Building Hope with Habitat for Humanity

Mi and SKF volunteers build, renovate and repair homes for grateful families

Every year, Mi’s United Way campaign targets a featured agency, and the one chosen for 2015 was Habitat for Humanity. When Mi employees expressed an interest in volunteering to impact the community, LaQuita Donald (Mi Environmental and Hazmat/HR, Birmingham, AL) decided to spearhead a build event with Habitat the following year.

Fast forward to May 14, 2016, and five grateful families were positively impacted by Mi's volunteer efforts through Habitat – four in Birmingham, AL, and one in Omaha, NE. Key Partner SKF also lent a hand and co-sponsored Habitat that day with Mi.

LaQuita said, “I believe in homeownership, and that children should have a stable and secure home. I'm a big proponent for anybody that wants a piece of the dream, and Habitat for Humanity is a great means for that.”

Birmingham
Early that Saturday morning, the mood of the 30-plus volunteers was excited. This was the first Habitat event for most of the Birmingham volunteers consisting of Mi employees, plus family and friends. SKF provided breakfast for the crew.

The afternoon crew, though slightly smaller in number, was no less excited to be there. Both groups started their shifts with a brief prayer, and the four Habitat construction supervisors performed a safety stand down, divided the volunteers into four groups (one house each), and assigned and outlined tasks. Then the volunteers jumped right in.

The focus for these four homes was renovation and repair. Participants' tasks included anything from moving material to picking up debris, and from painting to holding ladders. One group

MI and SKF volunteers for Habitat for Humanity in Birmingham, AL (left), and Omaha, NE (right), get busy to help families in need.
helped to build a deck, while another repaired a mailbox. Several roofs received needed attention as well. Four supervisors, one for each group, made sure tasks were complete and correct.

"Everyone gave it their all," said LaQuita. The number of volunteers in Birmingham totaled to about 65, and just about every Birmingham location and department was represented.

As a bonus, the group was able to interact with some of the residents. One was a six-year Marine veteran, who stated that he was grateful that the volunteers were there to paint his house. Another family included children in the first and second grades, who were fascinated with all the activity around them.

"When the little boys came back from playing baseball and saw their house with new paint, their eyes lit up like Christmas morning after a visit from Santa Claus," said Cindy Suttles (Mi Marketing, Birmingham, AL), who spent much of the afternoon painting that family's home exterior. "My joy comes from giving and from seeing a smile on someone's face. If a little bit of my time makes that much of a difference in someone's life, then it's time well spent. I will definitely volunteer with Habitat again."

LaQuita said, "The persons receiving the assistance are so grateful. They received a great upgrade to their current situation, which helps to solidify their feeling of being part of the community."

Jeff Carlisle (SKF Lansdale, PA) said, "My highlight was to see all of the wonderful Motion volunteers up early on a Saturday morning. We had a huge turnout which was very impressive. I also enjoyed seeing how hard everybody worked on their selected project – from painting, to roofing, to deck building! Motion has a lot of truly dedicated people."

Working next to Jeff at the top of a home that morning, painting its exterior was an equally exhilarated David Simpson (Mi Product Content, Birmingham, AL). He said, "The day was a
humbling experience – and to see the Motion family come together to make a difference is why, we, as a company, are the best in the business."

**Omaha**

A five-person group from Mi Process Pumps & Equipment in Omaha started the day at a very brisk 37 degrees, and met with another group to receive their assignment. The crew was tasked with setting the floor trusses for a new house that was a block away from the main job site.

"With our Mi hard hats secure and our PPE on, we didn’t waste time," said Tavis McVey (Mi Process Pumps & Equipment, Omaha, NE). The group was able to get all the trusses set before being invited to a house dedication, where they went to a finished home and witnessed the presenting of keys to the new homeowners.

Tavis said, "The house dedication was extremely influential for the Mi Process Pump group. After you are able to see families struggling for even the simplest of amenities, we realized we took for granted our own personal living arrangements. After the dedication and being full with humility from it, we pushed even harder to make sure we got as much accomplished in one day as possible. Our Habitat for Humanity Supervisor even commented that he loved being able to stand back and watch a great group excel without much direction."

"We knew we wanted to help as we do for all the Motion Industries branches," added Mike Aschenbrener, also of Mi Process Pumps & Equipment. "Day to day, we help support all Mi locations so refocusing that mentality towards our local Habitat for Humanity was easy."

**Round-up**

"It was a great day," said LaQuita. "Everyone got through their shifts safely – no accidents or incidents. I'm so grateful for Motion employees and their support, and for those who bought T-shirts. (Mi) Marketing was fantastic with posters and T-shirt design. I'd like to thank SKF, who helped and brought breakfast. I'd also like to thank the residents of Cascade Plunge for allowing us to work with Habitat for Humanity that day, and to thank Habitat for allowing us to participate in the activity."

Will there be a repeat event? "We'll probably do it again a year from now," said LaQuita. "My vision is to have a 'Motion Industries Habitat for Humanity' day, where each city has one (Mi) location that has a Habitat event in its local community. It's a lot of work, but worth it when you see how it impacts the community."

Jeff hopes that SKF will work with Mi again next year, as well. He gave a special call out to Mi's event organizer by saying, "Special 'Thanks' to LaQuita Donald for all of her hard work organizing this event!"

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David added, "A special thanks to our HR department and SKF for organizing the day."

"It was an incredibly rewarding experience," said Tavis. "I would definitely do this again."

*Thank you to all involved for your time and efforts in this community service for Habitat for Humanity and Habitat families. Hope to see you on-site at the next build!*