

Denny's gives Habitat a grand-slam effort

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The once rundown neighborhood on Highland Road near downtown Spartanburg took another step toward revitalization on Friday.

More than 160 employees from Spartanburg-based Denny's Corp. clad in cornflower blue T-shirts and dozens of contractors from local construction companies descended on the neighborhood to build four new homes for local families in need.

The homes are 1,200 square feet and part of a 12-home neighborhood that Denny's and other supporters are helping to build for Habitat for Humanity of Spartanburg.

This is Denny's third effort to help rebuild the neighborhood. Two homes that were started last year, one donated by Denny's and the other by R.L. Jordan Oil Co.,

Volunteering

For more photos of Denny's employees donating their time to fix up four area homes for Habitat for Humanity, visit GoUpstate.com.



will be completed, while two more homes will be framed and receive part of their roofing.

The first five homes in the neighborhood were completed by Denny's employees and other Habitat volunteers in 2007. Another five homes were started this past May.

Friday's blitz build utilized more than half of Denny's corporate work force.

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GERRY PATE/GERRY.PATE@SHJ.COM

More than 160 Denny's employees pitched in to help Habitat for Humanity build four new homes on Highland Road near downtown Spartanburg. The company said the community involvement also develops a team spirit among employees.

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The Spartanburg Men's Garden Club helped plant bushes, flowers and other landscaping features.

Roebuck Roofing and Construction Co., Solesbee Construction and T N Construction Co. Inc. also provided workers to manage the project.

"It's amazing what you can get done with this many people," said Dot Colson, finance project manager for Denny's Corp. "It's a great morale builder. It gets you working side by side with people from other departments."

It takes a donation of about \$60,000 to build one home. When homeowners are selected, they repay a no-interest mortgage at \$300 to \$350 per month over 20 years.

The city of Spartanburg donated each of the lots to Habitat. The property was previously non-taxed, and the city will benefit because the project will make the land taxable.

"It's important to give back to our community," Nelson Marchioli, president and CEO of Denny's, said in an e-mail. "Habitat for Humanity provides an opportunity for the Denny's family to work together as a team outside the workplace to help some of our Spartanburg neighbors achieve their dreams. The Denny's employees are some of the most caring people I've had the honor to work with."

Denny's has donated three houses in the neighborhood to date.

"I think it's a really great thing for them to help us with a large build like this," said David Fleites, construction coordinator for Habitat for Humanity in Spartanburg. "Denny's really got this neighborhood going. More people are starting to get involved. They're coming out here and changing people's lives."