

Building a greater understanding



Jay Janner photos AMERICAN STATESMAN

Volunteers, including, from left, Cindy Zieve, Fatima Ahmed, Kamaal Ahmed and Lori Kadosh, fixed up a house on East Fifth Street in Austin on Sunday as part of an Austin Area Interreligious Ministries program.

Muslims, Jews unite to help

About 65 volunteers join to repair, spruce up house in East Austin

By Molly Bloom

AMERICAN STATESMAN STAFF

After the Sept. 11 attacks, a group of Jewish Austinites decided to reach out to local Muslims to build a bridge between two often-estranged communities. Since then, the groups' construction efforts have expanded.

On Sunday, about 65 Muslim and Jewish volunteers descended on Concepcion Limon's five-room house on East Fifth Street to revamp her kitchen, repaint the brick-red trim and repair rotting siding.

"We figured we would show the world that Muslims and Jews can work together," said organizer Chuck Vorspan, 59, of Congregation Beth Israel.

Limon, 85, a Catholic whose dining room walls bear crucifixes and paintings of Mary and Jesus, was glad that they worked on her house, which her father built more than 80 years ago.



Lori Kadosh, left, and Fatima Ahmed check out the work they've done on the five-room home of Concepcion Limon, 85.

Limon's home is the fifth that members of Muslim Community Support Services, the Central Texas Muslamaat Congregation Beth Israel and Congregation Agudas Achim have repaired

bar mitzvah, squeezed between appliances to put a new coat of cream-colored paint on Limon's kitchen walls.

Fixing up an Austin home might not bring peace to the Middle East,