

Community rallies to give man a new house

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ROCK HALL — When a community comes together the end result might by some be called a noble project. Others might call it a miracle. By whatever name, courtesy of community spirit, Lamont Phillips has a new house located the same place he has lived his whole life. It was made official in a key-passing ceremony Saturday morning.

Phillips, 65, who has been blind since birth, is a well-liked, well-known figure on Boundary Avenue. When it was determined last year that the dilapidated house he lived in there wouldn't last, a number of groups, individuals and organizations came together to build him a new one. Facilitators included Interfaith Housing Corp., the town of Rock Hall, the county's housing office and Promise Keepers, a faith-based community organization.

After the town and Rep. Frank Kratovil helped acquire a FEMA trailer for him to live in temporarily, Phillips' old house was demolished in March and construction of the new, two-bedroom, single-story frame house was started. On Saturday, about two dozen people celebrated the completion of the effort and helped bless the new house with song, prayer, presentations and a cake.

Debbie Turner, of Interfaith Housing, said it was a pleasure working with the various components of the community. "In order to get to glory, it's about helping someone else," she said, adding that while it was a 15-month process to get the house built, "patience is the key to the kingdom."

Interfaith has helped fund three houses in Rock Hall.

The Rev. William Dore, describing it

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PHOTO BY KEVIN HEMSTOCK

A ceremony Saturday morning celebrated the completion of a new house on Boundary Avenue, Rock Hall, for Lamont Phillips. From left are Interfaith Housing Coordinator Debbie Turner, Phillips, Rock Hall Town Manager Ron Fithian and Ron Jayne, of H&H Builders.

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as a "gathering of family and friends," led the blessing during which Dickie Porter led a reading of the Scriptures. It was followed by singing of "Blest Be the Tie that Binds."

Jane Giblin presented a scrapbook documenting the 15-month process of building the house. Tom Bass, of Promise Keepers, introduced the speakers and thanked all those involved. He presented Town Manager Ron Fithian with a Promise Keepers hat.

The town, represented Saturday by Fithian and Councilman Bob Willis, helped transport and situate the FEMA trailer, installed utilities and helped move furniture.

"It's a privilege to be in the room with so many dedicated people," Willis said.

The county's housing office was represented by Bill Kerbin. Ron Jayne represented H&H Builders

Bass said this seemed like one of their most important house projects, because of Phillips' handicap and the fact that he lives alone. "Lamont deserves this," he said.



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Tom Bass, at left, of Promise Keepers, presents a hat to Rock Hall Town Manager Ron Fithian.