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Description

The women roofers of North Carolina say roofing is a "great way to get out frustration," and in the process have re-roofed more than 60 homes in North Carolina, and a handful in Mississippi after Hurricane Katrina.

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Making a Difference, Volunteering, Volunteers, Roofing, Roofers, Roofs, Construction, North Carolina, Mississippi, Building, Rebuilding, Nell Perry Bovender, "The Women Roofers", Women, Hurricane Katrina, Susie Kernodle, Helping

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All-Women Team Re-Roofs Damaged Homes

BRIAN WILLIAMS, anchor:
Finally, our Making a Difference report tonight is about some women in North Carolina who’ve joined together to help folks in their community and beyond. In fact, these women are bringing new meaning to the phrase, working from the top down. It’s a novel idea. And NBC’s Stephanie Gosk has tonight’s Making a Difference report.

WOMAN #1: Long time no see, Stromberg.
STROMBERG: Oh it’s so good to be back.
STEPHANIE GOSK, reporting:
Back on the roof, that is.

WOMAN #2: I’m an investigations consultant.
WOMAN #3: I’m a retired teacher.
WOMAN #4: I am a pharmacist.
GOSK: Their normal jobs, except once a month when these ladies from North Carolina climb up a ladder, grab a hammer, and transform into the women roofers.

JANE ALEXANDER BELL (The Women Roofers): And you get a feel for it after a while and it’s a great way to get frustration out.
GOSK: Sweating it out on a roof all day is not exactly the kind of charity work one might expect from a group of southern belles.

NELL PERRY BOVENDER (The Women Roofers): Occasionally, they say-- you get that raised eyebrow. They never say no. They just are intrigued that a group of women would be willing to do it.
GOSK: But Nell Bovender and her rotating crew have been at it for ten years. The youngest on this day is 13.

BOVENDER: Yeah.
GOSK: The oldest, 75. The all-women team has re-roofed more than 60 homes in North Carolina and a few more in Mississippi. After Hurricane Katrina, David Wesley’s house had been leaking for weeks.

DAVID WESLEY: It’s beautiful. It’s beautiful work. And I really appreciate them.
GOSK: While they had some help from skilled roofers in the beginning, the original team hardly needs them now. It’s a pretty tough outfit but you glam it up with the pink bandanna.

SUSIE KERNODLE (The Women Roofers): Yeah. Yeah. Well, this is--

GOSK: I like that touch.

KERNODLE: This is my Girl Scout touch because I needed this when I got a drill through my finger.

GOSK: A drill through the finger is just part of the job along with a fair share of gossip. I’m just wondering what portion of the day is business and what portion of the day is gossip? Be honest.

BOVENDER: It’s 50-50.

GOSK: Fifty.

BOVENDER: It’s-- it’s really not gossip. We just have a rule that what’s said on the roof stays on the roof.

GOSK: And roofing is a good way to make friends.

BOVENDER: While we know we’re helping a family that really needs help, we’re also-- it feeds something in us that wants to help other people.

GOSK: Volunteer work raised to a higher level.

(Crowd cheering)

GOSK: Stephanie Gosk, NBC News, Forest City, North Carolina.