UPDATE: Center of Hope

What could you do to improve the lives of others if you had $10,000? Earlier this year (see Techniques, Vol. 1, 2010) SCTD received a grant for this amount from Lowe’s (“Let’s build something together...”) and the national chapter of SkillsUSA to assist with the college’s effort to contribute positively to the Salvation Army’s homeless shelter, The Center of Hope.

A lot has been completed

Here’s what the college faculty, students and staff have accomplished since the grant was received.

• The Center of Hope desperately needed a working commercial washer and dryer. In partnership with Lowe’s and SkillsUSA, the college purchased a new commercial washer and dryer and SCTD’s Interior Design students have completed a space plan for the laundry area to meet efficiently client needs.

• Networking students led by CISCO instructor Allen Smith networked some computers donated by the college. Employees appreciate not having to walk from building to building to share information and are grateful for the e-mail access.

• Students and faculty representing CADD, Graphic Design, Dynamic Web Development, HVAC-R and Interior Design programs as well as staff tackled a large space between the women’s shelter and the cafeteria/kitchen. This open space was unusable due to debris and weeds as well as construction (deck, building wall) in disrepair. The team tore down a crumbling fence, moved ten young fruit trees, dismantled the unsafe deck, tore out vegetation and cleaned up wheelbarrows full of broken glass and bricks. They rebuilt the fence closer to the road, thereby expanding the amount of useable outdoor space. Lowe’s provided the necessary materials.

And there’s even more

• CADD and Interior Design students and faculty worked together to develop plans for a new deck for the shelter. The college obtained the appropriate building permit; students and faculty will construct the new deck as soon as the hot weather permits the work. The deck will provide a comfortable place from which women can watch their children enjoy the outdoor play set already purchased from Lowe’s. Students will install the play set, clean and level the yard surrounding it, and replace a door to the deck that has been sealed.

• This outdoor area is bordered by one wall of the kitchen/dining hall and a wall of the food pantry. When the participants finish cleaning the grounds and repairing these walls, Computer Graphic Design and Interior Design students will create murals on these external walls with children’s themes. Students are also working on murals in the dining hall.

Looking ahead

This Fall students have planned a celebration at the Center of Hope including performances by a practicing magician and two bands made up of SCTD students. Faculty and students will serve the meal planned and prepared under the guidance of Chef Tim Tucker, a graduate of Sullivan University’s Culinary Arts program. The college is also sponsoring a school supplies drive for the 27 children currently served by the Center.

Everybody wins

Allison Niemann, Computer Graphic Design BA student, says that she has learned a lot and benefited hugely from her work with the Center of Hope. David Lewis, an HVAC-R student, says that he was helped by someone once in his life and he just appreciates the opportunity to “pay it forward.” Carla Wallace, Interior Design instructor, says that such service to others “gets a person out of focusing on his own problems and lets the person see a bigger purpose to his existence ... plus it just feels good to do something useful for others.” Matt Yates says that what the college has done for his ministry is well beyond his greatest expectations. He says, “We are so blessed to have SCTD as a partner!”

The Center of Hope’s director, Matt Yates, recently presented SCTD with the Hometown Partner award for the work the college has done (so far) at the Center of Hope. The award is given each year at the annual meeting of the Coalition for the Homeless, Inc.

Dr. Sheree P. Koppel, Academic Dean, accepted the award from Matt Yates. Natalie Harris, Executive Director of the Coalition for the Homeless, is also pictured.