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HABITAT VOLUNTEERS ‘GIVE BACK’ FOR THE HOLIDAYS BY BUILDING AFFORDABLE HOMES FOR NYC FAMILIES

‘DAY OF GIVING’ VOLUNTEERS RAISE MORE THAN \$5,000, MATCHED BY \$31,000 FROM THRIVENT

Dec. 5, Brooklyn, NY—Seventeen caring New Yorkers celebrated the holidays by helping to build and fund affordable Habitat for Humanity homes for families in need.

These volunteers installed wood flooring in Habitat-NYC’s 41-home complex in Ocean Hill-Brownsville, Brooklyn, as part of a special **Day of Giving** build and fundraiser. They also raised more than \$5,000 toward construction costs, which will be matched by over \$31,000 from **Thrivent Financial for Lutherans**.

Among them are volunteers like **Bryan Ramm**, who was recently laid off, but is giving his time to help less fortunate New Yorkers.

Ramm had been working in the design and construction sector of the real estate industry. “I made the decision that, while I searched for a new job opportunity, I was going to put my skills to use for the benefit of others,” he said.

Chris Glady, a physician from Canada who has been living and working in New York for only two years, volunteered because “I want to help contribute to the growth of this city and the people who live in it. It means a lot to me to be actively involved and to work side-by-side others working toward similar goals, getting to know them and feeling a sense of making a difference.

“No one should ever take for granted the ability to go home at night to one’s own home,” said volunteer **Sarah K. Cohn**. “This is a great hands-on way to help improve the lives of New York City families.”

Future Habitat-NYC homeowner **David Arcena** worked alongside the volunteers. Arcena, who works as a porter in a luxury Upper West Side apartment building, will be moving to his new home with his wife Idaliza and four-year-old son Louis. The family currently lives in an overcrowded apartment with his sister and her family.

“Thanks to Habitat-NYC, I have a very positive outlook for my family’s future, and getting the opportunity to own my own apartment is a very big piece of the puzzle,” he said.

Here’s what some other Day of Giving volunteers had to say about their experiences:

Bari Simon, who also was laid off recently, said her goal was to “spend some time volunteering and giving back.” Her day was spent painting, framing doors and putting protective coatings over bathtubs. “It’s a beautiful thing we’re doing here,” she said.

Stephanie Partilla has built Habitat homes in Florida and Long Island. She was happy to spend a day painting trim with Habitat-NYC. She says: “I like hands-on work—and you’ve got to give back!”

(more)

The turmoil in financial services forced **Jessica Olivera** out from under the umbrella of her marketing position at Citigroup. “This is good for my community and I’m not sitting at home watching TV.” She said. “I’m impressed with how much is getting done here!”

“This is awesome. I’m having a great time,” said **Elyse Pultz**, who took a day off from her advertising job to help build homes. “I really enjoy community service, and everyone here is very passionate.”

Jackie Miller was moved by meeting a future Habitat-NYC homeowner. “You see that we’re helping him create a future for himself and his family—that’s what it’s all about,” said the retail manager for Coty cosmetics. “Today, I did some painting,” she added. “Next time, I may step out of my comfort level, step it up a bit, and lay flooring.”

Colleen McGuire said wryly that working construction seemed like a vacation from her regular job—caring for a four-month-old and a four-year-old child. “This is definitely easier,” she laughed as she trudged up three flights of stairs carrying a box of plumbing fixtures.

Denise Matamorose was laid off recently from a position in the high-end architectural design industry and grabbed this opportunity to fill a longtime dream of building with Habitat. “Many of us have come from well-paid jobs, and it’s difficult for us in these times,” she said. “I can imagine what it’s like for people who don’t have resources.”

The Day of Giving volunteers are among more than 10,000 New Yorkers who have helped build the 41-home complex of affordable condominiums in Brooklyn. This is the largest multi-family project undertaken by Habitat for Humanity anywhere in the world. This energy-efficient, environmentally friendly project will meet LEED’s high standard of green building.

Habitat-NYC transforms lives and our city by uniting all New Yorkers around the cause of decent, affordable housing. With the help of an average of 10,000 volunteers every year, Habitat-NYC has built more than 180 affordable homes in the five boroughs of New York City. Learn more about Habitat-NYC at www.habitatnyc.org.

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