

Habitat honors it's big crew of volunteers

Since 1991, 63 families have purchased a home through the Sisters Habitat for Humanity homeownership program. Last week one of those families, Larry and Terri Gallegly, celebrated with more than 100 Habitat volunteers and homeowners as they burned their 20-year mortgage, symbolically marking the pay-off of their home.

The ceremony took place during the 10th Annual Sisters Habitat's Board of Director's Volunteer Appreciation Barbecue where 92 people and four groups were honored with the President's Volunteer Service Award.

The four groups honored during the past year were Heart of Oregon Corps YouthBuild, Sage Academy from Minnesota, Tualatin Presbyterian Church and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers group.

In addition, Thrift Store volunteer Nan Daschel received the President's Lifetime Achievement Award for volunteering more than 4,000 hours during more than 10 years of service to Sisters Habitat.

Daschel is passionate about Habitat and has been volunteering at the Thrift Store since 2007. She also served on the board of directors as president and secretary and as a family partner assisting two families through the homeownership process.

Sisters Habitat's Executive

Director Sharlene Weed said, "Volunteers are the heart and hammer of Habitat. During the year 247 people volunteered more than 21,000 hours, and those figures represent the equivalent of one person working 2,625 days, or seven years."

Many of Habitat's volunteers have been helping out for years with the organization, working at the Thrift Store and ReStore, building at the construction site and serving on numerous committees. In 2009 a 1,000-hour Club was formed. To date 101 people have earned this distinction. This year two volunteers received Habitat's 1,000-hour Club Award, which is a cumulative award given to a volunteer once he or she has served 1,000 hours. The award was presented to Mary Jo Swaner, a ReStore volunteer, and to Rick Pearson, who volunteers at the construction site. Both Swaner and Pearson started volunteering with Sisters Habitat in 2016, and because of their consistency they have spent more than 500 hours each year giving back.

Pearson missed the Volunteer Appreciation Barbecue, and there seemed to be some confusion as to why he didn't attend, Construction Manager Darleene Snider said. She thought Pearson had been called to jury duty, but other construction volunteers joked the he was out fishing, which is usually one of the only



PHOTO BY JERRY BALDOCK

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reasons that Pearson will miss out on building, Snider added.

Swaner is also a very consistent volunteer, ReStore Manager Robin Tawney said. "Mary Jo was a customer and was donating items while she was building her house. When she found out we needed more volunteers at the ReStore, she stepped up and since then has been cashiering and researching prices of items on the computer. She's always ready to pitch in when we are short-handed."

It's evident that volunteering with Sisters Habitat not only helps Habitat, but it brings people together through camaraderie and friendship as well, store

Volunteer Coordinator Josie Newport said. Since she started working at Habitat a couple months ago she has heard so many great stories of friendships developing, she added.

Those interested in volunteering with Sisters Habitat can attend a volunteer orientation session, which is offered on the first and third Wednesday of each month. For more information and to register, contact Marie Clasen at marie@sistershabitat.org or 541-549-1193.

Through Habitat for Humanity, families and individuals in need of a hand up partner with Sisters Habitat to build or improve a place they can call home. Future homeowners help build their own homes alongside volunteers and pay an affordable mortgage. Through financial support, volunteering or adding a voice to support affordable housing, everyone can help families achieve the strength, stability and self-reliance they need to build better lives for themselves.

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