

The 2009 Interfaith Habitat Build

A 5-bedroom home for a family of 10!

Durham Episcopal, Jewish and Muslim communities are collaborating in a Habitat for Humanity of Durham first-ever interfaith build. St. Stephen's is an active participant. The opening kick-off took place at the home site, 1009 Carroll Street, on Sunday, October 18th. Our own Father Bob Kaynor was one of the kick-off speakers. Following the short ceremony, a number of eager builders (dressed in less than their Sunday best!) began the initial framing.

Habitat homeowners seek a hand up, not a hand out. Families contribute a minimum of 250 hours of "sweat equity" in lieu of a financial down payment, hours spent building their homes and the homes of Habitat neighbors. Habitat homes are sold at their appraised value. Homeowners contribute to the community through their property taxes and the pride with which they maintain their homes. Families repay their mortgages in full. Homeowner mortgage payments build future Habitat homes.

Who will be the partner Family?

The Interfaith sponsored home is being built in partnership with Dul Rahlan and Bop Siu who emigrated from Vietnam with their eight children. Dul has been a permanent resident since February 2005. Bop and their children joined him in Durham two years ago. They have five sons and three daughters ranging in age from 4 to 21. The family currently lives in a three bedroom house that is too small for their large family.



The Rahlan Family

left to right

Chau (18, yellow shirt), Kam (15, white shirt), Justin (21, blue plaid), Dul (dad), Bop (mom), Be (7, pink pants), Kim (9, white shirt), Sam (13, green shirt), Thahn (4, in mom's lap), and Jon (20, gray shirt).

Where is 1009 Carroll Street?

The Rahlan's home is being built at 1009 Carroll St. in Southwest Central Durham in an area with great historic pride. There are five local neighborhood associations connected through the Southwest Central Quality of Life Project, a grassroots effort that leads the transforming redevelopment of the community. Habitat builds here in partnership with the community, Duke University, the Durham Community Land Trustees and the Self-Help Community Development Corporation. Habitat of Durham has built over 40 homes here. With rebuilding there has been a 50% average reduction in reported crime.

What is our construction schedule?

Construction of the Rahlan's home began on Sunday, October 18. Building continues Saturdays and Sundays each weekend from 10am-3pm. Volunteers from the collaborating faith organizations come together to build, to enjoy a light lunch together at 12:30PM, and then to work together again in the early afternoon. Each build day begins with a member of a faith community leading volunteers in a prayer from their tradition.

There are many ways to be involved! In addition to construction volunteers, a hospitality team provides snacks and lunches that respect the dietary requirements of the different faiths, a learning process in itself! Expertise in construction or in food preparation is welcomed, but not required! Your fellow volunteers are eager to provide advice, and

experienced leaders at the construction site ensure that the resulting home conforms to building codes and to practices that ensure quality.

Which are the participating faith communities?

This interfaith Build is unique for Habitat of Durham in its broad spectrum of participating faith groups. They include, directly or indirectly, the five Episcopal Churches in Durham, the Duke Episcopal student organization, the Durham Beth El Synagogue, the Duke Jewish Life Center, the Ar-Razzaq Islamic Center, the Duke Muslim Student Association, and through its work with Vietnamese Montagnards the Binkley Baptist Church of Chapel Hill. These different groups will have opportunities to participate in this Interfaith Build in rough proportion to their capabilities and interest.

Who can participate from St. Stephen's

Anyone high-school age or older can participate, consistent with their physical capabilities and interests. No prior experience is required, and high-school students can receive **Service Points** for their participation. You can participate either as a construction volunteer or as a hospitality volunteer providing vital snack and lunch support. Habitat provides drinking water, something very important on hot days.

Habitat has some general rules and suggestions about working at a building site, including

- Prior to working on a construction site, a volunteer needs to sign a waiver of liability.
- The minimum age requirement for construction volunteers is 16 years old. Volunteers under age 18 may not use power tools or climb ladders or scaffolds. Volunteers ages 14 & 15 may work on site away from construction activities – various tasks such as landscaping, site maintenance, painting and lunch crews are examples of work where young volunteers can make a significant contribution.
- Close-toed or athletic shoes may be worn, but sandals or Crocs are not recommended. Habitat recommends wearing layered clothing that you do not mind getting muddy or potentially permanently stained. A hat, sunglasses and sun block is also helpful.
- All necessary tools, work gloves, hard hats, safety glasses, and dust masks are provided by Habitat, but you are welcome to bring your own if you like. (We recommend putting your name on them.)
- The Habitat site supervisor has the ultimate authority about construction practices at the building site.

Except for these relatively few rules and a common sense approach to safety, **our construction activities are broadly open to volunteers**. If you have questions about participation, discuss your concerns with Dean McCumber (919 419-8225), our St. Stephen's construction coordinator. Or, add your name on one of our sign-up sheets!

If construction activities are not for you, join one of the hospitality teams. Those teams provide snacks and lunch for all workers at the Build site on designated St. Stephen's days. If you would like to participate in this way, speak with our hospitality coordinator Nancy Barnes (919 467-4424) or add your name to a hospitality sign-up sheet.

How to learn more about the Interfaith Build or watch its progress?

You can learn much more about Habitat building activities in Durham and about the Interfaith Build in particular by looking for Habitat information under Time/Talent//Treasure on the Stewardship menu at the top of the SSEC web page at www.ssecdurham.org.