

Wednesday, March 5, 2008

Students build houses during winter break

By **Rebecca Wyatt Thomas**, OU Web Writer

Seven Oakland University students traveled to Mt. Pleasant, S.C., for Habitat for Humanity's Collegiate Challenge. This is the third year OU's chapter of Habitat for Humanity has participated in the national alternative break program.

The OU students participated in the East Copper Habitat for Humanity build project. The local chapter was building houses within a subdivision. OU students helped install beams, supports and subflooring, as well as worked on pre-builds for doors and windows.

"We used the Habitat for Humanity Web site to match our group with a build site. We wanted somewhere warmer within a day's drive," said Kristine Rothfeld, OU Habitat organizer.

OU was the first college group to arrive and participate at the build site. Other schools will be arriving later during their winter and spring breaks. The OU group left on Feb. 23 and came home on March 1.

Many of the students had little building experience. Rothfeld participated in last year's Collegiate Challenge, which involved painting and scraping and other final touches, but this year the work was much different.

Rothfeld and Christina Goll, who was participating in her third Collegiate Challenge, recruited other students through OU Habitat for Humanity's e-mail list. The final group include Jenna Bourdeau, Chris Colonius, Chris Goeth, Lauren Longbucco, Will Schwarb, Goll and Rothfeld. Bourdeau, Colonius, Goll and Rothfeld all met on last year's trip and welcomed the new participants this year.

The students started at Isle of the Palms Baptist Church in Isle of Palms, S.C. OU's members paid an affiliate fee, which covered lodging expenses, meals on the job site and material fees. OU's Habitat for Humanity chapter thanks the Student Activity Fund Board for the support to cover a large portion of their expenses.

While most of the trip was work, the group did have some time to explore the city. Charleston was 20 minutes from Mt. Pleasant so the students visited the downtown area. A few of the students went to Patriots Point, home of the U.S.S. Yorktown and other ships related to the military, Navy and Coast Guard.

"The Collegiate Challenge builds are an opportunity to see another area of the country and help out. I never have time when I'm at home to go to build sites because of school, work, homework and other things. This was a chance for me to give up some of my time to help out others," Rothfeld said.

There are already plans in the works for next year's participation in the Collegiate Challenge. The trip has become a tradition for the organization. In 2007, students went to Miami, Fla., and in 2006 OU Habitat went to Slidell, La., to assist in clean-up efforts after Hurricane Katrina.

Habitat isn't just about one annual build. On Monday, March 10 from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., members of OU's Habitat chapter will be selling baked goods in South Foundation Hall to raise money for the Youth United build that will take place in Pontiac.

Students will also be participating in build projects in Pontiac this spring and summer.

For more information on OU's Habitat for Humanity chapter, or to get involved in the local builds or next year's Collegiate Challenge, contact Oakland Habitat at oaklandhabitat@gmail.com.



OU's Habitat for Humanity chapter participated in the Collegiate Challenge during winter break. They teamed up with local volunteers to build houses in South Carolina.

SUMMARY

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