

Baylor students take ‘First Step’ into community service

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The completed Habitat for Humanity house frame remained on the Baylor campus for one week to draw support for the project. It was moved to its permanent location and is scheduled for completion in November. (Baylor University photos)

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By **Katie Brooks**

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WACO—Together, Baylor University students removed graffiti scrawled on the walls of downtown Waco businesses, cleared debris from along the Brazos River, improved walking paths in a scenic part of the city, and framed a Habitat for Humanity house for a local family.

The students experienced a crash-course in the importance of service and vocation as they participated in the recent First Step community service project.

More than 1,000 new students provided clean-up efforts to dozens of downtown Waco businesses and locations, and they saw tangible results by the end of the service experience, said Karin Klinger, associate director for student activities.



Baylor students move a completed piece of the house frame to its place with the rest of the Habitat for Humanity house.

“Students worked hard, laughed a lot and were able to connect with one another and with members of the Waco community. The upperclassmen student leaders involved said it was the best First Step experience Baylor has facilitated in years,” Klinger said.

As a part of the emphasis, hundreds of members of Baylor’s Class of 2011 took part in Project Build Hope. The volunteers framed the first Habitat for Humanity home to be fully funded by Baylor’s chapter of the non-profit, ecumenical Christian housing ministry. The house-framing project also celebrated the 20th anniversary of Baylor Habitat, the organization’s first collegiate chapter.

“The framing went exceptionally well. All the student groups moved through the site efficiently and enthusiastically, and we had a well-framed house by the end of the day,” said Anna Sauer, a senior accounting major from Fredericksburg and treasurer for Baylor Habitat.

Sauer was glad so many freshmen had the opportunity to learn about Habitat for Humanity and take part in the 20th anniversary house-raising.

“I hope that their experience with us that day will be ranked among their favorite memories at Baylor,” she said.

The completed Habitat for Humanity house frame remained on the Baylor campus for one week to draw support for the project before 15 Baylor Habitat volunteers disassembled it and moved it to its permanent location, said Sonya Maness, a senior archaeology and museum studies major from Houston and president of Baylor Habitat.

It is scheduled for completion in November.

During the week the house frame remained on campus, Baylor Habitat members held an “open house” to help spread the word about its mission. Students and faculty who passed by the frame signed it and wrote encouraging messages to the family.

Habitat members said that although the messages eventually will be covered when the house is complete, the encouragement and hope are woven forever into the innermost part of the house.

Baylor Habitat will dedicate the house at 10 a.m. Nov. 17, at its new location—1117 Brown St. in Waco. Guests will include community members and leaders, Baylor Habitat members, Waco Habitat staff and friends of the receiving family, Maness said.

At the dedication, Baylor Habitat officers will present the new homeowners with gifts for their home, she said.

“Habitat for Humanity is a program that reaches beyond simply providing a family with a home. Habitat creates stable and sustainable neighborhoods, making our city a better place to live. It teaches college students how to live outside of themselves, and it brings people from all walks of life together for a common good,” Maness said.