



# WORKS OF HEART

## How Healing Happens



The St. Paul Promise Neighborhood area encompasses a 250-block area in the Summit-University and Frogtown neighborhoods in St. Paul. Two public elementary schools are located within that area, Jackson and Maxfield Elementary Schools. Guided by the overall values of the Promise Neighborhood project (engaging the community and building on community strengths) and by its purposeful focus on seeking out and forging new and creative partnerships, Hearts & Hammers will join the Promise Neighborhood Initiative by focusing its services this year within the Promise Neighborhood regions. In addition, Hearts & Hammers plans, specifically, to select one (or more) home(s) from each of the elementary school neighborhoods for restoration.

*Left:*  
**Touching Lives**

*Below:*  
**Restoring Homes**

*Look inside to see the result!*

There is no doubt that a single Hearts & Hammers' home-revitalization deeply changes the lives of the homeowners being helped, but the impact of these restorations can also be seen and felt throughout an entire neighborhood. There are tangible results, of course; for example, overall home values increase; common crime and safety concerns are eliminated; and accessibility for elderly and disabled neighbors is improved. But there are some lovely intangibles as well, such as the restoration of pride in one's neighborhood; increased goodwill and social interaction among neighbors; and the renewal of the close, supportive community ties which make these neighborhoods better places for the families that live there.

Mindful of its larger impact on the communities it serves, Hearts & Hammers is pleased to be joining forces this year with the City of St. Paul as part of an amazing initiative aimed at revitalizing whole communities: the St. Paul Promise Neighborhood Initiative. The Promise Neighborhood effort was inspired by the Harlem Children's Zone in New York City, a community-wide effort which works to ensure that all children succeed in school and in life through coordination of educational, family, and community resources and supports. St. Paul is one of 21 communities across the nation selected to receive a Promise Neighborhood planning grant from the United States Department of Education.

Hearts & Hammers' partnership with the Promise Neighborhood Initiative will enable our volunteers to contribute their hard work, dedication, and expertise here in the St. Paul Promise Neighborhood to a larger, nationwide movement that will work, one home at a time, one neighborhood at a time, to restore the security, vitality, and sense of community missing for so many children and their families today. Hearts & Hammers is very excited to be a part of this healing initiative.



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# Qualifying Homeowners



**Mike Hutson**  
Executive  
Director

When I tell people that finding homeowners to help is one of the most difficult challenges we face each year, they are astonished. Unfortunately, finding homeowners is only half the battle; even when we attract enough applicants, there is always the equally challenging task of qualifying them.

After receiving an application, we must first determine if the preliminary guidelines on the homeowner application are met. An initial assessment of the site is done to see whether or not there is sufficient work for one of our volunteer teams. If the house looks needy (peeling paint, visible damage, overgrown yard, etc.), it is then selected for a formal home inspection, conducted by a two- or three-person team from our Board of Directors.

There is more to the formal inspection than just examining the house, however. While that is an important step, during the inspection, we also try to ensure that the homeowner is deserving of the service we will be providing them. How do we

determine what deserving is? It would certainly be easier if every homeowner were the ideal candidate (seventy-five years old, fixed income, no family, etc.), but the reality is that there are many deserving individuals in our community who don't neatly fit that description. So how do we make those difficult determinations?

Nearly all of our Board Members have served as Team Captains, responsible to their respective organizations for the coordination of a successful Hearts & Hammers event. Because of this, they recognize exactly what a successful experience on Program Day looks like, so we rely heavily on their experience and intuition during home inspections and homeowner interviews. Of course, it is not a perfect science, but that's precisely why the past experiences and keen judgment of our Board members are so vital.

Ultimately, the success (or failure) of Hearts & Hammers depends on the passion and expertise of the volunteers who do the work; our Board Members do a tremendous job of selecting the best projects for our teams and, in the end, the most deserving homeowners.



**A home restored, a life touched and a step toward healing a community.**

## Board Update

Hearts & Hammers is pleased to announce that Michael Fenner (Target Corporation) was elected as Vice Chair on August 14, 2010, and will continue to serve in this capacity for 2011. The Board of Directors also warmly welcomes two new members: Dan Sweeney (Medtronic) and Ryan Stai (Leonard Street and Deinard). Brad Harvey (Kraus-Anderson Construction), previously a Board member from 2007 to 2009, has rejoined the Board after serving on the Hearts & Hammers Volunteer Council in 2010. In addition, John Krenn (Gray Plant Mooty), Steven Olinger (Nerica), Karl Weissenborn (KEW Consulting Services) and Patrick Zimmerman (3M) have requested to extend their terms for another year.

