rolled up their sleeves and cleaned up trash from the river and banks at seven locations. Last year, they removed 72 tires and 6.61 tons of trash.

United Way works year-round to fight for the education, basic needs and health of every person in our community. Visit ourunitedway.org to get involved.