

BEING A GOOD NEIGHBOR



STEVEN VALENTI REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

Mark Williamson of Bristol spray washes a sidewalk at a home on Chestnut Hill Road in Waterbury on Saturday. Volunteers from the Waterbury Church of Christ spent time helping Isabella Griffin, 79, with her property.

Church work crew does yard work for widow

BY QUANNAH LEONARD
REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

WATERBURY — The loud sound of a pressure washer filtered into the living room of Isabella Griffin as she spoke with a Waterbury Church of Christ parishioner.

That industrious music accompanied by other yard work-related sounds blanketed her

property on Chestnut Hill Road for about three hours Saturday morning. At least 20 church volunteers raked her yard, trimmed trees, spray washed her walkway, weeded, painted her doors a cheery pink and stained her deck.

"It does mean a lot," said Griffin, 79, who is legally blind and has arthritis. "Appreciation is very difficult to express,

I think."

Volunteers from the Waterbury Church of Christ on North Main Street showed up at Griffin's white house with black shutters shortly after 9 a.m. They posted a bright yellow sign in her front yard that read: "Waterbury Church of Christ Service Project (203) 753-6765 www.WaterburyChurch.org." Then they went to work.

Minister Jim Crisp, who worked along side his parishioners, said the church wants to make this a regular part of what it does in the community. On a Sunday, 160 people attend the church, which is in the Bucks Hill neighborhood.

"One nice thing about Isabella is that her and her husband

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were part of the Bucks Hill community for many years," Crisp said. "They served others and now it's an opportunity for us to serve her."

He said it's a wonderful act for the church to do because it builds community within the fellowship and is a way to give to the community.

The president of the Bucks Hill Community Club, of which the church is a member, helped the church find Griffin, said Jim Smith, a parishioner who is in charge of publicity. This is part of a bigger vision for the church, he said.

The fellowship believes in doing acts of benevolence and serving others, and wants to bring the church out of the building and into the neighborhood, Smith said.

Jennifer Williams, of Bristol who has been a parishioner for at least five years,

helped rake and weed Griffin's yard.

"It's really something — if it's in your heart — it's really not a large effort," Williams said.

Providing for others should be instinctual, she said.

Parishioner Ruth Plumb kept Griffin company while the work continued in the background.

Plumb said she was happy to have met Griffin because she discovered they have much in common.

Griffin, who is a widow, has lived in the house since 1958. She worked at City Hall as a telephone operator before retiring in 1993, and as a secretary at St. Michael's Rectory until she retired in 2002.

Less than a month ago, Griffin said she got a call from Crisp asking her if she could use some help. She replied, "Could I ever?"

She said she thought this was a wonderful idea.