

Building a Community

By Alvaro Macias



You don't have to be very handy to help build a house for a family in need; you just need the will to help others. That's what the staff at Ascentra Credit Union believes and that is why some volunteer to build homes for Habitat for Humanity.

Call Center Supervisor Donelle Lineburg and Business Development Manager Katie Riessen both have rolled up their sleeves on a number of occasions and put teams together for this this worthy cause. In the past Donelle and Katie have recruited the help of other Ascentra staff including, Missey Andrews, Amanda Alatorre, Shari Tisinger, Tara Hoge, Liz George, Hillary Murphy, Lynn Edwards, Shelly Ridgeway, Priscilla Jackson, Seth Haan, Karen Murphy and even CEO Paul Lensmeyer. Habitat for Humanity works in partnership with people in need to build decent, affordable housing. The homes are then sold to those in need at no profit and with no interest charged.

Donelle Lineburg originally joined a team organized through her church, Risen Christ Lutheran Church in Davenport. Her husband helped in the construction of the port of a home and various other construction projects. She was involved with cutting shingles for the roof, marking the floors in order to install drywall, installing siding, and various small projects around the house and grounds.

After helping with each project Donelle feels very satisfied, "knowing that I could actually help build a house. Everyone is able to help in some way. If you have the desire to learn there are plenty of people that can help you with different aspects of the build."

Katie Riessen loves paying it forward, whether it's with Habitat for Humanity or any other organization.

"Knowing that I've helped someone who may not be as fortunate or possibly disabled and can't quite get there on their own, it just simply feels good to help someone in need," Katie explains.

The people who eventually live in the house work alongside the volunteers. Part of the agreement the family has is to put in "sweat equity" in order to own a Habitat home. According to the Habitat for Humanity website, to qualify for a home each family must put in 500 hours of sweat equity, a maximum of 250 per adult in the household. Half of the sweat equity must be completed before the ground breaking. Before the family can select the location of their home, 75 hours must be completed.

The volunteers work side by side with people who will eventually own the home, building together with care and pride. It's what Katie says is most memorable about helping out with Habitat for Humanity.

“It’s seeing the pride that the home owners have on their faces while they are there building,” Riessen said. “It’s nice to work with them and get to know a little bit about them and their story.”

Once a home is complete they have a dedication of the home, a meaningful event for Donelle Lineburg.

“I attended a dedication of one of the homes we worked on. It was a very emotional experience. You get very attached to the people you are working with. It is amazing seeing the finished product, after starting at the very beginning of the build,” Donelle said.

Other Ascentra Credit Union employees have helped Donelle in the past and she is hoping that they can pitch in once more for this worthy cause. She plans on creating another team in the next few weeks

“Being involved with Habitat is a very rewarding experience and will make you feel a great sense of accomplishment,” Donelle explains. “In actuality you are not only giving to others you also ‘get’ a lot from the experience! Try it! You will love it!”

To take part on Donelle’s team contact her at donelle.lineburg@ascentra.org. For more information on Habitat for Humanity visit their website at www.habitat.org.