

Anderson Woods buys house in Jasper.

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By Candy Neal, Herald Staff Writer

Anderson Woods has purchased a six-bedroom house at the southeast corner of Sixth and St. Charles streets.

The non-profit organization-which serves handicapped adults through permanent residences and a summer camp- plans to move four residents and two house parents into the house in January.

"It felt like coming home to me when we bought the home in Jasper," said Judy Colby, cofounder of Anderson Woods. "I think it's going to be a really good association for us."

The six-bedroom, estimated 3,000-square-foot house purchased in mid-November using money from the sale of the organization's house in Bloomington. Harry and Lillian Parks, of Huntingburg, will be the house parents and the four residents to move in are coming from the Bloomington house.

There will also be a guest bedroom.

"It's quite different from the conventional group home," Colby said. "We have pieces of five families coming together as a new family. They learn to live together as brothers and sisters. They learn to work and integrate into the community."

Anderson Woods started in 1978 with summer camps on 175 acres of land three miles east of Saint Meinrad; those camps still occur, with 133 people attending camp last year.

"We found out from it, particularly people coming from private homes, that there was a need for some kind of loving environment different from institutions or nursing homes or group homes," Colby said. "The people who kept their children at home wanted more of a home life for them."

Two houses were opened in 1992 in Siberia. A third house opened in 1994 in Bloomington, but was sold and closed this year.

"It was to far geographically," Colby said. "We decided we needed to get closer to home, get them more nestled together in southern Indiana. Jasper seemed to be the logical place because Jasper has been such a supporting city, both financially and in giving our people work

The Jasper home is the first to have a corporate sponsor: Stens Corporation of Jasper. The corporate sponsorship helps to ensure that the residents really do integrate into the community.

"We as a company are starting to forge in the community our own identity," said Stens president, Peter Ariens. "It is important for corporations, no matter how big or small, to get behind community and civic ideas and responsibilities. It is important to us, as a corporation, to also reach out to each employee to have them help and assist in any way they can."

Stens has already started working at the house with seven employees meeting the residents on Saturday. Together, they cleaned and painted the house that day.

"We got to meet the people who would be living here," said Sandy Baker, inventory planning manager for

Stens. "They were all very anxious and working very hard. The Stens people just joined in. We got to see each other in a different environment other than work. And we also made some new friends that day with the residents."

A second Dubois County home already has a corporate sponsor waiting: Jasper Engines & Transmissions. The company has committed \$50,000 to help fund the house, which Anderson Woods hope to open sometime next year.

Organizations need not commit money to become a corporate sponsor. It does have to commit time and talent. Sponsors are encouraged to help residents find find employment, if necessary; include resident in company activities, like picnics, outings and other specially arranged recreational activities; assist in maintenance and minor remodeling activities; participate in organizing a major fund-raising golf tournament or scramble; and have representation on the Anderson Woods Board of directors.