

habitat for humanity

model campus of fulfilling that mission." JOHN BARNHILL, NORTH CAROLINA CAMPUS COMPACT

SERVICE MISSION

nationally on trips to Thailand and Build Coordinator Becca Sowder. "I've never seen the sense of engagement with the community as we have here," he said. "We're absolutely at the top."

ity of Dance Marathon and UNC is organizations are equally com-

ly because you're always at risk of organization," she said.

student organizations on campus, themselves as service groups.

is APPLES Service-Learning incorporates service with academic education is the result of public Director Leslie Parkins.

l way to give back to a community opportunity of us."

her area universities in its involve- bill, executive director of the North impact, a coalition of 22 college and and chancellors established to sup-

cial mission of all universities," he a model campus of fulfilling that

Dance Marathon and UNC Habitat allow passionate students to unite, he said. "Their role is to provide a vehicle for individuals to serve. They are an opportunity for people to get involved."

Even groups that are not defined by service incorporate it somehow, said Jon Curtis, assistant director of student activities and organizations.

"There is no service requirement; it's really something they take on," he said.

"There's this sense of duty and obligation — and I mean that in the most positive way — to serve."

Shelton said Greek organizations are some of the biggest contributors to community service.

Members of sororities are frequently engaged in service, whether for a personal cause or for a chapter's national philanthropy, said Julie Wald, a member of Sigma Sigma Sigma sorority who has served on the Panhellenic Council.

The council pledged \$3,500 to the Dance Marathon this year.

In addition, four of the 12 Dance Marathon committee chairmen are sorority members. "We feel like this is such a worthwhile organization," she said.

Shelton said students often develop a penchant for service before attending college.

"Students bring service in and continue with it," he said. "It's a mental muscle; it gets stronger as you exercise it."

Service even plays a role in obtaining admission, which Shelton said shows that students are using their talents to benefit the community. "It's a hallmark of Carolina and its students," he said.

Barnhill said service is important because of both short-term and long-term effects.

"It is important to serve, but on a deeper level, if we didn't have students learn about issues, they wouldn't be able to tackle them in their future careers," he said.

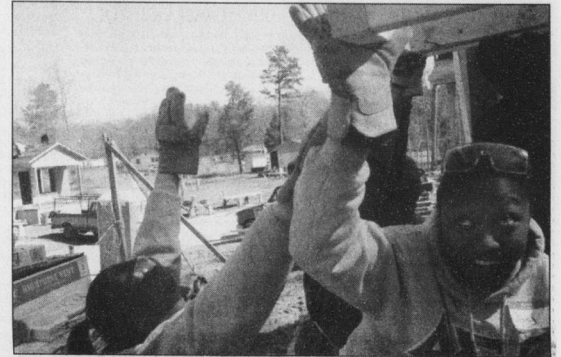
The goal of the NCCC is to learn about social issues and find solutions, Barnhill said.

Dance Marathon, UNC Habitat and many other campus organizations are working steadily to reach that goal.

"I think it comes down to the responsibility that each of us has to give something back," Curtis said. "All of us here at this University are fortunate, blessed to be able to be here. The most endearing quality is when students realize that."

Contact the Features Editor at features@unc.edu.

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DTH/JULIA LEBETKIN

Imani Parson, 4, snaps a photograph of her new house in the Rusch Hollow neighborhood of Chapel Hill before UNC Habitat for Humanity's dedication ceremony Saturday afternoon. She will live there with her mother, Linda Parson, a University employee, and her brother, Isiah, 5.

Chapel Hill home will give family place in community

BY STEPHANIE JORDAN
SENIOR WRITER

Linda Parson made the walk down the driveway with her two children to what will be their new house — and about 50 people turned out to greet them.

By the end of the summer, Parson and her two children, Isiah and Imani, will have a new Habitat for Humanity home in which to live — one that is affordable and in Chapel Hill, making the commute to work and to her kids' schools easier.

Parson, a 29-year-old single mother, is an accounting technician at UNC. She also is a former student, having spent 2 1/2 years at the University as a psychology major.

She has been a permanent employee with the Treatment and Education of Autistic and Related Communication Handicapped Children division for four years and used to make a 25-minute commute from Mebane each day to work. Now, she lives in Timberlyne Village.

Owning a home in Chapel Hill, she said, will help her to be a part of the community and to give back to it.

"With UNC helping out, it's kind of like you feel obligated to the University," Parson said. "Just being able to help build a house helps give me a bigger appreciation for it."

Parson's house is no ordinary Habitat home — it's part of a Blitz Build and will be built by members of the University community. "Our goal was to come up with a project for students, faculty and staff," said Becca Sowder, Blitz Build coordinator. "We wanted to unify all factions of the University."

The UNC Habitat Blitz Build took place this weekend from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

The foundation already was in place for Parson's home, so the goal was to finish the structure's frame, its roof, its siding and its doors. Professional contractors will come later to do the wiring of the house and the floors.

Sowder said UNC Habitat usually has 10 to 12 student volunteers to work each shift. This past weekend, that number was closer to 20.

"We had more than enough volunteers," she said. "Fund raising hasn't been a problem."

Habitat covers half of the cost of building the house, which in total is about \$60,000.

The University is underwriting the cost of the other \$30,000.

Parson will have to give "sweat equity" — putting in hours to build her home and other Habitat homes. She has to give a total of 325 hours, but family and friends can work 60 of those hours.

"To me, it's just a day's work," said Bobby Parson, Parson's uncle. "It's a blessing to give back. It's just exciting to be able to do something like this."

Parson has put in 165 hours so far.

"The more we see it, the more (the excitement) builds," she said.

"We're building on each other's energy."

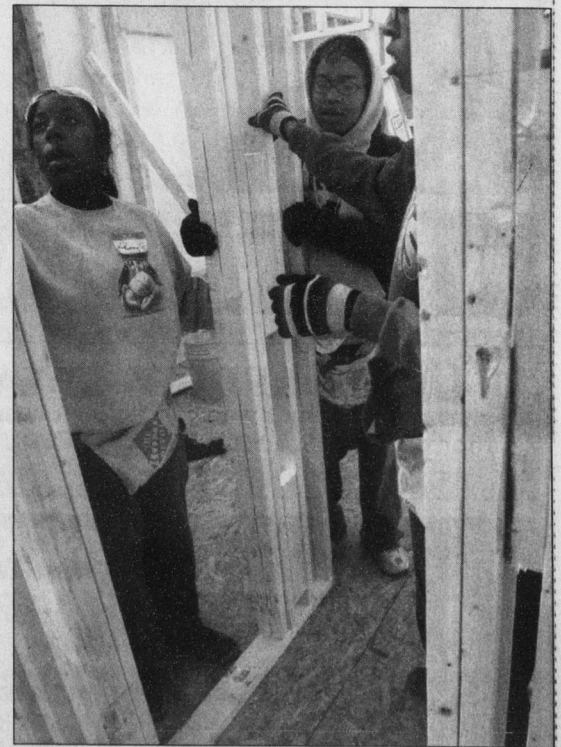
Five-year-old Isiah and 4-year-old Imani said they are excited about their new home because they will be able to have their own rooms.

And Imani added that if she could, she would help build the roof.

Contact the Features Editor at features@unc.edu.



140
volunteers
56,000
dollars raised
25.5
hours building



All UNC Habitat for Humanity photos by Julia Lebetkin