

# Local businesses, organizations work together to benefit Recovery Farm



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MEDINA — With the help of about 20 volunteers from seven different organizations, Medina's Recovery Farm began the installation of a hoop house to help extend the farm's produce season.

A hoop house, similar to a greenhouse, is a semipermanent structure.

Cathy's House Executive Director Jon Robinson said the hoop house will allow the Recovery Farm to extend the season and provide the chance to start the season earlier and possibly even keep crops year-round.

"It's another opportunity for people to learn in a different environment," he said.

Once fully installed, the hoop house will become part of what the Recovery Farm does day in and day out.

In December, Medina County Park District entered a 10-year lease agreement with Cathy's House, creating a partnership at the Brown-Trump Homestead between the park district, Cathy's House and Hope Recovery Community.

The Brown-Trump Homestead, 4092 Medina Road, consists of a Victorian home, two other houses and approximately 17 acres of farmland.

The property once was owned by prominent antiques dealers Edson Brown and Ross Trump, who wished for the property to be preserved as a working farm for cultural, educational and aesthetic purposes.

To preserve the land, the two created a conservation easement that is now held by the Western Reserve Land Conservancy. After both men died, a committee was appointed by the estate to select an organization that could fulfill Brown and Trump's wish.

Parks Director Nate Eppink spent about a year working with local nonprofits to create the Brown-Trump Homestead, which will combine the efforts of at least five nonprofits and the district.

After six months of work, the farm quickly transformed from acres of land and buildings that needed repair into a working farm with a large garden, goats, chickens and recovery housing for 12 men who have substance abuse disorders.

"At this point, over 500 pounds of produce have been donated to (Feeding Medina County)," Hope Recovery Community Executive Director Stefanie Robinson said, who is also Jon Robinson's wife. "You have people in recovery literally battling local food insecurities. That is not happening anywhere else in the United States."

On Friday morning, people from seven local businesses and organizations gathered at the Recovery Farm to build a hoop house, which was funded by United Way of Summit and Medina.

The local businesses and organizations include Cathy's House, Hope Recovery Community, United Way, Feeding Medina County, MTPD, Crop King and the Medina County ADAMH Board.

"Part of what we work on here in Medina County is mental health and basic needs," United Way of Summit and Medina Associate Vice President Paul Khacherian said. "Given that the primary focus on this farm is to help people who are in recovery, a big portion of that is the mental health piece."

Seeing that the project serves several aspects of United Way's focus and the farm supports Feeding Medina County, which United Way financially supports, it seemed like a no-brainer to help with the funding, Khacherian said.

Stefanie Robinson said that the hoop house is a symbol of collaboration at the highest level. In addition, she said it's a sign that stigma around addiction is disappearing within Medina County.

“This farm really symbolizes that we believe in second chances,” Stefanie Robinson said. “We’re making an investment and we’re seeing the possibility of recovery and I’m just really moved by that.”

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