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*Exclusively in the Blue Valley Times*

## In or Out

Is your basement part of your home? How can you tell? It's not as simple as you may think. Is someone living there? Well, that doesn't help to make the determination even though a whole lot of basements have become home to people lately. I was asking from an energy code perspective. The way to know if your basement is part of the house is to go down there and look around. If you need a sweatshirt for the trip, take that as clue number one. If you look up and see insulation in the floor above you it is likely that you are not in your house any longer. Even if your furnace is down there and all the ducts that carry air to and from every room in the house you may still be outside your house.

If you look at the walls and see bare concrete that's another clue. You are apparently on the outside looking in according to the energy codes. Now for the perplexing part, if you put something really smelly in the basement would the people upstairs know it? If so, how long would it take? If it is less than 4 hours then your basement is hiding inside your house. Is there weatherstripping on the basement door and is it an insulated door? I haven't seen that yet. Even if all of these things are true there is good news and bad news. The good news is that if you want the basement to be part of the house you can make some changes and make it happen. The bad news is that there are changes you probably wouldn't make because of the cost. Technically if you insulate the exterior walls of the basement it becomes part of the house.

But nowhere in the building code is the concrete floor ever addressed and that's the absolute worst part of any basement living space. You can build it up and try to insulate the raised floor but you will lose headroom and that's usually already minimal in a basement. What should be required in EVERY new construction project with a basement is a trench drain around the interior perimeter leading to a sump pit. No pump would need to be installed because you can always do that later. Add a minimum 12 mil continuous vapor barrier on top of the dirt or crushed stone. Then add at least R-8 board insulation and another 12 mil vapor barrier before pouring concrete on top. That would make such a huge difference in every basement that it would catch on really fast and be the best investment ever in a new home.

Ken Field is the owner of Slate Belt Energy and Field's Service, Inc. As a certified energy rater and contractor, he is qualified to assess every aspect of energy usage and prescribe solutions to save energy. He can be reached at 610-759-6306 or email [Ken@FieldsService.com](mailto:Ken@FieldsService.com)

# The Allentown Rescue Mission's Clean Team Workforce September Employee of the Month

By Stephnie Appel

ALLENTOWN, PA – The Allentown Rescue Mission's Clean Team Workforce congratulates its Employee of the Month for September, Andrew F. Andrew sought the help of the Allentown Rescue Mission after losing his place to live at a recovery house. The recovery house required guests to have a job, and Andrew was laid off from his job while staying there. As a result, he needed to find a new place to live.

Thankfully, a friend recommended the Allentown Rescue Mission. While residing in the Emergency Shelter, Andrew decided to join the Mission's Transformation Program. Andrew described the life skills and Bible classes as "just the boost he needed." Andrew started to read the Bible and attend church. He also learned how to build his resume and utilized the Mission's scholarship program to enroll in a forklift certification program.

Andrew graduated from the Transformation Program in August and, since then, has been working with the Clean Team Workforce doing many different jobs, including landscaping and estate clean-outs. In the past, Andrew admits that he had difficulty maintaining a job for longer than a few months. He is grateful to be working on the Clean Team Workforce and says it is helping him to be accountable for his work.

He also enjoys learning new skills on the job. After Andrew finishes his forklift classes, he hopes to obtain a full-time permanent position at a local company. He has prior warehouse experience and is excited about the many warehouse opportunities in the Lehigh Valley. Andrew's long-term goals are to glorify God in all he does, maintain a clean and sober lifestyle, start a family, and continue moving forward in life.



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