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Gifford woman 'blessed' to get free help to fix home

GIFFORD — Helen Ausby, whose home at 4707 35th Ave. needs new wood sidings, rewiring, porch, drywall and roofing and floor inspections, considers herself blessed.

That's in part because a new social-outreach group, led by environmental health worker Julianne Price and builder Dennis Witherow, is scheduled to descend on her house Saturday to get those wood sidings up - free of charge - using volunteer labor and donated material.

"I feel very blessed and appreciate it to know someone is paying attention," Ausby said Thursday night. "I pray everything works out."

Price, Witherow, sheriff's Deputy Teddy Floyd and others recently created their new group, Every Dream Has its Price Inc., to tackle problems like Ausby's, which they say fell through the cracks in the county's official system.

As a geriatric assistant, Ausby earns too much to qualify for low-income housing assistance but not enough to afford market prices even in a housing slump.

Ausby's problems started with hurricanes Frances and Jeanne in 2004 and Wilma in 2005, adding her to the ranks of people needing storm repairs. But she couldn't find a contractor she could afford, she said, until spring 2007. And the contractors she ended up hiring proved not to be licensed, abandoned the job and left her out more than \$20,000, records show.

Ausby said she contacted Floyd after reading of his work with Price getting new homes built for other needy residents in West Wabasso and Fellsmere.

"We saw a need, so we've stepped in," Floyd said. About 6 p.m. tonight, he said suppliers are scheduled to drop off the wood siding and other material at Ausby's address so volunteers can start work at 8 a.m. Saturday.

Because it's a volunteer job, said Price, president of Every Dream, only the wood siding will be done this weekend. The rewiring and other phases have to wait until she can arrange for that work.

The group will need volunteers and donations, Price and Floyd said. To help out, call Price at (772) 713-6883 or one of the directors, Joel Dramis, at (772) 528-8750.