

Wednesday, February 21, 2007

Close Window



Print Version

[Print Page](#)

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 21, 2007

Last modified:

Tuesday, February 20, 2007 10:50 PM MST

By Karen Walenga

The SOWERS are in town, helping get the Sahuarita Christian Academy schoolhouse on East Sahuarita Road ready for students.

Known as "Servants on Wheels Ever Ready," members of this Texas-based ministry of volunteers travel the country in their RVs, doing construction and maintenance work at churches, church camps, Christian schools and conference centers.

The first group of SOWERS arrived earlier this month at the three-acre site at 2285 E. Sahuarita Road and have been preparing a few RV sites at the property, putting up perimeter lights, installing front steps at the school, and more.

Next month, three other couples will take over, working on the school's plumbing, insulation and sheet rock.

Overall, SOWERS has about 1,000 couples as members. All are RVers and most are retired.

Members commit to working on at least one project per year, with each project involving a three-week month, four-day work week, and six-hour days.

As retirees, many SOWERS go to different parts of the country to visit their grown children and grandchildren, says Karen Edge of Mesa.

Working on a SOWERS project gives them something to do during the day when their kids are at work, but with only a four-day workweek, there's still plenty time to spend with family on the weekends, she notes.

Edge and her husband, Von, were part of the SOWERS group in Sahuarita in February. They've been active members since 1998 and have worked on about 25 projects,



Mario Aguilar | Sahuarita Sun
Principal Kathy Shiba, right,
comforts a crying kindergarten
student, accompanied by teacher
Laurie Huxsol, during the first full
week of school at Sahuarita Unified
School District's new Anza Trail
School in Rancho Sahuarita.

including churches and homeless shelters.

Edge notes that SOWERS members receive a monthly magazine that lists projects in need of volunteers, and members then can write in and sign up.

The group's primary purpose is to provide support on everything from new construction to cleaning, so that the local ministries can continue their missions.

"The people we serve are evangelists, but we're not teachers or preachers," says Pat Wheeler of South Dakota, who was at the Sahuarita school site in February with her husband, Jim. They've been part of SOWERS since 1996 and have worked on four projects since 2002.

Why do they devote their time and efforts to this group?

"I hate golf," Jim Wheeler says with a laugh.

"You can only sit in the swimming pool so long," adds Tom Ferrell, another SOWERS volunteer.

And, says Pat Wheeler, "the Bible never talks about retirement."

David Lyon, director of Sahuarita Christian Academy, points out that "we have limited funds ... and are not in a position to hire contractors" to get the school building into shape.

Some SOWERS members bring their own work tools along, while—thanks to donations—Sahuarita Christian Academy is able to supply the materials and specialty tools.

Lyon is aiming to open the 2,160-square-foot modular school building in August to students in grades K-12.

Currently, the academy has 65 families with more than 200 students interested in attending this new Christian school, he notes.

As a result, Sahuarita Christian Academy is looking ahead toward adding a second school building at the site, Lyon says.

He hopes to continue to have SOWERS work on school projects every year from October through April.

For more information on the SOWERS, visit online at www.sowerministry.org. or phone (903) 882-8070.

For more information on Sahuarita Christian Academy, phone Lyon at (520) 481-6905.

kwalenga@gvnews.com | 547-9739

Green Valley News & Sun

101-42 La Canada Drive, Green Valley, AZ 85622
520-625-5511 (phone) 520-625-8046 (fax)

[Close Window](#)