



Springfield firefighters in Nicaragua to help build homes

Harrison Keegan 7:32 p.m. CST January 9, 2015

(Photo: Chase Heilman/Rainbow Network)

Four Springfield firefighters are giving up their vacations to help with a building project in the Central American country of Nicaragua.

The firefighters — captain Jeff Prior, rescue specialist Matt Lyon, firefighter Daniel Speights and firefighter

Matt Fields — will help with a 25-home building project through Rainbow Network, a Springfield-based nonprofit, according to a news release.

The Springfield firefighters left on Sunday and they will be in the country for about a week constructing homes in the community of Las Rosas, which is in the mountains near the city of Matagalpa. The firefighters will be working alongside the families that will be living in those homes.

Firefighter Matt Fields also sponsors a Nicaraguan student named Fernando whom the Springfield group hopes to meet during the trip.

“Fernando wants to grow up and be a fireman, and that’s why Rainbow paired us together,” Fields said in a news release. “I am very excited for the opportunity to see him.”

The Springfield group will also visit a local fire station, along with medical clinics, feeding centers, banks, businesses, homes and established housing projects.

The release says the Rainbow Network works with 111 rural Nicaraguan communities, or about 42,000 people, helping with medical clinics, feeding centers, primary schools, high school scholarships, small loans for businesses and housing. The communities are running each of these programs themselves, alongside about 35 staff members Rainbow Network has in Nicaragua who are all Nicaraguan.