

GHBA's Remodelors Council members aid local charities

By **K. PICA KAHN**
Homes Correspondent

Local remodeling professionals recently took a day out of their lives to give something back to the community.

With tool belts fastened tightly around their waists, a group of more than 50 remodelers — members of the Greater Houston Builders Association's Remodelors Council — volunteered their time and services to several Catholic Charities projects.

In their regular jobs, these professionals remodel kitchens, enlarge family rooms, add extra bedrooms and bathrooms, and

many more projects for Houston area homeowners.

But Nov. 15, the members of the Remodelors Council provided labor and materials for the charities involving the Villas of Guadalupe at 326 Jensen Drive.

"We got a lot done, but I wouldn't call it work," said Bob Birner of Amazing Siding, spokesman for the Remodelors Council. "It felt really good to do something to help someone else, something to make a difference.

"We built a 20-by-20-foot cover for trucks that come and bring in 15,000 pounds of food every day for the hungry. Their trucks bring the food in for distribution, and if it rains, the food gets wet

and a lot of it is ruined.

"We also constructed a wall in place of a partition for a cubicle to allow more privacy for many of the workers. We put in cabinets in the lunchroom and did some plumbing, supplying a sink and faucet," Birner said.

The kitchen was updated so that staff members could prepare food for themselves.

"We also installed a window so that people could see into the room handling clients so they wouldn't walk in blind to a potentially dangerous situation," Birner said. "Our public relations person, Kenneth Charanza, put the whole thing together. He did a great job. He deserves a lot of credit."

The council participates in one charitable project each year. This year Catholic Charities was the recipient.

Catholic Charities provides services to those in need, without regard to race, religion or socio-economic status. Services include adoption, foster care, family counseling and programs for the elderly, refugees, immigrants and those affected by devastating illnesses.

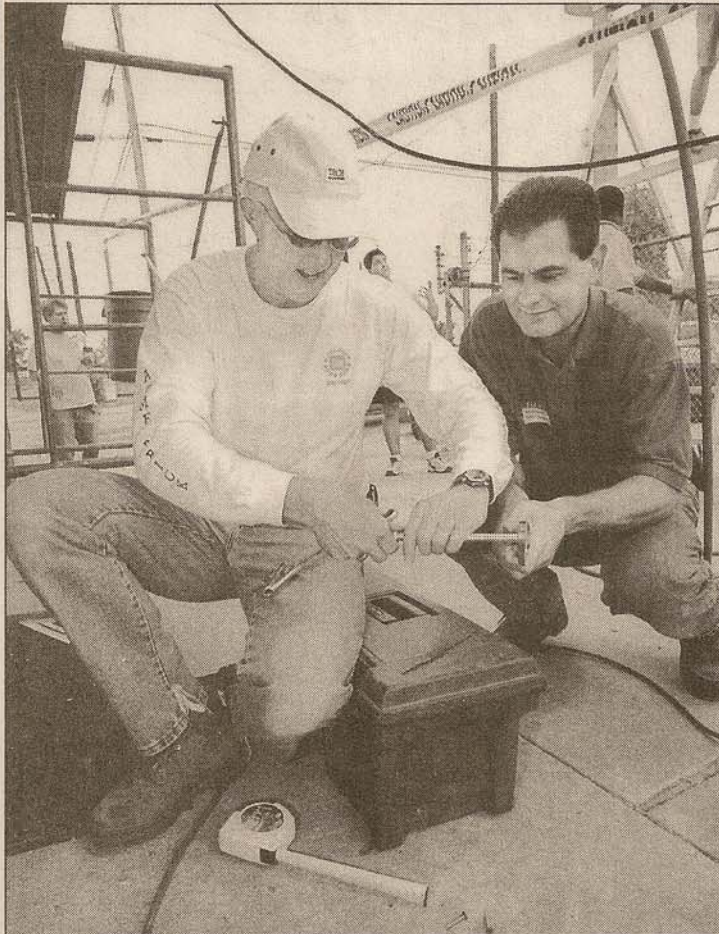
The Remodelors Council projects were completed in one day. Materials were donated from companies in the industry.

"We try to choose a project that can be completed in about one day," said Birner. "We like to be able to do a couple of projects in a day, and if we do it for one organization it seems to work better. It is a great time to get to work with other people in our profession instead of bidding against them. It brings us all together for a good day's work.

"It was really incredible. It took a few hours out of our lives and made a lasting difference."

Birner said he is looking forward to next year's project and wishes there were more opportunities to help the community.

"We are all lucky and although we do provide a service, it feels good to give something back to the community," he said. "I would like for us to do it twice a year starting next year."



Bill Shaw of Wm. Shaw and Associates Inc. and Kenneth Charanza of Charanza Contracting teamed up on the project.