

# Make A Difference Day Inspires Volunteers

By Jonathan Van Dyke  
Staff Writer

Infrastructure repair will be the emphasis for a local non-profit chapter during this year's 20th Annual Make a Difference Day.

Rebuilding Together Long Beach (RTLBB) is helping coordinate efforts during this Saturday's nationwide call for philanthropic acts, board member Tanya Marie Bermudez said.

"What we basically participate in is two different things a year. Make a Difference Day and Rebuild Day," she said. "We don't have a set amount (on how much work we can do), just whatever our budget allows."

This year, RTLBB will work on five different homes and the Eastman Facility of the Boys and Girls Club of Long Beach. The organization tries to help with the elderly and veterans who are in need when possible, Bermudez said.

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- Tanya Bermudez

"If they need bathroom accommodations, or ramps for wheelchairs, or they have painting problems or roofing problems, and they can't afford to solve them, we help," she said. "This is the most amount of projects we've done at any one time. The six projects are kind of a moral victory."

All of the RTLBB volunteers are unpaid, and most have some construction background. Each project will present a unique set of problems, Bermudez said.

Volunteers will install a skirt around a mobile home. They will repair a woman's bedroom screen, install tighter screws around her tub and sink fixtures and repair metal edging at her home. They will give a married couple a tub and a high

toilet. Other volunteers will help install a concrete ramp in a backyard that will flow onto a family's patio.

The home site that will need the most volunteers is a situation where a widow's husband was a hoarder, Bermudez said. Because of that, her house is overloaded with clutter and trash, which has led to city citations.

"We'll help her get her house up to code so she can avoid any more problems with the city," Bermudez said.

The biggest project will be at the Eastman Facility though, she said. About 100 student and staff member volunteers from California State University, Long Beach, will help repair the facility.

"We'll be doing some repairs to their gym from water damage," she said. "I think it's a problem that if it's not rectified it could become unusable."

The facility provides after-school programs and free lunches to about 150 children a day.

The weekend's work shines a light on a problem many people might not be aware of, Bermudez said.

"I would have to say as a community as a whole, we've all been shaken up from the recent downturn in the economy," she said. "The best way to heal is to reach out and help. If we start to uplift and reach out with positive energy, then we all kind of lift up together."

Bermudez said the organization encourages residents to reach out if they know of someone in need of infrastructure rehabilitation.

For more information, visit [www.rebuildingtogetherlongbeach.org](http://www.rebuildingtogetherlongbeach.org).

## Aquarium Has Sea Poetry Fest

The Aquarium of the Pacific will celebrate the ocean and marine life at a "Sea Poetry Festival," starting at 7 p.m. Monday, Oct. 25, at the aquarium, 100 Aquarium Way.

The event focuses on poetry about the ocean and sea otters. The first half of will feature historic and contemporary poetry and include works by the winners of the Urban Ocean High School Poetry Contest and the 2010 Sea Otter Poetry Contest.

In the second half of the program, Robert Carpio will read his poem on sea otters and aquarium staff will present an overview of the other.

Tickets are \$8, \$4 for aquarium members and free for Pacific Circle Members, students and teachers. Reservations are recommended. Call 590-3100, ext. 0.