

Professor finds new use for condemned Waco property

By Rebecca Jeffrey - Reporter

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WACO -- The door is boarded, rooms vandalized and the house condemned, but hope is not lost for this 90-year old building in the middle of the Sanger Heights neighborhood.

Dr. Laine Scales purchased the foreclosed home with the idea of creating a settlement house, a concept new to Waco.

"People that did settlement houses had a very different idea of how help is given, and that is that we live among the neighbors and we ask the neighbors to join us in a venture together," Scales, an associate dean and professor at Baylor said.

Dr. Scales lived in the house next door for several years so when the abandoned property became available she jumped on the opportunity.

Now, along with her five other board members, they are hoping Baylor undergrad and graduate students will step up and become "settlers." It is traditional for those overseeing and living in the house to be students, working for the house in exchange for lower rent payments.

"The unique thing is that this is really a place for folks who maybe have an organization running, but they don't have space, they can come and use the settlement house. Or if there's a meeting of local neighbors who want to meet and gather for a game night or a meeting night, they have this place that they can now call theirs, to meet on a regular basis," Board of Directors President, Morgan Caruthers said.

But if the house isn't renovated up to code, it will be demolished. So to make this dream a reality...

"We need help from experts who are licensed because we are going to have everything up to code," Dr. Scales said. Including electricians, plumbers and architects.

Currently the Good Neighbor Settlement House is working to get non-profit status and are filing their 501C3 soon.

To find out how you can help, visit the Good Neighbor Settlement House website, at www.goodneighborwaco.org