25, 199 Thursday • September 25, 1997

## LIFESTYLES 5 **Putting it Together**

## Habitat for Humanity builds two houses for area sisters

By MARIUM MOHIUDDIN Staff writer

**7**ho can build two houses in two weeks? Most contractors would shake their heads and walk away. "It cannot be done in that amount of time, maybe 3 to 4 months for one house.

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Saturday, Sept. 27 Habitat for Humanity will prove not only can it be nts also ha done, but it can be done by volunteers. It will bring to close a "Blitz Build" done by Habitat for Humaniwn food nade a R ty. The aim of the Blitz was to build y," Burchfiel two houses in two weeks. On Satured pastar, day, the families will move in.

One week later, on Oct. 4, ground breaking will begin for the next project, to build two more houses for St. k has a mo Joseph Regional Health Center.

Habitat for Humanity is a national, self-sustaining organization Aid and in said. "Ineve founded in 1976 to build homes for When Id families in need. The national orgarm room nization will be building its 50,000th home.

eir tummis It is a Christian organization, but it is not exclusive to Christians. Peotheir hund ple of many different backgrounds volunteer. Each house building begins with a blessing to motivate the Ung volunteers to accomplish the work in short periods of time.

Kate McKeon, president of Aggie Habitat for Humanity and a senior finance major, became involved with Habitat through a friend from Florida.

"There are 50 active members, and an estimated 300 Aggies work every year," McKeon said. "We have even had a couple of Corps outfits come out and help."

Construction has become a big part of these Aggies' lives.

The executive committee had gotten together and built an extension to my house," McKeon said. 'We bonded by adding a room, and had finished about 70 percent of the work.'

The Aggie Habitat for Humanity has begun an annual 5K run.

"It is the largest one in Bryan-College Station," McKeon said. "Last year we had 550 participants, and this year there were 700 participants. We charge a \$12 entry fee and raised \$4,000 to \$5,000."

Trisha Burk, executive director for the local Habitat for Humanity, said families go through a rigorous selection process.

The houses are not given away; they are given to families with a steady income. Over time, the families pay Habitat for the house. There are no banks involved, no interest, and Habitat handles the mortgages," Burk said.

It all begins with an application. From there, it is determined who has a real housing need. The families

(LSAT)



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Carolyn Clark, a professor in the Department of Education, works on one of the houses. She volunteered through the Unitarian Fellowship Church.

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have to be willing to put in 400 volunteer hours.

The two homes being built are three bedroom houses upon 1,150 square foot lots. The families are also given \$1,000 to personalize their new homes.

The local chapter has built a total of 17 houses since its start in 1989," Burk said. "These two new homes will bring the grand total to 19."

The land was donated by the Charlene Morrison family. Morrison was a resident of Bryan-College Station and worked for the city. When she passed away she left her land to her grandson, Andy Morrison. Andy Morrison had gone on a mission where one of his counselors had worked for Habitat. Andy Morrison then donated the land to Habitat for Humanity.

Two sisters, Hope Miranda and Oralia Perez, both single mothers, will be moving into the houses.

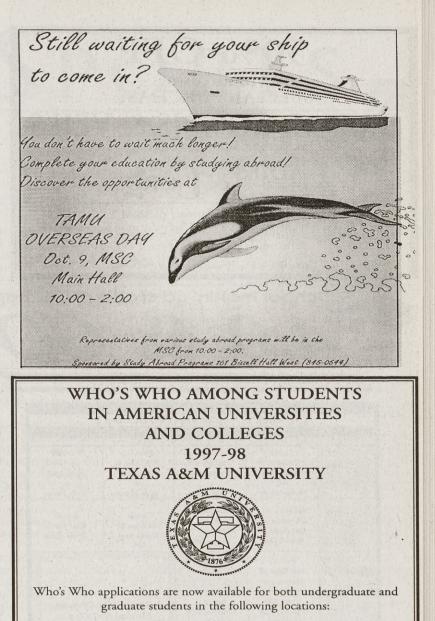
"I have gone to the sight almost everyday, and helped with painting

and cleaning," Perez said. There are about 60 people volunteering a day. No carpenters are needed on site because the volunteers have the skills. Some professionals are still contacted, however. The air conditioning is donated, and contractors are called in to do the insulation. The insulation placed in the houses is energy efficient and cuts the heating and cooling bills down. Habitat for Humanity is always

looking for more volunteers. They are trained in the wide variety of skills needed to build a house, such as framing, roofing and placing vinyl siding. There are also several committees such as resource, public relations and donations. Among the committees, there is also a family nurturing committee which provides workshops to the families about their new homes.

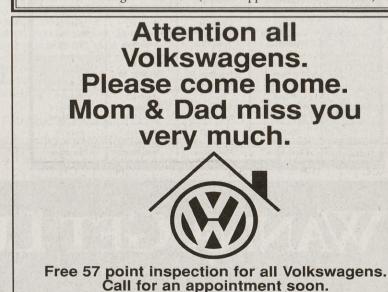
The workshops include budgeting, financing and how to fix things around the house. They allow the families to take good care of their homes.

The families have too much sweat equity to see their dreams collapse," Burk said.



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Completed applications must be received by the Student Activities Office no later than 5:00 p.m. on Friday, September 26, 1997. They may be hand-carried to the Student Activities Office, sent through Campus Mail, or sent through U.S. Mail. (See the application for addresses.)



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