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A look at the site behind Stepping Stone shows the area in which the equipment will be put. The project is being done by the 2014 Leadership Enrichment and Development (LEAD) class for its Big Give. L&T photos/Robert Pierce

By ROBERT PIERCE

- Leader & Times

Each year, the Leadership Enrichment and Development class, formerly known as Leadership Liberal, does one project to help with the community.

Since 2009, that project has been called the Big Give, and this week, the 2014 LEAD class is finishing up its project by helping the local homeless shelter get some new playground equipment.

Class members have distributed fliers about the project around town, in part to raise awareness of the project, but also to assist with funding for the task.

That flier stated that the condition of the playground equipment at Stepping Stone Shelter, which provides housing to more than 60 children a year, was in very poor condition and almost unsafe for children to play on.

“Without our help, it may have to be eliminated,” the flier read.

The annual LEAD project is called the Big Give because quite simply class members are called to “give big,” and this year’s project is no exception.

“Knowing how much Stepping Stone Shelter gives to the community, we have chosen to give back to them by providing a newly renovated and safer playground area for their backyard,” the flier said.

As part of the task, the 2014 class has laid out its mission in five parts:

- Build a safer play area for the children at Stepping Stone Shelter;
- Provide a mulched area under the swing set;
- Add picnic tables for more outdoor seating;
- Create a positive memory for the children during a difficult time; and

- Provide an area for Stepping Stone Shelter to be proud of.

To help finance the task at hand, LEAD class members are selling bricks for \$100 which will be used to pave the sidewalk coming out of the backdoor of the shelter.



“We will engrave your business or personal name on the brick so everyone can see the support you have given towards the shelter and our project,” the flier said.

The flier added for those not purchase a brick, any donation would be greatly appreciated.

LEAD class member James Powell said bricks need to be purchased by April 4, so that the project can be ready in time for Stepping Stone’s annual fundraiser, the Spring Thing Bar-B-Que Thing, which takes place in late April.

Powell said a pic of each brick will be taken and sent along with a ‘thank you’ to donors. Fliers are currently available at Spencer Browne’s, Sunflower Bank or from any LEAD class members.

The fliers include a form that can be filed for those wanting to purchase a brick. Checks should be made payable to LEAD, and donors are asked to write “2014 class project” on the memo line of the check.

Checks can be mailed to LEAD in care of Chamber of Commerce, 4 Rock Island Road, Liberal, KS 67901.

Powell said the class appreciates everyone's support with the project.

"The LEAD class of 2014 would like to thank you for your support of the Big Give project," the flier said. "It wouldn't be possible without individuals like you. We are thankful to live in such a giving community."

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