

# Building a Home For Humanity

By Jaime-Lynn Dyck



**T**he Habitat for Humanity Brandon Chapter is going strong as they work on 3 new builds this year for 3 hard working families in need of decent and affordable housing.

While volunteering at the Women's Build for Habitat this year, I got to work along side 2 of the families. You really get to learn about them and their story while you hammer in nails and put up walls! It makes the work you are putting in, feel much more rewarding. Each family has to put in 500 hours of work, in one capacity or another, as a commitment back to Habitat prior to moving into their home. This work can be on their home or another one being built and can range from different family members helping out.





700 Block of Franklin Street

The Brandon Chapter has had ample of volunteers help out this year, many on their Faith Build, Women's Build and Men's Build. This is a great way to get friends, family or colleagues together to help give back to the community. Keep it in mind for next year, as these are now annual events! During your time helping out, you are working! Building walls, framing the house, getting the house ready for siding; all with your hammer and nails! But don't fret! You are under expertise instruction of the foreman Kelsey and members of CFB Shilo.

Canadian Forces Base Shilo's connection with Habitat for Humanity began with a military carpenter who did some volunteer work with Habitat previously. He found he was able to meet the requirements of his On-The-Job-Employment (OJE) with the Habitat project, something that is often difficult to achieve working on the base. Getting all the requirements of the OJE package proves rather challenging since they conduct few "new" builds of simple

buildings on base. This proved to be an ideal opportunity for valuable training and the Brandon chapter of Habitat was approached. Thus, three military apprentices and two military journeyman tradesmen are working alongside Habitat for Humanity's hired tradespersons.

"So much of what we do domestically on military bases in Canada involves maintenance and repair of industrial sized buildings, yet when we deploy we have to return to the basics of building. Helping out with construction right



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from the foundation up on simple domestic buildings will help us when we have to open camps in new theatres of operation in the future.” says Major Jérémie Dulong, Officer Commanding of Real Property Operations West Detachment Shilo.

“Another valuable skill is cross training; while the structural work is being done the other trades provide a helping hand, when the electrical work is being done the remainder become trades helpers and so on and so forth. The experience we get from this opportunity is tremendous. And, we get to give back to our local community by helping some families get into their own home. It’s rewarding on all fronts.”

Many local businesses are working with Habitat in Brandon to get these homes ready for their new owners. Nickel Electric is happy to support the affordable housing initiatives Habitat builds in our community by contributing their work to the builds. When they heard about the Women’s Build last year they wanted to keep with the spirit of the project and took the opportunity to use a female Journeyman to head the electrical on site.

Sue Swarbrick with Budget Blinds in Brandon has been involved with Habitat for several years now. “I was honored to work with a wonderful committee of women from May 2017 to Feb 2018, establishing the first ever Women Build” Sue comments. “The actual week of the build was a pretty special time for all of us last summer and one of my roles was to secure donations for meals, snacks and beverages. Our community really

rallied around the cause. We organized an online auction in November and in February hosted Brandon’s first Designer Bag Bingo.” This Spring, Gord and Sue donated the blinds to complete the finishing touch on the Women’s Build house from last year.

Westman Lumber Supply Ltd., located at 1875 Middle Avenue on the North Hill, works with the Brandon Chapter to ensure they have all the supplies they need and delivered on site. If it wasn’t for local businesses like these, the job of Habitat would be a lot harder.

If you would like to check on the progress of the builds, head over to the 700 block of Franklin Street behind the hospital, you can’t miss them! If you want to learn more about Brandon’s Chapter, reach out to them at 204-726-4960. Myself, like many of the volunteers and businesses that help out, look forward to the completion of the homes knowing we helped make an impact on the lives of another family right here in Brandon. 🌿

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