



Volunteers Work to Improve Child Development Center in North Mpls.

By: Cleo Greene

August 8, 2015

<http://kstp.com/article/stories/s3874081.shtml>

The Northside Child Development Center in North Minneapolis has provided services for at-risk families for 30 years—but it's now showing decades of wear and tear.

On Saturday, volunteers from Twin Cities Black Journalists teamed up with other community organizations to make a change.

Will Wright did not hesitate to saw through a hanging tree limb at the Catholic Charities' Northside Child Development Center as part of a clean-up effort.

"Why not?," Wright said. "Every organization needs help."

Keith Kozerski, the director of children family services, said the center needs a makeover.

"Places like North Minneapolis often get overlooked by the community," Kozerski said. "So we have community volunteers out here making sure our environment looks great for kids."

Many of the community volunteers are also members of the Twin Cities Black Journalists, including KSTP's Brandi Powell.

Twin Cities Black Journalists President Duchesne Drew said participating at the center benefits more than those who volunteer to clean and organize.

"This place is a great opportunity to help kids get a solid start," Drew said. "It's daycare center that's taking little kids and getting them ready for the world that awaits them."

Drew said the work is a part of a community volunteer activity to coincide with NABJ's convention, which celebrated its 40th anniversary this weekend in Minneapolis.

"This is an opportunity to make an investment beyond the journalism that we do in the community," Drew said.

Additionally, Greater Twin Cities United Way is making an investment too by funding several projects.

"We are also celebrating our centennial by engaging 100,000 volunteers this year, which is a significant number of people who really care about improving the quality of life in our community," one Greater Twin Cities United Way volunteer said.

It's a quality of life that Wright is working to provide; one that will show a visible change in the community.

Organizers said several building improvements are scheduled for completion in mid-October. They said those improvements will result in a cleaner, more sustainable, and healthier learning environment for North Minneapolis youth.