

## NEWS

# When 'a bed is more than just a bed': Volunteers build for local families

By [H. Rose Schneider](#)

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Volunteers sand down lumber for a local chapter of Sleep in Heavenly Peace Friday, April 19, 2024, outside Pioneer Bancorp's headquarters off Wolf Road in Colonie. H. Rose Schneider/Times Union

COLONIE — On Friday, a parking lot off Wolf Road turned into a makeshift assembly line. Volunteers sawed, sanded and cut lumber, putting together dozens of beds for area children.

The build is one of many held by the [Mechanicville chapter of Sleep in Heavenly Peace](#), a [national nonprofit](#) that gathers volunteers and materials to build and deliver beds to families in need. Around 60 Pioneer banking employees donated bedding and assembled bed frames Friday.

"Our mission is to make sure no kids sleep on the floor," said Beth Heffern, spokeswoman for the local chapter.

The organization has conducted builds and donated beds throughout the Capital Region, and now has the manufacture down to a science, Heffern said. At one station, volunteers cut lumber; at another, a group sands them down; at another, volunteers assemble the parts. The next morning, volunteers split into teams to deliver beds to families, usually in a volunteer's van or pickup truck.

"A lot of it is word of mouth," Heffern said, of finding families in need. "Once a family receives a bed, very often they know a family that needs the help."

The local chapter has been around for about five years, its president, James Welch, said during remarks at the event. They're kept busy. Another build is planned next weekend, he said.

"Our foundation is centered around kids being kids," Pioneer President and CEO Tom Amell said Friday, referring to [the company's charitable foundation](#). That includes safety, education, housing and security for children.

For a child, a bed can absolute equate to safety and security, Heffern said. She has seen children face plant right onto their new bed and bury around the covers, or even start crying.

"A bed is more than just a bed," she said. "It's a place for them to dream, it's a place them to heal, to recuperate."

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