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A homebuilding blitz

Three houses to be built in 9 days in Habitat for Humanity 'miracle'

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Bruce Alspaugh of Arizona, a member of Blitz Home Builders, uses a table saw Thursday while working on a Habitat for Humanity home in Sioux Falls. / Emily Spartz / Argus Leader

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More than 80 Blitz Home Builders, Habitat for Humanity members and volunteers from local businesses worked together Thursday - day one of a nine-day expedition known as The Amazing Blitz to construct three homes for three families in northwest Sioux Falls.

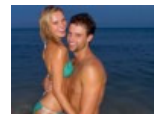
The project is unprecedented in Sioux Falls. Habitat for Humanity has constructed almost 100 homes locally in 20 years, but never three in less than two weeks. Through a partnership with Blitz Home Builders - a nationwide group of construction volunteers - three four-bedroom houses will be built on one street.

The Phoenix-based organization chose Sioux Falls for its Amazing Blitz partly because of the local Habitat chapter's ability to provide materials through various sponsorships from Sioux Falls businesses. Despite Sioux Falls

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being one of the smaller site choices in terms of population, support for funding the \$55,000 needed per house was too much to overlook.

"The Habitat's been blessed for the support from sponsors," said Joel Hathaway, development director for Habitat for Humanity's Sioux Falls chapter. "To get chosen by them (Blitz Home Builders) is pretty much a miracle."

And in one day of effort, seven-dozen workers made noticeable progress and noise on Amber Street in what volunteer Steve Cook has labeled "framing day." Before Thursday, the lots had only basement foundations and decks in the front yard.

"All the framing on the walls should be done. We might get to setting up trusses to the roof before we're done today, too," Cook said. "It's not that frantic of pace, either - many hands mean light work. I'd say we're ahead of schedule at this point."

The majority of the Blitz Home Builders have an engineering background and carpentry experience to provide leadership for the 25 to 30 workers working on each home simultaneously. In total, more than 300 volunteers from local businesses are scheduled at the site during the nine-day construction.

That means a subdued role for Adil Abdulhassan. Abdulhassan and his family were one of three families chosen to receive a home from the project. He and other family members were at the site Thursday pounding nails and setting up wall frames.

"They know what they're doing," he said. "But the thing I've noticed is how much they're enjoying it ... we're extremely grateful."

Abdulhassan and his wife, Kademiya, have eight children and were required to fulfill 400 hours as a family taking classes on home ownership and helping to build the house. The classes and work served as a down payment on the house. The family then will make mortgage payments to Habitat for Humanity.

Abdulhassan said some additional paperwork will follow construction and that the families expect to be moved in by the end of August.

A dedication of the three houses is scheduled for 9:30 a.m. July 30 at the build sites.

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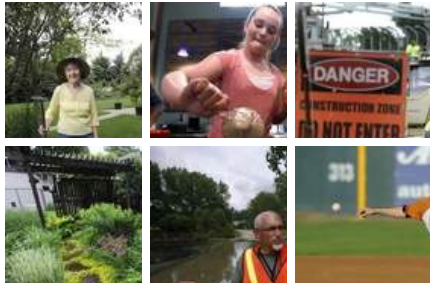
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