



## THE STUDENTS OF PROJECT HOME MAKE AN IMPACT

It's an unwritten rule on most college campuses that Saturday mornings are sacrosanct. Between classes and jobs, every hour of the week is jam-packed with required activity. Don't mess with an exhausted college student's Saturday.

But for seven years, a dedicated group of Guilford students have flouted this convention. Every Saturday while classes are in session, at an hour where even young children aren't even awake for their Saturday morning cartoons, you'll find small groups of volunteers fanning out into Greensboro's neediest areas, ready to work.

They're part of Project Home, a student-run service project that coordinates with Greensboro's Habitat for Humanity Home Repair to find houses in need of everything from yard work to major remodeling.

"A lot of the homes that we work on, the families are getting the work done at a reduced rate. So this is a need in the community," says project co-coordinator Cedric Essa '09. Essah, who has worked with Project Home since his first year

as part of his Bonner Scholars service, recruits other students into the pool of about 30 Project Home volunteers.

One of the challenges that Essah and co-coordinator Michelle Fanguy '10 face is finding students who are committed enough to come out on a consistent basis. "It is really hard for college students to get up on Saturday mornings and take six or seven hours out of their day and do some service work," says Essah.

On a sunny morning in early October, Essah and Fanguy gathered together one of their largest groups to start replacing a roof on a house on Madre Place, near Greenfield Park. "We had to take off old shingles and put new ones down. And there were about 20 of us out there on the roof," Essah says. "We didn't finish, but we got to a good stopping point. We had a goal set and we met that."

As a Bonner Scholar, Essah has also volunteered as a tutor at a local homeless shelter and at Guilford Correctional Center in McLeansville, N.C. While those experiences were eye-opening, the

type of service offered by Project Home has special appeal, he says. It reminds him of the work he did growing up in Charlotte, N.C., with Men of Acts, a group at his church that also did maintenance and repair at local homes.

"With Project Home, this type of service is hands-on. I like something I can do that involves my hands. And also, the service you're performing, you get to see the change you're creating right there in front of you. You can almost see the impact you're making as you're working on the home. That's something that's kind of fulfilling for me," he says.

"I've been very fortunate to have the opportunity to do this type of service work," he says. "And also to work with a great group of volunteers ... in my mind, I feel like the volunteers I work with, they're all outstanding. They all contribute in some way, and it's very helpful, not only to me but to the families they're serving." - S.B.