

HOME LIFE

Glorious groundbreaking set for summer

Construction to start on first of five group homes

By Terri Chance
For the Enterprise

A special community for a group of special people will move from dream to reality this summer, when Glory Community begins construction on the first of five group homes near Northmoor Park.

The organization assists adults who have developmental disabilities, but are capable of living fairly independently. Every home, to be built just north of Bal Swan Children's Center, will provide private rooms for eight adults, as well as an apartment for an experienced caregiver.

The idea was born when twins Mike and Mark Hembd were born in 1968. The sons of Broomfield residents Jim and Sandy Hembd have Down syndrome, and as the boys grew, their parents realized there weren't many options for independent living in Colorado, let alone Broomfield.

Sandy Hembd said there are 12,000 developmentally disabled adults on a list waiting for an independent living situation in Colorado. Unfortunately, she said, Colorado is 46th in the country when it comes to assistance from the state for such programs.

The Hembds have been raising money for five years to make the Glory Community dream come true. In April, they will hold the fifth annual Glory Gala fundraiser, complete with live auction and musical review. Tickets are \$80 and include dinner.

"We hope to raise \$50,000," Sandy Hembd said, "but so far



Photo by DAVID R. JENNINGS / Broomfield Enterprise

▲ GLORY COMMUNITY INSPIRATION: Mark and Mike Hembd, 42, are all smiles at the site where ground will be broken this summer on Glory Community. The twins' parents, Sandy and Jim Hembd, are the driving force behind Glory Community, which will provide five group homes for adults with developmental disabilities.

registration is way down and I'm getting nervous. This type of thing has to be supported by the community and corporations."

The Hembds wanted to give their boys an enhanced and independent life. The twins each have jobs they love, and Sandy Hembd said it gives them tremendous self-worth. While the boys both work — Mike at the University of Colorado Athletic Department, and Mark at Hunter Douglas — they are still living at home, but Sandy Hembd believes it is time for them to be more independent.

"The boys have the capabilities to take care of themselves, but they like living at home, because I do everything for them," she laughed.

Many disabled adults live in a foster care environment, Sandy Hembd said, and find themselves with a new ad-

dress about every six months. Caregivers tend to open their homes, but find the work is much harder than anticipated. They change their minds, and a young man or woman has to find another foster home, she said.

"It's so sad," Sandy Hembd said, "because these are the kind of people who need stability. They deserve a life of quality."

Each of the five group homes, which will be built on 2.5 acres, will be a 5,000-plus square foot facility and will offer a family living environment, in which residents will feel as if they are living with siblings. Everyone will be responsible for chores, help with meal preparation and work outside of the home. The caregiver will be salaried and experienced, and whether single or a married couple, will take on the parenting role.

Each home also will have a 10-person van that will transport residents to and from their jobs, as well as to the many planned activities and educational opportunities the group will have.

"We'll keep the van in the garage, so the community doesn't have to see it parked in front of the house," Sandy Hembd said.

Glory Community works closely with FRIENDS of Broomfield, since Mike and Mark Hembd have participated in many of the organization's activities, including Men's Night Out. Sandy Hembd said she is a "friend of FRIENDS."

But while the adult day care and daily activities offered by FRIENDS have been great for the twins and others in the same situation, around-the-clock care is more difficult to come by.

IFYOUGO

What: Fifth annual Glory Gala, "Happy Days"

Includes: The 17th Avenue Allstars performing a 1950s-60s "doo-wop" musical review, dinner, cash bar and silent and live auctions

When: 5 to 9 p.m. April 9

Where: The Arvada Center for the Arts and Humanities, 6901 Wadsworth Blvd.

Tickets: \$80, must be purchased by March 30. Proceeds benefit Glory Community.

Information:
www.glorycommunity.org

Executive director of FRIENDS, Gina Coufal, supports the Hembds' desire to construct the homes in Broomfield. As a parent of a young adult who has intellectual disabilities, Coufal said that as parents age, it becomes more difficult to care for an adult with special needs.

"The family goes into crisis mode, because they never get a break," Coufal said, "and finding providers they can trust or count on is difficult."

From the other side of the coin, Coufal said individuals need to experience life, such as moving out and living with peers.

"They need to have a job to feel like they are needed, as valued contributing members of their community," Coufal said.

Glory Community is a faith-based Christian community, and will be mostly self-supporting. One of the goals is to be less dependent on government aid. However, Sandy Hembd said it is in need of lots of volunteers and donations to make it work.

"If we had a couple of kazillionaires, we'd love it," she said. "We're happy that so many people in the community have been so supportive. The lord has led so many phenomenal people to us."