

Nana's House a home away from home for some children

Maria Sonnenberg, For FLORIDA TODAY; 1:55 p.m. EDT April 23, 2014



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The nightmares started at the worst possible time, just after Kim Frodge and husband Eric had just launched a new business.

"They would keep me awake at night," Frodge said.

Every night, Frodge would fall asleep to be awakened by the cries of children who needed a home. Because of the dreams, Frodge began volunteering at a children's home, where she discovered just how real her dreams were and how great the need was for a facility to house children whose parents cannot care for them because of substance abuse, illness or homelessness.

She launched Nana's House in Malabar on a wing and many prayers. Volunteers came forth, as did donations. Five years ago, the first home became a reality.

"We're supported 100 percent by volunteers and donations," Frodge said.

Frodge and her volunteers are currently renovating the third Nana's House, which already has a waiting list. Each of the homes house five children ranging in age from 5 months to 7 years of age. Parents voluntarily relinquish guardianship of their child for as long as it takes until the adults can again assume the responsibility.

Although the parents retain visitation rights, responsibility for raising the youngsters falls upon the house parents, all volunteers who willingly agree to the 24/7 job.

House parents are provided with living accommodations and the cost of running the home, but no more. Frodge is currently searching for house parents for the latest Nana's House. The homes provide a traditional, secure family setting instead of the institutional atmosphere of group homes.

Frodge is also looking for at least

4 acres of land where Nana's House can grow into a community of eight homes for children.

"We would be able to house 40 kids in these eight houses," Frodge said.

"Last year, we had to turn away 86 children because we have been full in our other two homes."

Frodge is certain the community will come forth for help, as it has in the past. The first Nana's House was purchased with donations, while the other two were directly donated to the charity. Volunteer labor and materials donations, including a \$25,000 roof, enabled the organization to renovate the homes.

"God will tell us what to do next," Frodge said.

Help Nana's House

Nana's House No. 3 needs volunteers from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. No experience is necessary, and lunch will be provided. Volunteers are also needed for Nana's two thrift cottages, which provide funds to operate the homes. Nana's House is also currently accepting applications for house parents for its third house. The organization also seeks donations of two gently used, seven-passenger vans and 4 to 9 acres of land. For information, call 321-266-3829.

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