

Volunteers thrive with Habitat for Humanity

By Diane Goble
Correspondent

Would you like to do something meaningful for your community and help hardworking families achieve their dream of homeownership? Are you a newcomer to Sisters and want to meet local folks with similar interests? Did you retire recently and feel like you want to be doing something with your newfound free time?

These are some of the reasons volunteers at Sisters Habitat for Humanity give for joining the team. Between the Thrift Store, the ReStore and the home-building projects, there is a constant need for new volunteers and a variety of things for all skill levels that need to be done to keep things running smoothly.

Sara Palmer enjoys helping customers with “upcycling” ideas and says she “gets as excited as they do when they find that special item they’ve been searching for in the ReStore.” Ken Purkey started volunteering to earn equity hours for

his daughter, but now that she and her son have moved into their own Habitat home, he continues to volunteer “because it’s so much fun.”

In the Thrift Store, there are frequent changeovers when the store shuts down and a team of volunteers completely changes the theme of the merchandise inside the store. A constant stream of donations means clothing and household items have to be sorted, cleaned, priced and displayed or stored for future changeovers, such as Christmas or Rodeo.

“I especially need someone on Fridays and Saturdays,” says Thrift Store manager, Lenora Fitzgerald, “but if someone can come in for a couple of hours one day week and tidy up the linen section or the toy section, or pitch in when we do a changeover, that would be really helpful. They don’t need to work a full four-hour shift.”

Robin Tawney, ReStore manager, treats her volunteers like gold and admits she couldn’t do her job if it



PHOTO BY JERRY BALDOCK

Sisters Habitat for Humanity volunteers have a satisfying job with lots of camaraderie.

weren’t for them.

“We have a variety of opportunities for people with various interests and skills,” says Tawney. “Obviously we need volunteers with strong backs to move furniture and appliances around, but we also need pricers and display decorators, people who know about tools, computers, stereos, sporting goods, automotive, flooring; people who can fix things. I need someone who will occasionally do a dump run to the landfill.”

Currently the ReStore needs one or more heavy-lifters to help with pickups and deliveries for a few hours every week on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. A commitment would be needed once a week, twice a month — whatever you can do — so days are covered.

Tawney would also love to have a couple of volunteers who would come in once a week to just straighten up and keep current the sporting goods section, the tools/

hardware section and the coral outside with the plumbing, gardening, bikes, and outdoor things

Age is no barrier; the oldest volunteer, Russell Williams, turned 92 this month. Buy him a (free) cup of coffee and a cookie, and he’ll tell you lots of stories.

At both the Thrift Store and the ReStore, volunteers can choose their own days and times, work a regular weekly four-hour shift or come in once a month for a couple of hours or be available to fill in if needed. People needing to do community service, including teens over 14 wanting to add to their college applications, are welcome.

Habitat also needs volunteers to work on the job-sites. Even if you’ve never swung a hammer, construction manager Shawn O’Hern will make sure you get on-the-job training.

Volunteer orientations are held monthly at the Habitat for Humanity office above the

Thrift Store at 141 W. Main Ave. The next orientation is scheduled for February 11 at noon. Volunteers learn the story of Habitat for Humanity and about all the volunteer opportunities available at the stores and build-sites. For more information or to RSVP for the next orientation, contact Marie Clasen at marie@sistershabitat.org or 541-549-1193.

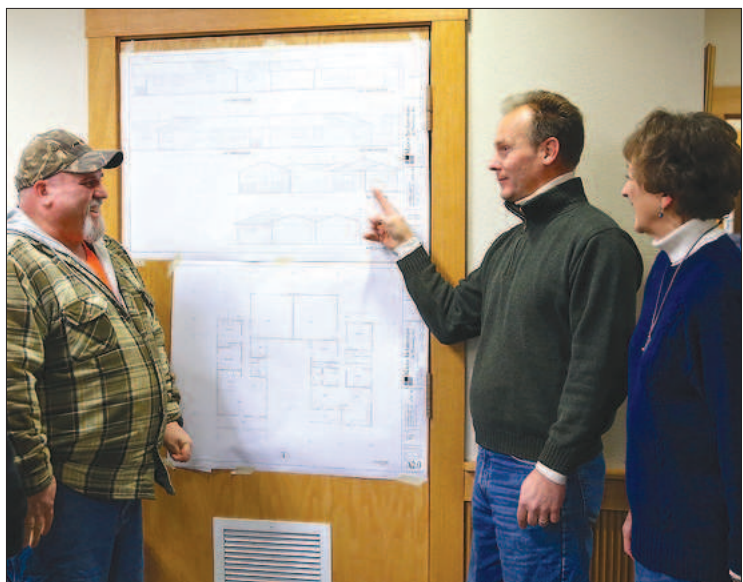


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Construction manager Shawn O’Hern (pointing) talks with future Habitat homeowner Dave Spain.

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