

Habitat Celebrates 2000 Housing Goals

By ERICA COLEMAN
Staff Writer

Before February, Cheryl Alston was often forced to carry buckets of water to her home because her landlord would not fix her malfunctioning system, she said.

But because Habitat for Humanity reached its goal of 11 new houses by 2000, Alston should never have to haul water again.

"God, we thank you, oh Lord," she said Saturday. "God, because we have a safe and decent place to sleep tonight, God."

Alston is the recipient of one of 11 new homes built by Habitat, an international organization that builds homes for residents of substandard housing.

She spoke at Celebration 2000, a Habitat function celebrating achieving its May 1998 goal of building an 11-home neighborhood called New Homestead Place by 2000.

Celebration 2000 Chairwoman Ann DiGiano said that because of a community-wide effort, with volunteers and funds coming from local businesses, churches, governments, high schools and "a whopping 25 organizations from UNC," 11 families now live in houses they could afford.

U.S. Rep. David Price, D-N.C., announced a fiscal goal that had been achieved through a community effort—that of fund-raising.

"The Celebration 2000 goal of \$1.7 million has been reached," Price said. "We did it, you did it, we all did it!"

This money will be used for future Habitat endeavors.

After the speeches were finished, and while eating lunch, Alston told about the unsafe feelings she had in the high-rent apartment she and her granddaughter had previously lived in.

Alston said she heard about Habitat through a television commercial and decided to apply. When she was called for an interview, she said she was excited and hopeful.

"I came home from church one Sunday and there was a message from (Habitat for Humanity)," Alston said. "I just said, 'Oh my God!'"

Alston said she called one of her friends and said, "Habitat's coming to interview me, pray, pray, pray!"

Manali Patel, co-chairwoman of UNC's chapter of Habitat for Humanity, described what Habitat's Orange County Board of Governors looked for when selecting a family to live in a Habitat house. She said selection was partly based on need.

"The interview is actually held at the person's home," she said. "That way we can see what their living conditions are already like."

Patel said selection was also based on the family's willingness to work for their house.

"They look for a family who is willing



U.S. Rep. David Price, D-N.C., speaks at the Habitat for Humanity Celebration 2000 in Chapel Hill.

to commit," she said. "They have to put in sweat hours on their own home and on other people's homes, too."

Alston said owning her own house meant a lot to her.

"I always wanted to own my own home," she said. "I always wanted the day to come when I could have something to leave my granddaughter. It's a dream come true."

Alston said she thought it was good that Habitat made homeowners work for their homes instead of just having the homes handed to them.

"I heard somebody say once that

Habitat is not a hand out but a hand up," she said. "And it is that. I like the idea that you have to work for your own house."

Devon Myers, co-chairman of UNC's Habitat for Humanity, said UNC Habitat participants worked on several of the New Homestead Place houses. But the Blitz Build, during which UNC Habitat members nearly completed a whole house in one day, was "our big trump card," Myers said.

The City Editor can be reached at citydesk@unc.edu.

Disabled Citizens Hula With Civitans at Luau

Lines blurred between students and members of the ARC of Orange County on the dance floor Friday.

By HARMONY JOHNSON
Staff Writer

Tropical fish made of paper hung from the ceiling and pop music filled the air in the Union Cabaret on Friday night.

Several students in shorts and leis danced with a man holding on to his walker, while another young man sporting a black suit jacket jumped and spun like Michael Jackson.

The Carolina Campus Civitan's Hawaiian luau-themed dance for the members of the ARC of Orange County, formerly known as the Association of Retarded Citizens, was in full swing throughout the evening.

The dance lasted from 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. and included a pizza dinner.

It was the organization's biggest event of the year, said Kevin Chapman, co-president of the Campus Civitan.

"One of the Civitan's main thrusts is helping people with developmental disabilities," Chapman said.

The Campus Civitan sponsors several events for the ARC during both the fall and spring.

Kim Costello, program director for the ARC, said, "It's given them the opportunity to get out in the community and do things."

About 40 ARC members and 40 student volunteers attended the dance, including high school students from the Civitan clubs at East Chapel Hill High School and members of N.C. State University's organization.

"I kind of got dragged along because not enough people were coming," said Emily Martin, a junior from ECHHS.

"It's been a lot of fun. I'm really glad I came."

ARC members said they were also enjoying the night out.

With smiles on their faces, most never left the dance floor during the evening.

Chris Linear, an ARC member, said he was most enjoying the music.

When the DJ finally honored Linear's request to play Michael Jackson's "Bad," he wowed the crowd with an authentic dance performance that lacked only Jackson's signature grab of the crotch.

"These people are so uninhibited and it's awesome," Chapman said.

"It spreads to us. You look around and you can't tell who's with the ARC and who are the students."

Amidst all the fun, the ARC citizens also taught the students a few lessons, said ARC member Kirsten McWilliam.

"We can show that the people that have disabilities can dance just as well as the people without disabilities," she said with a laugh, earning her a high-five from one of her friends.

"It's a good event to get people together and let people without disabilities know that there's nothing wrong with people with disabilities."

The University Editor can be reached at udesk@unc.edu.

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