

HOUSING



Habitat for Humanity Builds Green

New homes meet highest standards

Making a sustainable home doesn't just mean going green—it means creating homes with lasting value that contribute to the productive growth and positive health of the communities in which we live.

Portland's Habitat for Humanity has a commitment to green building and continuously looks for ways to make homes affordable to buy and affordable to live in.

In 2007, a unique opportunity arose when the Cascadia Region Building Council challenged participants to design a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) green rated duplex at 604 N.E. Webster, a property owned by Habitat for Humanity.

The rating system provides a framework for sustainable green building and development practices. LEED certification demonstrates that a building is environmentally responsible and healthy place to live.

The winners of the contest were David Posada and Scott Mooney. After meeting with the



Juan Gonzalez (from left), Carrie Davis and Thea Zander work on a Habitat for Humanity home at 602 N.E. Webster St., the non-profit group's first LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) home in Oregon.

PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER



The Alemayoh family will move into a Habitat for Humanity home with the highest rating for green sustainability building practices.

designers, Habitat decided to make their design a reality, with some adjustments to make the home more conducive to Habitat's program of simple, decent, affordable housing. Walsh Construction Co. and Bank of America sponsored the project and Walsh provided the project management.

Most Habitat homes are already Energy Star efficient, but this demonstration project was an opportunity to utilize many non-traditional products and systems that Habitat wished to learn about. A large amount of the materials and labor for this project were donated, which kept the homes affordable for hardworking families of limited means.

The families will purchase the



Janette Clark becomes a homeowner thanks to 500 hours of sweat equity with Habitat for Humanity.

homes at cost and pay a zero percent interest mortgage. While building green is more

costs worthwhile—it is estimated that these homes will be 40 percent more energy efficient than a normal home.

The two Habitat homes at 604 N.E. Webster, a four-bedroom and a two-bedroom, are expected to earn either a gold or

platinum rating from LEED for Homes. According to the U.S. Green Building Council, there are only 14 housing projects in the entire state of Oregon with a gold or platinum rating—and none of those fall under the category of "affordable housing."

It is Habitat's hope that the houses on NE Webster can become a model of how socially and environmentally responsible decision-making can ultimately provide more progressive and energy-efficient homes for families in need.

Preventing Home Fires

Oregon State Fire Marshal Randy Simpson reminds Oregonians any time is a good time to have chimneys, fireplaces and woodstoves inspected and cleaned to avoid fires.

"Keeping your family warm should never result in tragedy," says Simpson.

If you use portable room heaters make sure to give them space and keep them away from

combustible materials.

Oregonians can keep themselves safe by having chimneys, flues, fireplaces and woodstoves inspected and cleaned each year by a qualified chimney sweep. Ask them to check for creosote deposits, soot build-up and physical damage.

Always use a fireplace screen. Make sure the screen is

made of sturdy metal or heat-tempered glass to prevent sparks from escaping. You should also keep a clutter-free environment.

Store kindling, fire logs and wood at least three feet from any heat source and dispose of ashes in a metal container and place the container outdoors at least three feet from anything flammable.

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