

women build NEWS

A PUBLICATION OF THE WOMEN BUILD PROGRAM OF HABITAT FOR HUMANITY CANADA

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Fall 2004

and in the beginning . . .

Congratulations to Maureen Crawford and her staff for launching this excellent newsletter. As a member of the Women Build Steering Council, I am delighted to contribute to our first Canadian Women Build News. It is exciting to see the momentum that has been generated since the first grassroots Women Build projects in Waterloo and Tara (Ontario) in 2000/01.

As many of you are aware, The National Women Build Department and the Advisory Council were established following the high profile Calgary build in 2002. The success of this build, along with affiliate enthusiasm and National Office support have generated energy and motivation that far exceeds any dreams we might have had.

For the past 18 months, while we have continued to sort out who and what we are, two more affiliates, Brantford and Saskatoon have charged forward and once again demonstrated the power of women during their successful 2003/4 Women Build projects.

As a council and a newly created national program we are slowly and quietly emerging from behind closed doors as we take on an active role, all the while attempting to keep up with our dynamic affiliates who are on board with the Women Build program. Now in the open and rapidly growing we are committed to supporting Canadian affiliates in their Women Build endeavors by making available various resources such as training/support materials, Gifts-in-Kind, funding, and access to a volunteer data-

base. Although women have been involved in Habitat from the beginning, the numbers of volunteers do not reflect the qualities that women have to offer in the building of homes. We want to bring many more skilled women on board and train unskilled women to build homes with families, and yet much of what we would like to deliver remains a work in progress. We look forward to partnering with affiliates, exchanging ideas, and sharing our successes and lessons learned. A goal for us all is about providing and maintaining a superior Women Build Program – a goal we can all aspire to – women and men alike.

Cathy Ens, Acting Chair

Canadian National WB Council

FROM THE OFFICE OF WOMEN BUILD

On a lovely Saturday in September 8 women representing 6 Affiliates gathered together to learn more about Women Builds. The all day workshop was led by HFHI WB staff – Fiona Eastwood, Program Director, Don Nordwell, Training Coordinator, and Suzanne Lewis Johnson, Media Consultant. Topics ranged from,

why a Women Build, to public relations, fundraising, training, and creating your own crew leaders. Everyone left with a better understanding of



Women Builds and some tools to share with their affiliates. More of these workshops will be held by HFHC as interest for Women Builds continues to grow across Canada. Let us know if you are next!

Maureen Crawford,
VP Affiliate Services

A Legacy is Celebrated . . .

Ask anyone from the Calgary Women Building a Legacy build and they will all say the same thing, "The media coverage changed their Habitat lives." Women Build brings in the media and puts women up front in their communities' consciousnesses.

When you put carpentry tools in a women's hands amazing things happen. They are empowered. They build houses. They learn new skills. They bring happiness to their communities. As Shelley Myshrall, Calgary Sun, reports in her August 10, 2002, "Lending a Hand to Begin a Legacy" article, "women have more faith in you and trust you to do many tasks." Women are not about standing alone and competing with each other, but about uniting together to laugh, learn, and encourage each other to improve.

The Calgary build was the

official launch of the Canadian Women Build Program and it was the enthusiasm of the volunteers, in combination with the extensive media coverage, that made Calgary stand out. According to Kathy McCormick, reporter for the Calgary Herald, it takes "strong leadership and experience . . . [and] strong teachers," along with eager hardworking volunteers, to warrant front page coverage of the Home Section (August 17, 2002).

What made the difference at Calgary? It was the women who lead the way, the women who wanted to follow, and the women who dared to try. With this example it is not hard to understand why women stood out, because even when overwhelmed by their own busy lives, women are willing to give of themselves so that they can make a difference. Women Builds stand out because women are well organized. They do the little things that make a differ-

ence, like taking time to put herbal hand soaps and lotion in the porta potties. Women know how to make the experience whole.

And on top of it all . . . Calgary women know how to build.

Katherine A. Weir, WB Coordinator



WOMEN BUILD COUNCIL

The formation of the Canadian National Women Build Council came about through the grass roots projects organized and implemented by affiliates in 2000/2001. This interest led up to the highly publicized Calgary Build (featured above) and from there the Council was formed. The Council is presently made up of four members with two vacancies available (Council Chair and Fund Development Chair). Their

mandate is to provide support to HFHC by promoting the Women Build Program amongst affiliates, funders and the media, and to support the affiliates in their Women Builds with support material, Gifts-in-Kind, funding, and access to a database of volunteers.

When Diane Reid of Calgary was asked, "What was your greatest surprise/benefit of your Women Build," she replied, "The extraordinary media coverage - it really launched Habitat - Calgary as a major player in solving the housing crisis in Calgary."



PRESENT COUNCIL MEMBERS

- Cathy Ens, Acting Chair
- Kelly Harper, Marketing & Comm. Chair
- Janice Liebe, Affiliate Support Chair
- Judy Cosco, Liaison, HFHI WB Steering Council
- Maureen Crawford, Staff Liaison

UP AND COMING BUILDS

2005



HHF Cabot

HFH Winnipeg

(May 28 — June 4)

HFH Northumberland

Women Build Workshop Toronto ♀ September 2004

In September HFHI Women Build, in accordance with HFHC, held an all day intensive Women Build information and training workshop in Toronto. The workshop was well represented by six affiliates (Cabot, Northumberland, Toronto, York, Waterloo, and Winnipeg), representatives from the Canadian National Women Build Council, and National Office Women Build staff. While so far Women Build had been a relatively little known project in Canada, the main purpose of the workshop was demonstrate to affiliates the feasibility and added bonuses of having a Women Build. All of the affiliates went away committed to doing Women Builds, with three of them signed up for 2005.

