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ATHENS BANNER-HERALD



Blueprint: Woman driven to help teens

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Teenagers and young adults who ask for help from Oglethorpe County resident Jacqueline Bosby will get it - whether it's completing mandatory community service hours, setting up an internship or figuring out tricky math problems.

Bosby and her husband, Mike, operate Me Ma's House in Crawford and set up programs for students from three counties who want to acquire some real-world job skills through offices in Oglethorpe, Clarke and Elbert counties. This is through a unique leadership program developed by the Express HOME Program.

"It's actually a resource center for at-risk teens," Bosby said. Bosby directs the non-profit Express HOME (Helping Others Magnify Education) program, and through that encourages students to stay in school, earn their GED or take part in summer camps - like those that teach video production skills - she said.

"What I try to do is see what the kids want to do, and then I try to help them create a program around it," she said. One group of teenagers wanted to learn about personal finances and Bosby planned a class that taught them about filing taxes, this was through her leadership program in Elberton Ga. 12 students were certified through the VITA program. Bosby's always wanted to help other people, starting when she was just a teenager when she offered her family's spare bedroom to a homeless woman.



Later, she helped homeless people find and keep jobs, but decided that working with children and young adults might prevent some on them from losing their homes in future, Bosby said. "I've worked with kids since I stopped working with the homeless," "Teaching leadership and life skills will give them the tools they need." Right now we are producing educational television program, publishing a community news paper and working with teens and young adults through community service projects and College internships," "If I had just a little help I could do so much more." Bosby said.

Me-Ma's House

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Bosby, her husband, and children moved from Illinois to Oglethorpe County about a decade ago.

"I wanted land. I wanted to build an independent-living program for teens," she said. Bosby doesn't have the money to start the independent-living program just yet, but she hopes to have that program up and running soon, and Me-Ma's House is the beginning" she said.

"I want an independent-living program so that they know that there's someone in their life who really cares," she said. "They need to know that somebody is there for them." Such a house would give homeless students, or those who have a bad family life, in foster care the chance to succeed on their own, Bosby said.

Education officials in Clarke, Elbert, and Oglethorpe counties have noted Bosby's work with students.

"I'm very pleased with anyone who wants to give our students opportunities for learning over the summer," said Oglethorpe County schools Superintendent Veta New.