# Volunteer Council 101

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One of the greatest strengths of the Hearts & Hammers organization has always been its large number of dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers. As the organization has grown, so has its volunteer force, resulting in an ever-increasing Board. As the Board grew, however, its sheer size made it less efficient. In 2009, one of the significant findings of Hearts & Hammers' Organizational Effectiveness Initiative was that the size of the Board had become untenable, so the decision was made to create a Volunteer Council.

The philosophy behind this decision was to shrink the original, much-larger Board down to a smaller, core group of highly-involved individuals who would take an active role in the strategic vision of the organization, while simultaneously establishing the Volunteer Council, comprised of non-Board members who participate in a more limited but highly focused manner targeting their specific availability and areas of expertise.

Where in the past, all Board members participated at all levels of the organization, Volunteer Council

members work within specific committees such as Home Coordination, Technical/Logistics, Development and Communications. Refining expectations through the Volunteer Council helps volunteers become more engaged and effective by targeting where they can contribute their skills to Hearts & Hammers' greatest advantage, while offering them a more manageable time commitment. This tailoring of volunteer commitments, in turn, creates a more positive, fulfilling experience for volunteers, increasing volunteer retention and involvement. And of course, the more volunteers involved in the organization, the bigger Hearts & Hammers' circle of friends becomes, helping the organization expand the number of home-owners in need it is able to serve each year—an achievement that all of our volunteers, no matter their level of commitment, can support.



**Our volunteers put the heart in Hearts & Hammers**

## H&H Spotlight on Eric Stendahl

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Back in 2007, Eric Stendahl, owner of Sage Homes, Inc., noticed that he had a lot of excess product "laying around": windows, doors, etc. He wanted to see if any local organizations might be able to use what he had, so he called Hearts & Hammers. Little did he know that three short years later, he'd find himself serving as Treasurer for the Hearts & Hammers Board of Directors.

When Eric first began working with Hearts & Hammers, he and his company would volunteer labor and materials for Program Day projects, including repairing or replacing windows, doors, and porches. Since that time, Sage Homes and its volunteers have grown into what Eric calls "The team before the team": "There is a lot of work that goes into a successful Program Day," he says. "Hearts & Hammers relies on its contractor component to ready the house for painting. We come in one week up to one month prior to Program Day and do structural and cosmetic prep work—[which could include] replacing siding or windows, fixing gutters, etc; we may even do a little follow-up work [after a Program Day]. Program Day is the culmination of weeks of preparation."

Aside from the dedication and expertise he brings to the Hearts & Hammers' Board, Eric also has a keen understanding of the importance of the

volunteer experience to a successful Program Day: "Our volunteers expect to be able to make an impact in someone's life. Our 'customer' is not necessarily the homeowners; it is the organizations that are volunteering. They want to feel satisfied."

Understanding that intrinsic satisfaction and helping others to experience it keeps Eric coming back for more:

"Because of the work we do on the houses prior to Program Day, I get a chance to meet and talk with homeowners on a regular basis as we are working on their house - especially our elderly homeowners. I get to know what they did for a living, how they are dealing with some of the challenges in their life (like illness), how they are dealing with a loss of a spouse. The deep appreciation that these homeowners express to me for what Hearts & Hammers is doing for them, bolsters my resolve to do this again. I have several best memories and at the center of each of them is the homeowner who I got a chance to know and help...it's the reason I stay to help every year."

**Eric Stendahl**  
Treasurer



# New Home for Our Hammers



It's somewhat ironic that Hearts & Hammers, an organization dedicated to

helping homeowners save their homes, has not, to date, had a "home" to call its own. Warehouse space for materials, tools, and supplies is something Hearts & Hammers traditionally has shared with local partner organizations, while Board and committee meetings have regularly been held in various "mobile offices" (i.e., area businesses, churches, or coffee shops.)

But thanks to the generous support of the Target Corporation, all that is about to change: Two years ago, Hearts & Hammers first began inquiring about possible warehouse spaces, but there were none available at that time. This year, the call for space was sent out again, resulting in calls from Target Corporation about several possible locations.

Hearts & Hammers' Executive Director, Mike Hutson and Board members Mike Moore and Mike Fenner toured the available spaces and was impressed with one located in Fridley, saying it was "better than anything he could have imagined." At approximately 6,000 square feet, the Fridley space has a large, dedicated warehouse space, two offices, a conference room and a loading dock, as well as two covered drive-up loading areas. In addition, the fenced, stand-alone property already has its own security system, making it ideal for safely storing supplies and tools.

Happily, with Target's generous support, the space turned out to be available for a three-year "free lease," which will finally provide Hearts & Hammers with a home of its own. Having a central space to store tools, paint, and supplies, and a formal meeting space for its Board and the various committees of the Volunteer Council will improve the logistics and effectiveness of the organization. Hearts & Hammers is grateful to Target for its generous support.



**HEARTS & HAMMERS**  
Restoring Homes. Touching Lives.

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\*Denotes home sponsors who provide volunteers and funding for the homes being restored.