

Restoring an old house for a new teen shelter

By SAM YOSAFI, JEN PLONSKI and DANIELLE LETOURNEAU
The Tattoo

An old house on Chippens Hill is being renovated into a homeless shelter for teens.

A coalition of church officials and social workers are working to create the Good Shepherd House on a former summertime estate on Hill Street.

Tom O'Keefe, president of Bristol Housing For Children at Risk, said there are typically 15 to 35 teens in Bristol that are either homeless or at the risk of being homeless.

O'Keefe's task force is trying to decrease that number by providing up to six homeless teens with a safe, temporary place to stay.

The shelter will serve teens "who through no fault of their own have found themselves homeless," said the Rev. Mark Hansen, a leader of the coalition. "Providing a safe home for teens is the mission of the church."

The shelter site — the late Katharine Shepard's charming 12-room colonial house at 733 Hill St. — needs about \$200,000 of renovations before it can open as a shelter, according to Hansen.

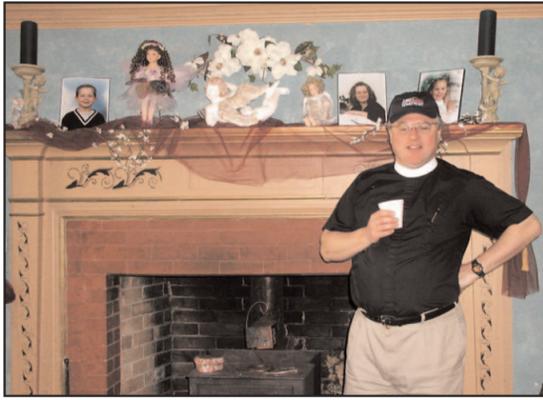
Shepard donated the 23-acre property, including two houses and two barns, to the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut when she died in 1989.

The Good Shepherd House will have six boys and girls ages 14 to 18 living together at any one time, with staff members from the Wheeler Clinic who will provide constant supervision and intensive counseling, according to Hansen.

The teens in need of the house will be found through schools or word of mouth, said Hansen. If they want to stay at the Good Shepherd House, the youths will be interviewed by Wheeler Clinic staff members to see if they are eligible.

Teens can stay 45 days, but Hansen said some may be allowed more time. He said the home will be flexible and no one will ever be put out on the street.

At the house, counselors will help teens get their lives in perspective.



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The Rev. Mark Hansen stands in the living room of the Good Shepherd House. The house has six fireplaces.

First, said Hansen, counselors will try to reconcile the teen's relationship with their parents if possible. As an alternative, they may find a home with relatives or in a group home.

The counseling starts "from day one when the person moves in here," said Hansen.

"We try to take things one step at a time," said Hansen.

According to Hansen, everyone that lives there will "really get a lot of attention."

In addition to



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Below, Pam Young, an eighth grader at St. Joseph School, rakes outside the Good Shepherd House Saturday.

intensive counseling, teens who live at the home will have their own bedroom, and a van for transportation outside of school, Hansen said.

Teens will be allowed to have friends at the shelter on a limited basis, Hansen said.

"We don't want this to seem like a prison," Hansen said.

Hansen said teens who have a history of drug or alcohol use or violence won't be allowed in the program, but he said kids who drop out of school will not necessarily be excluded.

Because of the emotional trauma of homelessness and the problems it brings, kids in the program will need counseling, said Hansen.

Hansen said the psychological



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The Good Shepherd House at 733 Hill St.

problems brought on by homelessness allow the shelter to classify the teens as emotionally disabled and gives the project protection under state law.

Teens do home work

By MIKE NGUYEN and KATE HAIRE
The Tattoo

Volunteers broke out their rakes and paintbrushes Saturday as part of an effort to fix up a house for homeless youth.

Some renovations included clearing overgrown grass, painting porch rails, raking out areas, and disposing of yard waste.

Over half a dozen church groups were present at the house to clean up its exterior and backyard. It's one small step towards restoring the house, which will be used as a shelter for homeless teens.

"I think it's good. I'm having fun," said Amanda Souza, a 15-year-old that attends Bristol Eastern High School.

