

Homes of Hope hooks anglers for the day

Tour participants use day off to volunteer with housing group

By Angelia Davis

STAFF WRITER
adavis@greenvilleonline.com

Professional anglers like Darrel Robertson and Jimmy Houston participating in the FLW Outdoors Walmart fishing tournament on Lake Hartwell spent part of Wednesday volunteering and working alongside Homes of Hope interns on affordable housing construction projects.

The interns are men overcoming drug and alcohol addictions.

The experience "just lets me know that there are those who really care about people with problems like me and like us. It gives us a hope that we can do that if we really want to," one intern said.

And he said it shows that the anglers are "for real. That makes me feel better

too."

The FLW Walmart Tour on Lake Hartwell runs today through Sunday.

Allie Gibbs, community outreach specialist for the tour, said wherever the nationwide tour goes, an opportunity is provided for the anglers to give back to the community.

"They're out in the water a lot of times so we want to give them an opportunity to serve," she said.

Homes of Hope is a non-profit organization that provides safe and energy-effi-

cient affordable housing for homeless and low-income families and individuals, as well as provides job skill training and mentoring for men overcoming addiction.

Gibbs said Hands on Greenville, which referred the FLW Tour to Homes of Hope.

The anglers, she said, "wholeheartedly stepped up and wanted to volunteer for this program."

Robertson and Houston, both of whom are from Oklahoma, said Wednes-

day was their "off day" after days of practicing for the tournament.

"We found out we could come out here and help and we wanted to do that," Houston said.

Robertson and Houston, who has been tournament fishing since 1966, said it's the first time their volunteerism has led them to a group like Homes of Hope.

One thing that makes it unique, Houston said, is it's Christian-based. Houston and Robertson are heavily involved in their churches

and speak at churches around the country.

"There are a lot of good places around doing a lot of good things. But this is more than changing people's lives, getting them off of substance abuse or something like that," Houston said. "This is changing their lives spiritually, too. That means a lot more to me personally."

"It's not just a life-changing deal for next week, next month, next year. It's life-changing from an eternal standpoint," he said.