

# Code Enforcement Employee Recruits Colleagues for Realtors Care Day Home Repair

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This year's Realtors Care Day personified the true meaning of compassion and community collaboration. The annual event, led by the Canopy Housing Foundation Initiative, brings together local realtors to assist with exterior home renovations, and offer support to those needing safety modifications and critical repairs in the Charlotte area. Homes selected for renovations, at no cost, are chosen by the foundation's partners such as the City of Charlotte and Habitat for Humanity.

One day while working his shift, Charlotte Code Inspector Carl Canterbury received a complaint about a property and went to observe the home. Upon arrival he noticed that it had excess cars that did not function, litter around the house, and that the home's conditions were dilapidated. Code Enforcement would typically open a case against the property for minimum housing code and do a full inspection. Yet, "After speaking with the owner and realizing that she didn't have the means," said Canterbury, "I spoke with Millicent [Powell] from Community Engagement and got the owner to fill out the paperwork for Realtors Care Day."





In addition to connecting the homeowner to resources, Canterbury recruited his colleagues to physically assist in restoring the home. With a background in construction, he was not afraid to get his hands dirty. He, along with the other volunteers, repaired the home's fascia and soffit area, cleaned the gutters, cut down bushes, installed a window in lieu of its boarded-up plywood, rectified holes, and removed vegetation on the roof to ensure that it remains weather tight.





These actions are completely outside the typical scope of services for Code Enforcement, as the responsibility for repairing a home normally falls on the owner.

"Code [enforcement] actually going above and beyond to provide a service, that was immeasurable. That doesn't happen," Chad Martin, the Southwest Service Area Liaison who works closely with Powell, said. "It was something that they didn't have to do, but to see them with ladders on top of the roof, nailing different things to the house, that was amazing. That's unique."

Canterbury knew that if additional volunteers participated, it would lead to greater impact and allow the homeowner to sleep in a safer home. "It just felt good to help somebody that probably didn't have the means to do it otherwise," he said. In his line of work, people can often view him as the bearer of bad news. However, he does understand the struggles associated with life. "We have hearts, too," he shared.





The homeowner's family was ecstatic, making the volunteer efforts well worth it. "We get to see the work that we do actually take place in those neighborhoods. We get to see the enjoyment that the residents in those neighborhoods who receive those services get. I think that it's great to not only see the work, but to also see the residents, and how they beam and they smile, and how appreciative they are for the work that's actually done related to Realtors Care Day."

While many view this as a single day of service, it's important to note that it is the culmination of year-round relationship building done between City of Charlotte staff and residents. It takes a lot of trust building for someone to open their doors and allow people access to their homes, which is work that couldn't necessarily be summarized in a single day.



Canterbury's actions have already motivated his colleagues to want to pick up the baton to go over and above to offer our community more support. Martin said, "[This project was] sort of a challenge to the rest of us. If Code [Enforcement] can go out and actually do the work in the community, where they're putting their hands on the work that needs to be done in the community, then why can't we do the same thing?"

