

Rebuilding Together Tulsa helps couple married 60 years with free home renovations

By MIKE AVERILL World Staff Writer | Posted: Friday, October 25, 2013 12:00 am

For nearly 55 years, Aubrey and Martha Barnett have lived in their westside home just four blocks from where they met.

Friday is their 60th wedding anniversary, and on Thursday, they received a gift that left them without words: free, extensive renovations to their home.

More than 30 volunteers from Rebuilding Together Tulsa replaced rotten and broken windows, sealed large gaps around the exterior of the home, repaired fascia and soffits, installed exterior handrails on the front porch, painted, and made energy-efficiency repairs.

"There's no way to tell you how great this is," Martha Barnett said. "Everybody has just been wonderful. All I can do is pray for them. I can't repay them."

Rebuilding Together Tulsa is a nonprofit agency that does home repairs for low-income and older residents. Clients must own their home, live within Tulsa's city limits and be 60 or older or living with a disability.

The agency offers repairs in four categories: roofs, safe at home, energy efficiency and ROOT repairs including painting, electrical, carpentry and more.

The Barnetts were selected as part of the Heroes at Home program, a national partnership between Rebuilding Together and Sears. Aubrey Barnett joined the Navy in 1945, when he turned 18.

"This allows us to provide free home repairs for deserving Tulsa veterans to have a safe, secure and weather-proof place to call home," said Kelly Hall, an agency spokeswoman. "They are definitely deserving of the work that they're receiving, and we're so excited to see the transformation in your home and the difference it can make."

This is the second Heroes at Home repair this fall. A round of repairs was done in the spring.

"It is great to be able to help veterans through this program because people like Mr. and Mrs.

Barnett have given so much to the community, it is about time that something be given back to them," said Jennifer Barcus-Schafer, Rebuilding Together Tulsa's CEO.

Through its programs, Rebuilding Together Tulsa repairs 160 to 200 homes each year. The average cost is \$5,424.

"We have groups that are out every Wednesday and Thursday and on the weekends, as well," Hall said.

Previously, volunteers put a new roof on the Barnetts' home, and because of the Heroes at Home program, this additional work was possible.

"I think this is the most wonderful organization I've ever heard of," Martha Barnett said. "They're just great."

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For more

For more information about Rebuilding Together Tulsa, call 918-742-6241 or go online to **rebuildingtogethertulsa.org**