

# TONIC

## The Super Bowl Serves as an Occasion to Help Families in Need

BY LAUREN KELLEY | FEBRUARY 7, 2011

In the run-up to Super Bowl XLV, most everyone in the Dallas area was focused on football (ok, and probably also snow!). But one group of people focused its energies on something different: helping refurbish homes and playgrounds for low-income families.

The national nonprofit Rebuilding Together launched its 16th annual Kickoff to Rebuild event last week in Arlington, just outside the Big D. Coordinated in partnership with the NFL, the event provides homeowners with much-needed home repairs, such as roofing, painting, drywall replacement, foundation and floor repair, weatherproofing and the installation of handicap-accessible equipment.



This year, the project will bring together some 1,000 volunteers, including NFL players and other celebrities, to help make repairs to a dozen homes near Arlington's Speer Elementary School. "A lot of our families are struggling to make ends meet, so the last thing you're going to budget for are home improvements," Speer Elementary Principal Linda De Leon said in a statement. "So for Rebuilding Together to come in and offer to renovate these homes and rebuild them ... it sends a message that there are people still out there who care."

Another first this year is that Rebuilding Together has partnered with Carter's Kids, a charitable foundation launched by HGTV host Carter Oosterhouse that works to promote physical activity among children by building and refurbishing playgrounds across the country.

With an eye towards addressing the nation's childhood obesity epidemic, Oosterhouse and his charity helped spruce up a playground near Speer this week, and now they're taking the show on the road, planning to build or fix up an additional five playgrounds between now and next year's Super Bowl in Indianapolis. (Maybe his [new girlfriend](#), Amy Smart, will help out again like she did in Arlington.)

Oosterhouse wants the playgrounds to be attractive to kids, so they'll be more likely to turn off the TV and video games and get outside. But beyond that, he's interested in creating shared community spaces that everyone in the neighborhood will take pride in.

"Once you build a playground, it's amazing to see not only the faces of the kids, but the faces of the parents as well, because these playgrounds really do have a gravitational pull for all the families in the area," Oosterhouse told Tonic. "We get the community involved to make sure they'll sustain this community area after we're gone."