



215 Matthews Avenue | New Britain, PA 18901 | 215.348.2204 | habitatbucks.org



It's About...Women Building a Better Bucks!

Thank you for your interest in Women Build and **welcome!** Women Build is a year-long adventure, offering a variety of opportunities for getting involved including the steering committee, Lowe's training clinics, and building on site. I'm sure we have something that is a great fit for your skills, and we are happy to help you figure out what that is. Women Build may also help you discover skills in areas you might not have imagined!

Attached here, you will find an overview of the Women Build program, including how and why it evolved and the successes we have had thus far. The program has been a "success" in other intangible ways not listed, also. Over the life of the program, we've watched women who have no experience with construction come together and gather so much knowledge that they begin teaching it to others. The camaraderie that has developed in this process is amazing! This is about having fun as well as building affordable homes!

Additionally, included is an outline of the ways to get involved and a schedule for this year's events. There are many ways to be involved throughout the entire year! Have a look and feel free to contact Laura with any questions you might have or to get on the schedule for one of our many events.

Also, please consider joining our Women Build Steering Committee, which meets on the 2nd Thursday of every month at 6:30pm here at our office. This amazing group of women truly make Women Build possible. Remember, this program is largely volunteer-driven and there is much behind-the-scenes work being done by Women Build-ers. This lively group could definitely use your help!

Finally, please provide us with your complete contact information, including the email you prefer us to contact. We send out a Women Build update email about every two weeks. This is the best way to stay current with the latest Women Build events and activities. You can also check out our Women Build website at www.habitatbucks.org/womenbuild.asp.

Once again, thank you for your interest in Women Build! We are excited to get to know you!

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WOMEN WHO INSPIRE

Women and their children are disproportionately affected by poverty and substandard housing. This is true nationally, internationally and right here in Bucks County and the surrounding areas. Of the calls that Habitat Bucks receives inquiring about our homeownership program, more than **80%** are made by women. Since 1990, Habitat Bucks has partnered with **59** families for homeownership. Of those, **30** are headed solely by women. An amazing **122** children and young adults have benefited from the Habitat for Humanity homeownership program here in Bucks County.

Though each family is unique, the experiences of the women in our program often overlap: circumstances that left them as the sole provider for their children, kids with special needs, cramped living conditions, a desire for a better life for their kids and themselves, a determination to succeed. Hard work is nothing new to any of the women with which we have partnered. They are all incredible and serve as inspiration for the Women Build program.

BUILDING OPPORTUNITIES

Since **1950**, the number of households headed by single women has grown by **400%**. Unfortunately, less than half of those women own their own home. Additionally, as of 2004, women made up **47%** of the volunteer force at Habitat Bucks, but represented only **17%** of our repeat construction volunteers. **Women Build** is not about excluding men, but about including women. Begun by Habitat for Humanity International in **1991**, the **Women Build** program is designed specifically to recruit, train and empower women to build.

BUILDING INDEPENDENCE

Children of homeowners perform better in school and are more likely to continue until graduation. They also experience fewer behavioral and health problems. Yet the women responsible for the well-being of so many children are increasingly being denied access to the most basic human right of a home. Women themselves are also positively impacted by becoming homeowners. They are more likely to experience job growth and increased feelings of self-worth. **Women Build** results in women with real skills that allow them to maintain their own homes.

BUILDING LEADERSHIP

Through hands-on training and a women-only environment, **Women Build** encourages women to enter what remains a male-dominated arena. It offers the opportunity to develop the skills necessary to become a crew leader on the construction site and lead other women through the building process. All participants become leaders in the fight against poverty housing.

BUILDING A LEGACY

Since its launch in 2005, **425** women have contributed more than **7000** hours through the Habitat Bucks **Women Build** program and have raised over **\$200,000**. Of those women, **200** have been trained in construction and **13** became crew leaders (one even became a staff member!). All of the training and planning culminates in an annual women-only week on the construction site. During **Women Build-a-thon Week 2007**, **66** women raised over **\$16,000** and contributed more than **900** hours building on **8** homes at Emerald Hollow!

Women across the region are excited to be a part of something that allows them to learn valuable skills, contribute in an area where they are often excluded, and make a tangible improvement in the lives of women in their neighborhood. **Women Build** has the potential to ensure that, years from now, women and girls are given the opportunity to develop personal or career-oriented construction skills, to own their own home and to see themselves as catalysts for change in their community. What a precious legacy to hand down!

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

- Serve on the steering committee (meets the 2nd Thursday of every month, 6:30pm at the Habitat Bucks office)
- Attend construction training clinics hosted by Lowe's
- Train to become a crew leader
- Participate in a Women Build Day
- Host a fundraiser to benefit Women Build
- Become a Women Build day or program sponsor
- Speak to your contacts about becoming a sponsor
- Assist with events like Strawberry Festival and Yardley Harvest Day
- Participate in Women Build-a-Thon Week 2008
- Provide a lunch or breakfast during Build-a-Thon Week 2008

WOMEN BUILD 2008 DATES

Mark your calendar for these upcoming dates! All events require prior registration with the volunteer associate (l.mcclellan@habitatbucks.org or 215.348.2204 x302)

March 5, 12, 19, 26: Lowe's training clinics, Quakertown
Learn basic construction skills that you can use on our site or in your own home.

April 3, 10, 17, 24: Lowe's training clinics, Warrington
Learn basic construction skills that you can use on our site or in your own home.

April 26: Women Build Day on site
A great day to get your first taste of Habitat and the Women Build program.

May 3—4: Peddler's Village Strawberry Festival
Women Build will be hosting a booth at this fabulous festival.

May 7: Women Build Day on site
A great day to get your first taste of Habitat and the Women Build program.

June 7: Opening Ceremony and first build day of Women Build Week

June 7—14: Women Build-a-Thon Week 2008
The ultimate way to ACT, GIVE, SHARE! Participants gather sponsors to fund their building on site.

June 13, 2008: Sponsor Lunch at Emerald Hollow
An opportunity for our sponsors to experience exactly what their support has made possible and for us to show them our thanks!

June 14: Closing Ceremony

Other events will be scheduled throughout the year. Please provide us with your email address to be notified of further involvement opportunities!

"Women Build is a wonderful opportunity to help those in the community and also help yourself. It's an ongoing process from fundraising to promotion to building in which everyone can put their individual talents to use while learning and gaining new skills and confidence. Together the end result is affordable housing and a stable, safe living environment for someone in need."

-Theresa Sheehan, 2006 & 2007 Women Build participant

