

A Place to Call Home



Organization helps build more than housing

Constructing houses is only one goal of Lincoln-Lancaster County Habitat for Humanity; building family relationships and a supportive community are the others.

For 10 years, Habitat has been dedicated to eliminating inadequate housing in Lincoln.

"There are a lot of needy people in the community," said Laurie Fraser, Habitat vice president. "We are trying to help those who need us the most."

Inspired by her father's Habitat for Humanity work in California, Fraser has worked with Habitat for four years.

"I like the fact that we are helping people improve their lives," she said. "It's the greatest feeling in the world."

Habitat is a Christian organization

with volunteers from many faiths working together. Since 1988, the Lincoln chapter has built 33 houses throughout the city.

"We don't give anyone a home," the Rev. James Cooke, Lincoln Habitat president, said. "We build a home with them."

Cooke, a 10-year member of Habitat, said the group's main mission is to build houses.

"We are the fun part of the church," he said.

Fraser said interested families wishing to become Habitat for Humanity families must attend a homeowner application forum.

Upcoming forums will be Oct. 6, 8 and 10 at Grace United Methodist Church, 2640 R St., she said.

"This is where we tell them what Habitat is all about," Fraser said. "We are a hand up, not a hand out."

Families fill out an application, and a Habitat family selection committee reviews all applications.

Each family that meets Habitat's partnership criteria then participates in both a family and an in-house interview.

"The interviews serve as a chance for us to get to know the families," Fraser said. "We personally get to know them and see how they live."

After the interviews, the committee conducts a final review and makes family partnership recommendations to the Habitat board of directors.

Fraser said Habitat does not limit the number of houses or families it

sponsors each year.

Cooke said being involved with a Habitat home can do a lot of good, both for the volunteer and the partnership family.

"As you work on a house you see instant results," Cooke said. "Habitat is building lives one house at a time."

Habitat offers many volunteer opportunities throughout the year. Fraser encouraged everyone to get involved.

"If you are proud of Lincoln as a community, helping families become strong is the greatest gift you can give," she said.

For volunteer opportunities and information call Lincoln-Lancaster County Habitat for Humanity at (402) 477-9184.