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Local leaders help build a house

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Hardin County Habitat for Humanity construction foreman Howard Gatlin speaks Saturday morning to volunteers from Leadership Hardin County before beginning construction work on a Habitat home on Moore Drive in Elizabethtown.

ANDREW CRITCHELOW/The News-Enterprise

In order to excel as a community leader, it's important to understand problems in the community and collaborate with organizations tasked with addressing these problems. That's a key philosophy for Leadership Hardin County, and it is why members of the group spent Saturday morning volunteering to help Hardin County Habitat for Humanity build a house for a family in need.

A Hardin County Chamber of Commerce program, Leadership Hardin County is designed to bring together a class of community leaders each year to help them better understand the region they serve. Through the program, each class is required to develop and execute a community project with this year's project being a collaboration with Habitat for Humanity.

Leadership Hardin County member and Hardin County Habitat for Humanity board president Daniel London said past Leadership Hardin County projects have included collaborations with Silverleaf Sexual Trauma Recovery Services, United Way of Central Kentucky and others.

"This is a great opportunity to pursue community service with a great team of folks," he said.

Construction began in March and is expected to be completed before the class's May 15 graduation. A three-bedroom house on Moore Drive in Elizabethtown, will be completed for a local widowed mother and her two children.

London said Habitat's mission is imperative to help fight local poverty.

"They might not have a house otherwise if it wasn't for Habitat," he said.

Habitat homes are granted for qualified, low-income families. Families must put in 500 hours (or 250 hours for individual homeowners) of "sweat equity" through the process, which includes either helping in the construction process or volunteering in other capacities with Habitat for Humanity. When the house is complete, families sign an affordable, interest-free mortgage and make monthly payments.

During Saturday's work session, volunteers worked on placing baffles on the bottom side of the structure's roof and built attic access for the home. The team consisted of Leadership Hardin County members, along with Hardin County Habitat for Humanity President Scott Turner and construction foreman Howard Gatlin.

Turner said groups that volunteer with Habitat for Humanity gain a firm sense of team building and strengthened camaraderie.

"If you work here and you're side-by-side and you're doing all this stuff and you're becoming friends, then you probably are going to have a better work relationship," he said.

Of course, Turner said, these partnerships are mutually beneficial.

“The more volunteers and more groups we have, the faster these houses go up,” he said.

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