

[Editor's note: This story ran in the April 18 Edition of the Oakland Post. Portions of the full story have been omitted from this release.]

Oakland Law Firm to Remodel Home For 82-year-old Alzheimer's Patient

Oakland -- An 82-year-old African American woman in East Oakland who suffers from Alzheimer's will have her deteriorating home remodeled by a local law firm with a long history of performing pro bono legal work and community service.

A volunteer team that includes attorneys and staff from Donahue Gallagher Woods LLP will begin work on the home of Florida Williams on Sat. April 14. The team will continue the work on 69th Avenue near International Boulevard over the following two Saturdays, and the project will be completed on April 28.

Based in downtown Oakland, Donahue Gallagher is sponsoring the work and investing \$5,000 in the Williams home under the auspices of Rebuilding Together Oakland (RTO), a non-profit agency that remodels homes for indigent residents, many of them African American.

"We're glad that we can be of service to Florida Williams and her daughter Barbara, who takes care of her," said Steven K. Lee, a Donahue Gallagher partner who formerly served as RTO's president and now is a board member. "Several studies have shown that a safe home free of clutter is particularly helpful for people with Alzheimer's."

Indeed, Alzheimer's is a condition of the brain associated with older people that affects thought, memory and language. Experts say this disease is of particular concern to African Americans because they have a greater risk than Caucasians of getting it.

"My mother and I want to thank the volunteers for their help," said Barbara Williams, who cares for her mother while holding down a full-time job. "We're excited to see our home being fixed up and repainted. This is really a big help for us."

The roof in Ms. Williams' bedroom leaks and is discolored, a distracting and potentially unsafe situation. In addition, an exterior wall has deteriorated to the point that it must be replaced.

The Donahue Gallagher team also is repainting the home. Lee said the volunteer crew decided to use different colors of paint for different interior rooms to make it easier for the senior Ms. Williams to find her way around.

Alzheimer's often leaves patients disoriented, experts say. Research shows physical environments can impact the behavior of those who suffer from this

progressive disease, says the prestigious Fisher Center for Alzheimer's Research Foundation, headquartered in New York.

As a partner at Donahue Gallagher Woods, Lee specializes in intellectual property, business and corporate law. He represents domestic and international clients in a variety of industries, including software companies, manufacturers, retailers, importers, wineries, authors, publishers, musicians, designers and other entrepreneurs and emerging companies.

For its part, Donahue Gallagher Woods supports many good causes by providing pro bono legal services, having its attorneys serve on the Boards of Directors of several community and charitable groups, and by making generous financial contributions to service organizations.