

SWOOP Helen Wright Center - Saturday, March 13, 2010

### **New Friends, New Partnerships**

SWOOP returned Saturday, March 13th to the Helen Wright Women's Center in Raleigh for an encore performance, with a twist. This facelift of the main dormitory area was sponsored by the Infinity Diamond Club, with SWOOPers providing the labor to match IDC's supplies. This is the second time in recent years that SWOOP has worked on the downtown Raleigh women's shelter. SWOOP Co-founder LeAnn Wallace remembers painting the center back in July of 2000.

The partnership with Infinity Diamond Club is a new one for SWOOP, which was honored by the social empowerment organization at its 2009 women's conference. Co-founder Priscilla Coleman says when IDC needed workers for the women's center project, SWOOP was a natural choice. Saturday about two dozen SWOOPERS refurbished lockers and patched and painted the main dormitory area while IDC supplied lunch and materials for the job. Infinity Diamond Club is a social network that provides support for men, women and communities who might not otherwise find it through traditional family ties. IDC co-founder Annie Ross says she'd like to see her group partner with SWOOP again.

Pat Kingsberry of the Helen Wright Center offered heartfelt thanks to both organizations saying, "Rejuvenating the Center inspires women to want to move on and lets them know that society hasn't forgotten about them."

The partnership with IDC wasn't the only first for SWOOP, several new faces could be seen on the job site. First time SWOOPer Emily Schneider spent the day spackling, sanding and painting under Pam Gayheart's direction. Emily first learned about SWOOP several years ago at the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure, but Saturday was her very first work day. Pam has been SWOOPing for several years now, and headed up the paint crew for the women's center facelift. She says her favorite part of SWOOP work days is the great feeling you have at the end of the day. "It feels good to help people who really need help and appreciate it."

Pam says she starting coming to SWOOP two or three years ago after hearing about it from a friend. Word of mouth seems to be a popular way of recruiting new SWOOPERS. Bobbi Sauls also heard about SWOOP through a friend. She's been SWOOPING for several years and loves the painting jobs the most. Bobbi says, "I tell a lot of people about SWOOP because I think it's a great organization." Despite a mailing list of more than 1200 people, there are still many folks in the triangle area who don't know about SWOOP. As SWOOP continues to network and recruit new volunteers members can do their part by telling a friend, or better yet, bringing one to the next work day!