

Habitat for Humanity Rallies Women to Fight Poverty

According to the Census Bureau, more than 12 million children—one out of every six—live in poverty in the United States, where more than 70 percent of Habitat for Humanity houses are built in partnership with women heads-of-household.

To help address homeownership challenges this population faces, women volunteers across the country will pick up their hardhats and power tools on construction sites in all 50 states in recognition of Habitat for Humanity's National Women Build Week, the week leading up to Mother's Day.

Beginning Saturday and going through Sunday, May 13, nearly 3,000 women will gather for "How-To" clinics at local Lowe's stores. Up to 10,000 women volunteers will then put their construction skills to work alongside low-income families at 275 Habitat build sites across the country.

Sponsored by Lowe's and themed "The Build Generation," the event calls on women to devote at least one day to creating simple, decent and affordable housing in their communities. The goal of the national week of building is to teach women construction skills, bring them together to address affordable housing needs in their communities and recruit young women volunteers ages 18-24 to support the mission.

"Habitat for Humanity's Women Build is not about excluding men; it's about including women," its website states. "While women make up 50 percent of Habitat's volunteer force, they are often a minority on the construction site. When women crews take the lead, Habitat increases its capacity to build more homes and to eliminate poverty housing."

To date, women volunteers have helped construct more than 1,900 Habitat houses nationwide through the Women Build Week

program. The event, now in its fifth year, has drawn more than 30,500 volunteers.

“Women Build offers a comfortable, welcoming work site where women quickly learn construction skills and take the lead in building new Habitat houses,” Habitat’s website says.

Habitat for Humanity International is a global nonprofit Christian housing organization that seeks to put God’s love into action by bringing people together to build homes, communities and hope. Since 1976, Habitat has served more than 500,000 families by welcoming people of all races, religions and nationalities to construct, rehabilitate or preserve homes; by advocating for fair and just housing policies; and by providing training and access to resources to help families improve their shelter conditions.