"I take pride in my community," said John Fortunato, the project coordinator. He was impressed with the number of teens that showed up. "You guys are the future. It's about giving back."

"Being a senior citizen, we need future taxpayers," he joked.

Two sisters, Jessica and Katalin Cummings, who attend East Hartford High School, were also present at the house, helping with various jobs like pulling weeds. They think the shelter is a great way to get homeless teens off the streets.

They thought that the house being located away from the center of town was a good idea, because it's away from all the trouble.

Alex Ayala, 14, a student at Bristol Eastern High School, said he learned about the Good Shepherd House through his church.

Ayala said the project will help a lot of people. If he was in

need, Ayala said, he would go there.

Katherine Feltt, a student at Bristol Central High School cleaned out underbrush near one of two barns on the property. She said she decided to help out because it seemed fun.

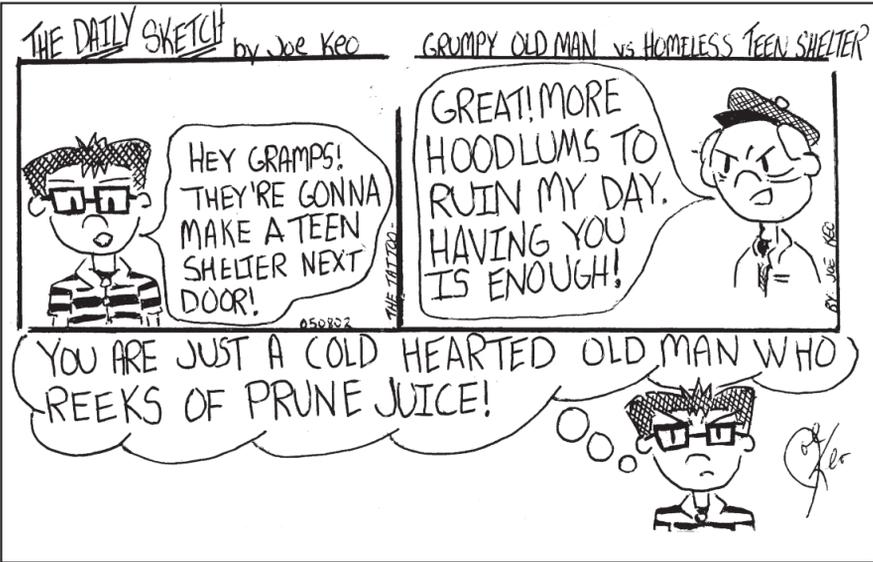
"It was so close to my neighborhood," said Feltt. "I always wanted to do it."

However, some neighbors in the area aren't as keen about the homeless shelter, which is across the street from Chippenee Golf Club.

"They're not too happy with it," said Paul Contrastano, 46, of Bristol. "But if the place is maintained and supervised, they won't have a problem."

The 1805 house has a dozen rooms and three bathrooms.

Tattoo staff writers T.J. O'Connor and Danielle Letourneau contributed to this story.



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Bristol Central High School students Caitlin O'Meara, Katherine Feltt, and Julie Wargo, work to clean the grounds at the Good Shepherd House Saturday.

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Crawl quickly into Spider-Man's web

By KAISHI LEE
The Tattoo

If you are disillusioned with summer movies, go for the ultimate spin with Spider-Man.

But before you go up the wall being tormented over whether Spider-Man the movie lives up to Stan Lee's comic, don't.

This long-awaited film adaptation of Spider-Man is a hit because it sticks to the basics and the spirit of the original comic.

To clue in any Martians: Peter Parker or the Amazing Spider-Man (Tobey Maguire) is a nerdy science geek who wor-

ries about peer pressure, girls and money.

Add in girl problems and Parker, living with his Uncle Ben (Cliff Robertson) and Aunt May (Rosemary Harris), has an unrequited crush on his Titian-haired neighbor, Mary-Jane Watson (Kirsten Dunst).

Ingeniously directed by Sam Raimi (Evil Dead, A Simple Plan), Parker turns into a wall-scaling, crime-fighting superhero after he gets bitten by a genetically-engineered spider (a radioactive arachnid in the



original Spider-Man).