While there are reams of notes from the workshop, for the sake of economy I will focus on only three topic areas touched on throughout the day: The Man Dilemma, Publicity and the Family, and Volunteers.

The Man Dilemma: Probably the biggest misconception of a Women Build is that men are excluded from the build. Reality is men make up the majority of the skilled construction trades and therefore women need them. Men can be used as teachers and overall, those men included in builds as teachers, are usually thrilled to not only be teaching their skills but also to see the number of women who are and have the potential to become viable home builders. Remember these three things when it comes to men: 1) decide early on the level of male participation and make sure that everyone is well aware of this, 2) women work better when they are in the majority, and finally, 3) have men as "teachers" only.



Publicity and the Family: Women Builds are highly publicized events. The media can be overwhelming. For the family this can be dismaying, while for affiliates this can be a dream come true. Choose a family that will be able to withstand such attention and make sure in advance that they are well aware of what is being asked of them.

Volunteers: The Volunteer Committee is the backbone of the Women Build project. The committee chair should not be the Executive Director but a dynamite woman who can carry this project through from start to finish. Be prepared for the tremendous response you will be getting. Women Builds attract 70% new volunteers to Habitat. Plan ahead for what you will do with all of this attention. Be prepared!!!

Further information about this workshop is available at womenbuild@habitat.ca.

Katherine A. Weir, WB Coordinator

WHAT WOMEN BUILD CAN DO FOR AFFILIATES!!

- ☎ The media coverage alone will boost your image and increase the number of sponsors that want to get involved with Habitat.
- ☎ You can increase the untapped skilled work force by promoting women as leaders and by inviting women to challenge themselves in the construction trade. Remember women make up 1/2 of the population.

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WOMEN BUILD'S SHOPPING LIST

- A WB National Council Chair (send resume to mcrawford@habitat.ca)
- A WB National Fund Development Chair (send resume to mcrawford@habitat.ca)
- Affiliates to do Women Builds
- Stories for the Newsletter
- WB volunteers (journeyed, experienced, and beginners)

Statement of Mission

The mission of the Women Build Program of Habitat for Humanity Canada is to work through affiliates to nurture, recruit, and train women to build and maintain simple, and decent, healthy and affordable houses.

FACTS about *women* and **HABITAT FOR HUMANITY CANADA**

The Canadian Women Build Program, established in 2003, was set up in order to promote further involvement and leadership roles for women in the construction of Habitat homes. Our Canadian Women Build projects provide an environment where women can either supply their already acquired construction skills or start from scratch as they learn how to build a home from the ground up. In addition, Women Build is about encouraging women and men to work together in a women-guided environment with the sole purpose of working with a family in need in order to help them accomplish a dream – a home to call their own.

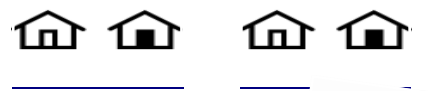
The Women Build Program at Habitat for Humanity Canada, in Waterloo,

Ontario, works to provide affiliates with resources that will equip them with the necessary tools they will need in order to undertake a successful Women Build. These educational resources include manuals on how to plan a Women Build, how to train volunteers for a build, how to use the media, and how to organize fundraising workshops.

Women Builds offer tremendous empowerment for women and men alike. Women bring a practical awareness to the build, and for those who are not already skilled construction workers or contractors, they have the chance to take on new and multiple skills that can be used on other builds or in their own lives. Skilled men have the opportunity to share and teach women, who can then go on to mentor others in future Women

Builds.

With women as 50% of the population and less than half that of working on a regular build site, a Women Build project opens the doors for many women to volunteer. It also increases the overall potential volunteer base for an affiliate. Women Builds, while known for their spirit, originality, and extensive media coverage, are often overlooked when it comes to the practical long term benefits of increasing volunteer awareness, Habitat friends and promoters, and the opportunities for any affiliate to build more homes.



Habitat Statistics on Women for Regular Builds

- 40% of volunteers
- 25% work on site
- 4% are skilled workers

Women Build can change these numbers.

SEND US YOUR NEWS

What are women in your area doing to build houses and relationships with Habitat for Humanity? We'd like to know about your successful builds and fundraisers, as well as the problem projects that have you stumped. Are you interested in volunteering for future Women Builds or do you want to be on our newsletter mailing list? Write or email the editor at Women Build, Habitat for Humanity Canada, 40 Albert Street, Waterloo, Ontario, N2L 3S2. womenbuild@habitat.ca.



Check Out Our Web Site!



We now have a Web site linked to the main Habitat Canada site. You can access the Women Build page from the links on the Habitat for Humanity main page or through the History link on the About Habitat page. The address is www.habitat.ca. Our newsletter is included on this site. Please visit our web-site and let us know what you think.