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Home stagers lend a hand in Detroit

By Christopher Behnan
DAILY PRESS & ARGUS

Homeowners call Kathi Presutti and Rob Leece to fix up their homes to ensure faster sales of their homes and great profit.

The Ronald McDonald House in Detroit had a much different challenge for Presutti and Leece — to help make the house more comfortable for families of sick children being treated at nearby Children's Hospital of Michigan.

Presutti, of Genoa Township, and Leece, of Brighton Township, have made careers of out home staging — the process of making homes more attractive to buyers or existing homeowners.

The Livingston County duo joined other members of the nonprofit International Association of Home Staging Professionals Foundation's Great Lakes Regional Chapter to take on the Ronald McDonald House project.

The project took weeks to complete and involved raising about \$11,000 for materials.

Participants renovated the house's playroom, weekend suite and garden, and making them more inviting to guests.

"We were trying to make it very serene so it would be a little oasis for them to relax in," Presutti said. "The idea was to give back to the community through staging."

Funds raised were applied to purchasing carpeting, paint, bedding, blinds and other materials.

The project culminated Sept. 16 with Worldwide Staging Service Day. With the project completed that day, volunteers spent their remaining time with families staying at the Ronald McDonald House and donating toys to children.

"It was great to see them. It was very heartwarming and touching," Presutti said.

Leece said the closing event provided a closeness to his clients he normally doesn't experience when staging homes for sale.

"You don't get that face-to-face time," he said of his commercial work.

Much work is yet to be done at the Detroit house, which includes several rooms for guests, laundry area and a large kitchen.

Both Presutti and Leece said they'll be up to the task if called on again.

"Already we're planning to come back," Leece said. "I think they need as much help as they can get."
