

Poverty housing is a severe threat to children's health, growth and potential. The US Census Bureau reports more than 16.1 million children are living in poverty in the United States. Nearly 24 percent of children reside with women heads-of-household.

### WHY WE USE SWEAT EQUITY

Sweat Equity is not a simple programmatic requirement, nor is it in any way meant to be a test for partner families to pass or fail. Rather, sweat equity is an exciting cornerstone to the Habitat ministry, designed to meet three important goals:

#### Partnership

Sweat equity provides meaningful interaction between partner families, affiliate representatives and Habitat volunteers.

#### Pride in homeownership

Investing sweat-equity hours in constructing their own homes helps families begin the transition to homeownership.

#### Development of skills and knowledge

On the building site, partner family members should gain a real understanding of the construction of their home and of maintenance issues they will face after occupancy.



# Habitat Heartbeat

2015 Volume 1



## 2015 Women Build House Underway

In February, Loudon County Habitat for Humanity's 9th Women Build house got underway in the Hope Haven neighborhood. Over some 14-16 weeks, a crew of more than 50 Loudon County women volunteers will pick up their hammers and raise the walls of Michele Haynes' new house.

"This is our first Women Build house since 2010, so we are excited about this project and the house that will result from it," said Shauna Oden, Executive Director. "Women from our area will be on the construction site during the next few months doing everything from raising walls to installing windows," she continued. "The women are amazing and amazed at what they can do!"

Among those working on the house will be some of Habitat's homeowners who learned construction skills while helping to build their own home. This will be the 39th Habitat house in the Hope Haven neighborhood and the 103rd Habitat house built in Loudon County since the affiliate began in 1993.

Other volunteers will include women from area churches, clubs, and other organizations, but all Loudon County women are welcome on the work site whether they have construction experience or not.

"We learn on the job," said Elizabeth Weikert, co-chair of this year's Women Build. "Habitat staff provide excellent hands-on training. There is nothing that happens on the work site that we can't prepare women to do," she continued.

Volunteers are scheduled for specific tasks on specific days to assure that the work is

completed on time. Those who want to help can work a day, a few days, or throughout the project whenever they are available. "We're ready to put on our work gloves and bring out the hammers," said Sandy Hanes, co-chair with Weikert. "I've worked on a number of these Women Build houses in Loudon County, as well as volunteering for other houses built here," she continued. "When you work alongside other women on a project like this, you are energized and know that women



*"People ask me if it's still standing," she joked. "I tell them it's doing fine. We put enough nails in that house that it'll never blow away."*

*Habitat homeowner Kim Burnette took the microphone to describe how she felt working alongside about 160 mostly unskilled women to build the first Women Build house in spring 2002.*

2004



2005



2006



truly can do anything they set their minds to."

The Women Build program brings women together from all walks of life to learn construction skills and then to use those skills to be part of the solution to poverty housing.



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## 2015 National Women Build Week

Loudon County Habitat for Humanity is one of 300 affiliates selected to participate in the 2015 National Women Build Week from May 2-May 10. During this week, houses like the one being built by Loudon County women will be built all over the country by some 15,000 women.

Lowe's has been a sponsor of Women Build for many years and this year they have awarded our affiliate a \$5,000 grant for the build. Saturday, May 2 will be designated as Lowe's Day in recognition of this support.

Women volunteers boost Habitat's capacity to build more houses and serve more families. More than 2,000 Women Build houses have been built nationally by all-women construction crews since the program began.

Want to make a difference in your community? Want to spend a day or two helping a family have a safe and affordable place to live?

If so, contact Sammie Shanks, Volunteer Coordinator at 865-640-5578 or sammie@loudoncountyhabitat.org.



## A 2011 National Survey of Habitat for Humanity Homeowners...

...conducted by the Center for Applied Research at the University of Southern Indiana shows significant increases in areas of homeowners' self-esteem, well-being, overall family health and neighborhood pride.

The survey, sponsored by Whirlpool Corporation and Habitat for Humanity International's Women Build program, measures the impact of homeownership and respondents' satisfaction with the Habitat experience. The survey reflects the participation of more than 320 Habitat homeowners (more than 85% of them women) in 44 US cities who bought their homes within the past five years.



Among their key findings, researchers found that more than 80% of Habitat homeowners surveyed had a highly positive overall Habitat experience. In addition, 98% of Habitat homeowners reported moderate to high self-esteem.



## Other key findings from the survey:

**93%**  
 of the homeowners take pride in their neighborhood.

**74%**  
 indicated that their family's overall health had improved since moving into their home.

**84%**  
 felt safe in their neighborhood since moving into their Habitat home.

**74%**  
 reported that their family's state of well-being improved after moving into their Habitat house.

**90%**  
 of women surveyed felt a sense of power being part of a Habitat build.

## Episcopal Church of the Resurrection Sponsors Its 3rd Habitat House

It may be a small congregation, but the Episcopal Church of the Resurrection is a church bursting with people who like to help others.

In February, they began their third Habitat house, all three located in the Hope Haven neighborhood. This house, built with and for Maria Guzman and her family is the 38th house to be built in this Loudon County neighborhood.

Church volunteers spent Valentine's Day bundled up against a frigid wind

to raise the walls of this new Habitat house. But work didn't begin until after opening prayers by the Reverend Claire Keene, Rector at Episcopal Church of the Resurrection, and a safety clinic by Todd Helton, Construction Director.

Sponsoring a house can be a daunting task, but this church found the answer to raising the necessary sponsorship funds six years ago when they began hosting Ribfest4Homes right on the church's property.

An annual outreach event, Ribfest4Homes features a barbeque competition of over a dozen teams competing in a variety of categories. Crowds come out to sample the ribs and vote for their favorite team.

Music, crafts and booths for local nonprofits are also a big draw and provide a fun and filling afternoon for

families and individuals alike.

Habitat thanks the church for their dedication and partnership in our efforts to eliminate substandard housing in Loudon County.