When Uncle Ben is murdered, Parker plunges into misery and decides to use his powers (hurrah!) to protect the innocent and fight evil.

A new-generation superhero, Spidey is also prone to self-doubt and just as vulnerable to stress and strain as the average angst-filled teen.

Most tellingly, Spidey is billed as "the hero that could be you."

If you can, ignore the cheesy computer-generated animations of Spidey in the first half of the movie as there is still much to marvel about Spider-Man.

Summer blockbuster fans,

be warned though that Spider-Man has toned-down action sequences with a few car chases, some explosions and of course, the showdown between Spidey and the villain, Green Goblin a.k.a. Norman Osborne (the stellar Willem Dafoe).

However, the characters come to the rescue with heart and plenty of warmth. Maguire is primed for stardom and adulation of fans with his earnest and sensitive portrayal of Spider-Man.

He delivers a pitch-perfect performance swinging through the

streets of New York on skyscrapers with ease and deftness.

As wholesome and squeaky-clean Mary-Jane, Dunst shines. Taking a break from her rebellious bad girl roles in The Virgin Suicides and crazy/beautiful, she delivers a job well done.

Take heart as two more sequels are in the works and the cast will begin filming next year. Spider-Man II is set for a 2004 release.

Till then, go get your Spider-Man action figure and don't bug Spidey ... he's busy saving the world.

'Ultimate X' delivers thrills

By DANIELLE LETOURNEAU
The Tattoo

You've probably heard of Tony Hawk, Stephan Murray, Bob Burnquist and so on — the world's best skaters, BMX riders and dirt-bike dudes.

But you haven't seen them close-up and in action on the IMAX screen.

'Ultimate X,' the IMAX movie of the X Games comes screeching into theaters on Friday, May 10.

If you wanna see these hot, ass-kicking skaters, BMX and dirt-bikers in action, then you have to see this movie.

With one glance at the screen, you are in a totally different place.

Awesome wipe-outs are really close up — and the large screen and terrific speakers make it sound like you are

right there and it is happening in front of you.

With IMAX, you get a whole different perspective at the movies. You aren't just seeing the people skate, bike or ride, it's like you are the athlete, or someone in his path.

Beyond these hot skaters, you learn a little about ESPN's X Games and the pros themselves.

The X Games began in the mid-1990s and some people said they were "terrible."

On particularly strange sport called "shovel racing" had competitors basically just racing downhill on shovels.

Another odd sport featured bungee jumping.

Not very exciting, huh?

But as the years went on, the X

Games got better because they began to understand more about good competition and all.

'Ultimate X' also teaches viewers about the pros themselves.

Tony Hawk, a world famous skateboarder, turned professional at 14 years old.

Carey Hart, a pro-dirt-biker, was the first person to attempt the back flip — and succeeded.

In the movie, he said that he had attempted this many times and wiped out, when he finally succeeded, the crowd roared with pleasure.

But overall, all those wipe outs and hot dudes all come together into this awesome, close-up, lifelike IMAX flick that you'll love even if you don't like extreme sports.

Wicked tunes make 'X' rock

By JEN PLONSKI
The Tattoo

When ESPN's "Ultimate X" movie started, the soundtrack boomed out hard rock that vibrated everyone so they felt like they were sitting on a couple of sticks of dynamite.

Throughout the whole movie loud and electrifying music poured out of the speakers.

The IMAX movie included extreme sports like street luge, skateboarding, biking, motocross, and a little bit of in-line skating.

In one part, the gigantic screen made you feel like you were twisting and turning and out of control with other street luggers.

It felt like you were ripping down the pavement, nearly crashing into the bales of hay on the hairpin turns instead of sitting safely back in your seat at the theater.

Another section in the movie showed a whole bunch of extreme wipe-outs. The last one was kind of funny because the biker went over the top of the ramp backwards and let out a Tarzan-like squeal just before he crashed.

Some of the athletes in the film talked about what they did before they turned pro and their perspective on their sport. A lot of them proudly listed for the camera their many injuries from their extreme sport. They seemed as though they thought the more times they've gotten nearly killed, the better.

