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Winging it: Temple foundation helps people with house repairs related to coronavirus pandemic

BY SHANE MONACO | TELEGRAM STAFF
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While hand washing has become an important routine lately, some residents have not had what they needed to keep healthy — water.

Residents in Temple are now being helped by the nonprofit Zoe's Wings Foundation to get this needed resource. The foundation, which normally helps residents make home repairs, has shifted to focusing mainly on those who need repairs related to the coronavirus.

Zoe Grant, president of the foundation, said helping through the foundation, which she founded in 2019, is important especially during this pandemic.

"What we are finding now, especially with COVID-19, we are actually finding homes without water running through there," Grant said. "So (some residents either) turn off the water, and turn it on when they need it, or they don't have any water and have to buy it from the store. And then there are houses with water, but no hot water."

Grant said her organization mostly has been helping residents in West Temple, though they help anyone in the city, by replacing water heaters and old corroded pipes.

At the start of the pandemic, Grant said she had received a list of 35 resident's names from the city who her organization could help. The foundation has helped seven households get repaired since the start of the year.

Grant said she is currently waiting on hot water heaters for five more homes, and has several more homes that need to be completely refitted with new pipes.

Temple's Neighborhood Services Manager Nancy Glover said the city is currently working with three local nonprofits for home repairs. She said the city already has committed all of its current funding for projects but is encouraging residents to contact the city so it can find them help.

While many residents are usually quiet about their need for aid, Grant said that started to change as more kids stayed home from school and water was needed more reliably.

"Before, kids used to go to school and didn't need to deal with not having those amenities when they were at home," Grant said. "(It is) the same with parents who are now working from home or not working at all. We are hearing about these (problems) now because they are more immediate because (people) are home."

Though the foundation is currently looking at housing issues that could affect the coronavirus cases, Grant said her organization is keeping a list of those they have helped that need more repairs. She said she hopes to be able to get back to these homes once the virus is more contained.

Grant said the foundation, which is funded completely by grants and donations, can't afford to repair every problem in these homes right now and needs to spread the money around.

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