



Sep 19, 2007 1:10 pm US/Eastern

Broward Group Helps Seniors Weather The Storm

(CBS4) FT. LAUDERDALE Milt and Linda Madison have lived in their Coral Springs home for nearly 30 years and have weathered many storms.

Thirty years ago they had no trouble putting up their hurricane shutters. But as they've grown older, the task has become tougher, forcing the couple to rely on their neighbors.

“All the guys came out and participated and helped one another put them up. Eventually ours were put up,” said Linda Madison, “But last year nobody was volunteering to do it anymore.”

“I think it takes probably about an hour and a half,” said Milt, “If Linda and I had to put them up, it would probably take us about a day and half. It's just very hard.”

Milt and Linda aren't the only ones who struggle when the word goes out to prepare for a storm.

“There are a lot of senior citizens here in South Florida,” said Audra Vaz, with Volunteer Broward, “and a lot of times they don't have relatives that live with them or near them.”

Luckily, for people like the Madison's, they won't have to rely on neighbors anymore.

The non-profit group Volunteer Broward has launched a new program to help senior citizens prep for a storm. It's called the Shutter Assistance for the Elderly, and it's free.

“What we do is we install existing shutters on the homes of senior citizens or people with disabilities,” explained Vaz. “We have the volunteers put the shutters up, screw them in and make sure things are nice and safe.”

Interested seniors should call **Volunteer Broward at 954-522-6761** or call Neighbors 4 Neighbors at **(305) 597-4404** to sign up for the program before the hurricane season. Then when a storm threat is near, teams of volunteers hit the neighborhoods installing the shutters. Volunteers then come back after the storm and take the shutters down.

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