

# Short on cash, neighbors swap skills, services

Exchange groups grow in popularity around metro Detroit

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From free massages and cooked dinners to résumé revisions and chimney repairs, neighbors are helping neighbors as money gets tight.

It's an old concept, but one that's spreading across metro Detroit as an increasing number of people organize neighborhood skill-exchange programs called time banks.

There are 20 potential groups cropping up in communities such as Sterling Heights, Eastpointe, Detroit, Southfield, Ferndale and Royal Oak, said Kim Hodge,



RASHAUN RUCKER/Detroit Free Press

Lathrup Village residents Frank Selinsky, left, and Ed Blondin work on a basement Oct. 10 as part of a skill-exchange program, or time bank.

co-founder of the group that sparked all of the interest, the Lathrup Village TimeBank — a nearly 2-year-old effort considered by its founders as the

first of its kind in Michigan.

But time banks, growing in popularity nationwide, aren't exclusive to neighborhoods.

The Michigan Department

**“WE CAN’T SELL OUR HOUSES. WE MIGHT AS WELL GET TO KNOW OUR NEIGHBORS.”**

KIM HODGE, a group co-founder

of Corrections is considering creating a skill-sharing program for newly released prisoners to help them integrate back into society.

“Let’s go back to a lot of the values we had in the past,” Hodge said. “We can’t sell our houses. We might as well get to know our neighbors.”

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