

## PONTIAC

# Rebuilding Together repairs Oakland homes

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When Jessie Lucien moved into her home in the Pontiac Knolls subdivision, Lyndon Johnson was president and the Beatles were hitting the top of the charts for the first time.

Johnson isn't alive anymore and The Beatles broke up a long time ago, but Lucien is still in her home. This weekend, a team of volun-



Lucien

teers from Rebuilding Together Oakland County will lend her a helping hand with new paint inside and out, a new stovetop,

a new garage door and safety upgrades.

"It's very generous," said Lucien, 76, of what's known as Rebuild Day. She learned

## FYI

For more information about Rebuilding Together Oakland County, visit [www.rebuilding-together-oaklandcounty.org](http://www.rebuilding-together-oaklandcounty.org), call 248-432-655, find the nonprofit on Facebook or follow them on Twitter @RT\_OC.

about the program from a friend.

Her husband, Thomas Mitchell Lucien, died in 1984. He served in the U.S. Navy

during the Korean War and later worked for Pontiac Motors and Oldsmobile. Plaques marking his career achievements adorn the wall near Lucien's front door.

Louise Beller, a board member at Rebuilding Together, said Lucien told her that Thomas would often plow their neighbor's driveway when it snowed and always helped others.

"It's payback time," Beller said.

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## Rebuilding

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Lucien's home is one of six in Pontiac and 46 in Oakland County that will be repaired with the help of about 1,000 volunteers Saturday.

Booz Allen Hamilton is the primary sponsor of the repairs at Lucien's home, and volunteers from St. Luke's United Methodist Church in Rochester Hills are helping, too. More than 30 people will work together to complete the work on the Pontiac home in one day.

Lucien pays her mortgage and keeps the house up using her Social Security income. She's had to travel to New Orleans frequently to care for an ill sister.

"Yes, it has been hard," she said Friday.

Lucien said that Pontiac's a different city than the one she moved to in 1964.

"General Motors had everything sewn up here in Pontiac. And now it's just about the opposite."

Kurt Dreher works as program manager for Rebuilding Together Oakland

County, a position sponsored by Bank of America. He said the nonprofit is able to leverage donations and sponsorships with the use of volunteer labor.

"If she were to go out and have contractors do the work we're going to do, it'd probably cost her \$5,000."

In West Bloomfield Township, Rebuilding Together volunteers plan to install an accessible bathroom at the home of Scott McCullough. His 13-year-old daughter, Molly, has cerebral palsy and has had to be carried to the home's second-floor bathroom.

Next weekend, the nonprofit is targeting a Southfield neighborhood for improvement, in the area bounded by 8 Mile Road, Inkster Road, Shiawassee Road and Indian Street.

Dreher said Rebuilding Together's work includes both the annual rebuild day and year-round minor home repairs

"It's more and more needed, as funding has been harder and harder to get," Dreher said.

Lucien's granddaughter, Adriana, was visiting Friday.

"I think it's a blessing to help my granny," she said.