

# Local Church Partners With SPHA To 'Paint The Saint'

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ST. PETERSBURG – On Saturday, Sept. 17, community volunteers will be repainting the exteriors of three single family homes in St. Petersburg, at no cost to the homeowners, as part of the “2011 Paint the Saint” service project. The Northwest Church of Christ (NWCOC) is organizing this painting effort, with assistance from the St. Petersburg Housing Authority (SPHA).

Event Organizer Tom Burket from NWCOC said, “The ‘Paint the Saint’ service project is an opportunity for people to come together as neighbors to show their community spirit and to help a few families in need.”

The homes selected for repainting were part of SPHA’s HOPE VI program, which assisted 115 income-eligible families in St. Petersburg with the purchase of single family homes at affordable prices. The program was a cooperative effort between SPHA, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the city of St. Petersburg, and Neighborhood Home Solutions (then known as St. Petersburg Neighborhood Housing Services).

SPHA Chief of Programs Melinda Perry said, “We were very pleased when the NWCOC approached us with this idea. In a tough economy, homeowners often don’t have the extra money for home improvements, and the housing authority is facing cuts to federal funding. The ‘Paint the Saint’ project is a wonderful way to keep the former HOPE IV homes looking beautiful, while fostering community involvement and neighborhood pride.”

The owners of the selected homes have worked with project organizers throughout the planning process, even picking out their new paint colors. All of the painting materials and labor are being provided by local businesses, church volunteers, SPHA staff volunteers, and other community members. Also, volunteers will pressure wash and prepare the houses for painting during the prior week, so that exterior paint can be applied on the day of the event.