



Project provides breath of cool air

Annual initiative distributes fans, air conditioners to elderly

By Almar Flotildes
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Paul Martin

David Stone (left) loads an air conditioning window unit into the trunk of Joanne Chesnut's car as part of Project Cool Breeze, Thursday June 28, 2007 at the Lowes Home Improvement in West Ashley. Stone is a member of the Phi Theta Kappa honors fraternity at Trident Technical College who was on hand at the event to assist with carrying and loading the A/C units.

Joanne Staley usually sat under a tree drinking water to cool down from the heat. Now thanks to Project Cool Breeze, she can sit comfortably inside her house beside a new air conditioner.

"I was miserable," Staley said. Not only was she without air conditioning, she also suffers from asthma.

"It was so hot in my house, you could fry an egg," she said.

Staley, 62, also received another air conditioner for her 84-year-old mother, Lillian Malphrus.

They were two of the many people who benefited from new units Thursday at the Lowe's Home Center on Glenn McConnell Parkway.

This is the eighth consecutive year that the Cool Breeze initiative has provided air conditioners and fans to people in need over the age of 60.

The project distributes an average of 250 to 300 air conditioners and fans a year on a first-come, first-serve basis, according to Carolyn Brown, director of Cool Breeze.

Cool Breeze mainly operates from sponsors and donations around the community.

Charleston City Councilman Wendell Gilliard founded the program in 1999 after becoming distraught over a growing number of heat-related deaths around the nation and in the Lowcountry.

The next distribution date is scheduled to coincide with Law Enforcement Community Unity Day on July 21 from 3 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Brittlebank Park.

To donate or get help from Project Cool Breeze, call the Elder Support line for an application at 843 -766-7180, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday to Friday.

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