



Famous faces help breathe new life into Astor Services

[Abbott Brant](#) , Poughkeepsie Journal Published 6:35 p.m. ET April 27, 2017 | Updated 8:19 p.m. ET April 27, 2017

The first of several wings had been renovated with the help of actors Jeffrey Dean Morgan and Hilarie Burton at Astor Services for Children and Families in Rhinebeck. Ricky Flores/Poughkeepsie Journal Wochit



Buy Photo

(Photo: Ricky Flores/Poughkeepsie Journal)

189CONNECTTWEETLINKEDINCOMMENTEMAILMORE

Since becoming a fixture of Mill Street in Rhinebeck 64 years ago, Executive Director James McGuirk said Astor Services for Children & Families “has always tried to be a good neighbor.”

And when actors Jeffrey Dean Morgan and Hilarie Burton made the move to Dutchess County, they wanted to be good neighbors, too.

When the married couple discovered Astor and the upgrades it required within its residential units, they orchestrated a renovation plan, bringing together contractors, companies, and a little elbow grease to spruce up eight bedrooms for the non-profit organization.

[**READ: Jeffrey Dean Morgan helping renovate Astor in Rhinebeck**](#)

[**READ: Paul Rudd and Jeffrey Dean Morgan help Samuel's keep Rhinebeck sweet**](#)

“We wanted to create a whimsical space,” Burton said of the newly redesigned area, boasting sky blue walls and an outdoor, camping theme. “You can’t tell a kid to dream big dreams and have them going to sleep in beige.”

Morgan, known most recently for his role as Negan on “The Walking Dead,” and Burton, who starred on television’s “One Tree Hill” and most recently appeared on Fox’s “Lethal Weapon,” became familiar with the non-profit through a friend on the Families for Astor Committee, a fundraising organization.

Eleven boys, ages eight to 12, reside in the renovated space, which includes communal living and kitchen areas.

Leading a tour of the space Thursday, Burton described some of what went into the week-long renovation: a fresh coat of paint for bedrooms, decals and murals along the walls, new cabinets in the kitchen, hand built tables, new wooden chair rails, and bookshelf in each room.



Buy Photo

Actress Hilarie Burton shows a wing which she helped in organizing of renovation of a dormitory wing at Astor Services for Children and Families in Rhinebeck on Apr. 27, 2017. Burton hopes to help raise funds to finish off other parts of the complex that is in need of repair. (Photo: Ricky Flores/Poughkeepsie Journal)

“You wouldn’t think having a bookshelf would really impact someone’s daily life,” Burton said, but the children were eager to display their few possessions as they settled into their new digs.

The impact of the celebrity couple can be easily felt in northern Dutchess. Local contractors and companies that donated time and materials to the project, including McEathron Contracting and Williams Lumber, had been previously involved with work on the pair’s home in Pleasant Valley. And down the block from Astor, on Market Street, you may spot the couple in Samuel’s Sweet Shop. Morgan and Burton, along with actor Paul Rudd, are all co-owners.

Similarly, the effect Morgan and Burton have had on Astor is felt “on every level,” McGuirk said.

Burton said whether it be “fans of my husband” or just those inspired by Astor’s work, donations have come in from all over the country. Their next step, McGuirk said, is renovation work to the building’s three other residential units.



Buy Photo

Actress Hilarie Burton shows a wing which she helped in organizing of renovation of a dormitory wing at Astor Services for Children and Families in Rhinebeck on Apr. 27, 2017. Burton hopes to help raise funds to finish off other parts of the complex that is in need of repair. (Photo: Ricky Flores/Poughkeepsie Journal)

“When I say (Burton) committed to doing the work — she did the work. She was here five days, 8 o’clock in the morning. She was sanding, she was painting, she was doing everything,” he said. “When you have somebody like Hilarie and Jeffrey say, ‘the work you’re doing is important to us as well, we want to help you, we want to do what we can to make the lives of kids you’re serving better,’ that just kind of puts a spotlight on what we’re doing.”

Abbott Brant: abrant@poughkeepsiejournal.com; 845-437-4809; Twitter: @AbbottBrantPoJo