

# Habitat volunteers help build dreams

By Ray Westbrook | AVALANCHE-JOURNAL

Tuesday, September 15, 2009

Story last updated at 9/15/2009 - 2:06 am

The new owners of homes under construction by Habitat for Humanity can be seen driving nails, helping erect walls and sweeping the concrete foundations before there are floors to work on.

"It's like a dream come true," said Bertha Camacho, with a broom in her hand and the pride of ownership dancing in her eyes.

"This is my first home - and it's exciting."

Lubbock Habitat for Humanity has enlisted volunteers from across Lubbock to construct five houses in the 2100 block of Dartmouth Street for families who will pay for the homes with zero-interest loans.

Habitat began the work Saturday and plans to continue a Building on Faith blitz through Sept. 26. Volunteers have been

invited to help out in following weeks for any homes that are unfinished by the deadline, but work appears to be progressing ahead of schedule.

Felix Garcia, who was working Monday on Camacho's home, said, "We are definitely going to get it done by the end of the week. We worked out there Saturday and Sunday, and after we do this porch, we are going to start on the decking."

A supporting beam for the porch, assembled on the home's concrete pad with two vertical arms to attach to the house, weighed an estimated 250 pounds, and volunteers planned to lift it above their heads as high as they could reach.

Nick Parker could be heard saying before it was lifted, "Let's think this thing through."

Another volunteer, referring to the vertical arms that were straight up, said, "Lay it plumb down."



Geoffrey Mcallister / Lubbock Avalanche-Journal

Habitat for Humanity project leader Nick Parker works on the roof of a home for Bertha Camacho on Monday afternoon in Lubbock. Volunteers began building Camacho's home Saturday.

Then they placed three stepladders on the porch and eight men lifted the beam in place high above their heads while 2x4 props were positioned under it long enough to stabilize the heavy unit until it was nailed in place.

It was done without incident.

Parker, who helped with the lifting and directed the maneuver with Garcia, could be called foreman. "I guess I'm what they call the house leader. But I defer to everybody else who knows something about it - I'm just out here. This is my ninth house that I have worked with Habitat to build."

Camacho will share the home with her children, Damien and Danielle.

April Kitchen, who was nailing brace boards on the house Monday, said she is a volunteer for one of the home's sponsors, LakeRidge United Methodist Church.

She explains her motive for the work this way: "It means that I get to help a single mom have a home that she might not have otherwise."

The other sponsor is the Lubbock Firefighters Association.

Sandra Anderson, executive director of Habitat, said the organization acts as the mortgage company for the loans. "We pay their insurance and their taxes out of their mortgage payments. The payments average between \$340 and \$350."

She said the houses represent a vast improvement in the lives of the new homeowners. "We've got one lady who moved in two years ago whose son has graduated from Lubbock High School with honors, and now is in college and wants to be a doctor."

One home nearing completion in the project will belong to Monica and Thomas Tuttle and their children, Jerik and James.

It is being sponsored by Coldwell Banker Rick Canup Realtors and the city of Lubbock Community Development Block Home Fund.

Monica Tuttle said she has personally worked on the house and would also like to work on other houses when hers is finished.

"It's like a foundation for our family."

LUBBOCK/Habitat for Humanity volunteers help open doors to better lives through building of homes