



From the sea to the mountains

In case you didn't know, 1994 is the official Year of the Coast in North Carolina, and 1995 is slated to be the Year of the Mountain.

NOVEMBER 1994

Hammers and spirit

High Point looks to Habitat for housing

A development of 60 houses built by Habitat for Humanity is underway in High Point. It's unusual because most Habitat houses are not built in one development. It's the third largest project of its kind in the U.S.

BY SUSAN GRAY

High Point

Eva Kerse leans back in her armchair and sighs. "It's a blessing from God," she says, looking around her living room.

Brass fixtures shine. A niece lies at her feet on a spotless carpet. Across the room, her husband Mack holds a young nephew on his lap. Air-conditioning cools the room. A washer and drier whirl in the background.

Kerse is talking about her house, which Habitat for Humanity volunteers — along with her family — built a year and a half ago.

"I wouldn't want to live anywhere else," she says. "It's so much better than renting. We used to live across town, in the middle of a complex. All night long, [strangers] be going through the front and the back, all through the yard."

Now, the Kerses and nine other families live in a quiet section of East High Point in a development of homes that were all built by Habitat for Humanity of High

Point. Trees tower over the three-bedroom houses fronted by trim porches.

The development — now in its initial phase with 10 houses — has 20 acres of land at its disposal. Habitat for Humanity of High Point bought the land with interest-free loans from local banks.

At least 50 more houses are planned, making the development the largest all-Habitat site in the state, and the third-largest in the U.S. In most cities and towns, Habitat houses are scattered throughout various neighborhoods because it's easier to find empty lots piecemeal than in one large chunk. That was the case in High Point until 1990, when the city teamed up with Habitat for an ambitious plan to rid High Point of rundown housing.

City government gave Habitat first rights to purchase the land. And local banks provided the organization with no-interest loans to buy it.

"We want to not only provide decent housing for all the people in the area but help these people realize their dream of home-ownership," says Martin Senell, an architect who is chairman of the board for Habitat for Humanity of High Point.

Habitat for Humanity homes always are owned by the families who help build and move into them.

In High Point, Senell estimates that each of the development's houses costs about \$35,000 to



TOP: View of two of the Habitat houses in the High Point development. LEFT: Eva and Mack Kerse stand outside their brand new Habitat house during a Sunday celebration that included city leaders and TV news crews.

Photo courtesy of Habitat for Humanity, High Point

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MARTIN SENELL

Chairman of the board for Habitat for Humanity of High Point

build. That covers materials, land, water and sewer costs. The labor is provided by volunteers.

Homes are sold to families for \$42,000, although each has a market value of about \$55,000. The

\$7,000 that Habitat makes from each sale goes back into a fund for materials for new Habitat homes.

The homeowners work out an affordable down payment with Habitat and then pay back the

remainder — at no interest — over about 15 years. None of the families has defaulted on its loan, Senell says.

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Green lessons

Middle school environmental programs go city-wide

With a growing public debate on the environment, Chapel Hill educators are paying more attention to integrating environmental issues into the curriculum — and local businesses and government officials are jumping on the bandwagon.

BY KATE FOSTER

Chapel Hill

Environmental issues lie at the core of the modern social agenda. Whether it's recycling or carpooling, people increasingly are chipping in for a cleaner world. Educators, in particular, have picked up on the growing environmental consciousness

and are finding new and innovative ways to integrate environmental science into their classrooms. The interest is so great, in fact, that one Chapel Hill science teacher has found both local government and business support for her projects.

Randee Haven-O'Donnell is modest about her accomplishments. Since coming to Culbreth Middle School in the Chapel Hill-Carrboro School System five years ago, this seventh-grade science teacher and her students have helped make environmental education and activism a district-wide pastime.

O'Donnell's initial project in environmental education was to found Culbreth's environmental



Students in the PIGS Environmental Club prepare a compost demonstration site at Culbreth Middle School in Chapel Hill. The composting project served as a pilot program for what is now a district-wide composting project.

Photo Courtesy of Randee Haven-O'Donnell

club. She started the group, known as PIGS (Public Interest in Global Studies) as a way to get children more involved in environmental issues outside the classroom.

"I was looking for ways to get children involved in a non-academic but environmental way," she says. "I think children need things to care about. They need to feel that what they do is important, and so it made sense."

Perhaps their biggest success has been in helping get their school's composting program off the ground. In its first year, Culbreth composted 2,033 pounds of pre-consumer waste — scraps of vegetables and fruit generated in

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BRIEFLY

United Way offers volunteer training

The United Way of the Central Carolinas in Charlotte is offering training for new volunteers for its Reachline and First Call for Help information and referral services. The 50-hour training program will cover crisis intervention, active listening and suicide prevention. Call Marti Morris, (704) 333-6121.

How to care for children with AIDS

Lutheran Family Services in Raleigh is offering foster parent training this fall for individuals and families that want to foster children who have HIV/AIDS or other special needs. For information, call (919) 832-4378.

AIDS quilt display travels to Triad

More than 1,870 panels of the national AIDS Memorial Quilt will be on display at the Greensboro Coliseum December 1-4. For information about how to add a panel, call Ruth Hamilton, the Aids Service Agency (919) 834-2437, or John Owens, Southeastern Regional Chapter liaison, (704) 866-4452.

American Cancer Society seeks volunteers

The American Cancer Society's central office in Wake County needs volunteers to answer its 800 information and reference line. Volunteers work 4-hour shifts, Mon. through Thurs., 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. or 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. For more information call the United Way (919) 833-5739.

Chance to assist American Red Cross

The American Red Cross of Wake County is looking for volunteers to perform a variety of non-medical services to blood donors including registration, taking blood pressure and serving refreshments. Volunteers work five hours a week at flexible times. Call the United Way of Wake County for details: (919) 833-5739.

Help out with art, yoga classes

Wake County Mental Health Services needs volunteers for its Community Bridge Program. Volunteers assist in classes for the mentally ill on topics ranging from woodworking to yoga to table games. Shifts are open on Tues. and Wed., 2 p.m. to 5 p.m., and Sat., 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Call the United Way of Wake Co. (919) 833-5739.