

Students eyeing home repair possibilities

BY MARK BROOKY

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Several students from Grand Haven's Central High School have been dropping off information this week to homes on the city's east side.



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The students have also taken pictures and jotted down notes of potential trouble spots they eye on the houses' exteriors.

Called the Eastown Community Project, the students are working in partnership with the city, Michigan Works!, Community Action Agency and Kandu Inc. The students get academic credit as well as pay through Kandu for the work.

Brandi Lee and Felicia Greene, both 12th-graders at Central, were on the streets Thursday afternoon taking pictures and notes, and dropping off brochures that explain the project. Lee said they've talked briefly to some homeowners who were curious about what they were doing.

The students started last week and are hoping to complete 28 blocks of the city's east side by the end of the month.

Two other Central students, Steve Tiggelman and Cassandra Thibault, are also working for the program.

Two officers from the Grand Haven Department of Public Safety's Retired Seniors Volunteer Program (RSVP), Tom Sheward and Sam Young, accompanied the students Thursday to ensure their safety.

"They're photographing each house on the block, and any areas they find that may be eligible for assistance for repair, they're photographing that — so they're taking one or more pictures at each location," explained RSVP Coordinator Sheward. "They'll take these pictures back to school ... and they will then be using Photoshop (a computer program) to show the current appearance of the house and the way the house could be if it were fixed up. And that information will be presented to the homeowner so that they could possibly be put into contact with one of the

agencies, as mentioned in the brochure, to apply for either no-cost or low-cost funding to do their home repairs."

Lee said the homeowners will receive the information in May.

Char Seise, the city's housing resource specialist, said the end result is that homeowners get connected with financial resources for improvements that they might not have known existed.

The students are eyeing several critical exterior areas for repair needs: weatherization and energy efficiency, roofs and gutters, siding or painting, windows, doors, and porches and stoops.

For more information about the project, call Seise at 935-32