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## Building In A Blitz

Habitat For Humanity Volunteers Expect To Build 2 Houses In A Week

### Wisconsin State Journal :: LOCAL/WISCONSIN :: B1

Saturday, July 31, 2004

Nathan Leaf Wisconsin State Journal

While Sheila McBride may be on vacation this week, you won't find her lounging in a beach chair or sipping mimosas between mud packs and pedicures.

Instead, the 42-year-old New Jersey woman chose to spend her vacation in Dane County, pounding nails and putting up drywall as she and other volunteers knock out 2 houses in the next week for Habitat for Humanity.

She flew in Thursday to join the team of about 60 volunteers from across the country who will work on the "Blitz Build" project in the Twin Oaks subdivision on Madison's Southeast Side.

The team, which is known for its cohesiveness and efficiency, will complete two homes and start a third, to be completed by the United Way next month.

On Friday the group, which consists of former and current Honeywell employees, started the project off with wall raisings.

While it's McBride's third year working with the group, many of her fellow builders have been doing the work for nearly a decade. And McBride is still in awe.

"The skill and level of perfection these people put into these homes is amazing," McBride said. "Its almost like seeing something moving in fast-forward," she said of the "Blitz Build."

In the past, Honeywell has organized the trip, helped with travel expenses and given employees time off. This year the company posted \$18,000 toward construction costs, but volunteers are paying their own way and using personal vacation days.

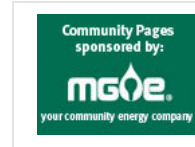
Ron Konkol, publicity coordinator for Habitat for Humanity of Dane County, said the volunteers have been put up in UW-Madison dorms by Habitat while the Kiwanis Club of Madison East keeps them fed with three meals a day.

The accelerated building means Michelle Sharlow, a 33-year-old surgical technician, will be able to move out of her small South Side apartment into one of the homes several months earlier than expected. Instead of waiting until next spring, Sharlow and her two sons, ages 12 and 13, will move in Nov. 1.

Sharlow was approved for the Habitat program through an application process that requires a family income no higher than 60 percent of Dane County's median and the ability to pay a \$500 down payment.

She said she was amazed the volunteers would make such a sacrifice. "Its really great. I mean this is their vacation time they're giving up," she said.

\ Contact Nathan Leaf at [nleaf@madison.com](mailto:nleaf@madison.com) or 252-6120.



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