



# HEAT & Humanity

By Brian Kelley,  
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*Taylor Management volunteers endure high temperatures to lend a helping hand in the community*

A group of volunteers from Taylor Management Company spent three of the hottest days of the summer not inside an air conditioned office, but rather working under the blazing sun to build a two-family home in Morristown, N.J.

The house — being constructed as part of a Habitat for Humanity of Morris County project — was slated to go to two families selected by the organization through a thorough vetting process and eventually a lottery.

From June 11-13, volunteers from Taylor Management joined a steady crew of 30-40 of workers all giving their time and energy to build the Habitat house.

“We had about 15 people here from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. each of the three days,” said Ted Tucker, vice president-management of Taylor Management Company.

Deborah Ramirez, development director with Habitat for Humanity of Morris County, said the organization works with municipalities in helping them meet affordable housing requirements and that land for the Habitat

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homes is either purchased or donated to the organization.

“This particular plot was purchased by the Madison Affordable Housing Corporation, in partnership with The Church of God and Christ across the street from the site, which collaborated with Morris Habitat to build this home,” said Ramirez. “The home that was here was in disrepair, so we tore it down



and decided to build this multi-family unit.

"Since land is limited, we need to use it wisely and maximize the land available to us," Ramirez added.

Before the duplex was constructed, roughly 200 families applied for the chance to buy one of the two spots in the unit, according to Ramirez. After background and credit checks, the list was whittled down to about 20 to 25 applicants who were then selected through a lottery.

"It's important to know that Habitat for Humanity is not a hand-out program — it's a hand-up program," said Ramirez. "The partner-families are constantly working with us to build new homes or anything they can to help further the mission of the organization. They are required to make a down payment of \$1,000 and they will have mortgage payments between \$500 and \$700. Morris Habitat, as the bank, then uses those funds build new affordable housing in the area.

"In addition, the partner-families are required to do 300 hours of 'sweat equity,' which includes time building their home, working in the Habitat offices or in a Habitat ReStore outlet. If they are unable to work and can get friends or members of their church to take their place, that also counts toward their 'sweat equity,'" added Ramirez.

This particular project also marked a design and construction milestone for Morris Habitat, according to Ramirez. "We strive for most of our homes to be energy efficient, but this — I believe — is the first that we have done to be rated as Energy Star efficient so we'll continue to do that with our future projects," she said. "In the end, energy efficiency also keeps costs down for the homeowner and makes the house more affordable.

"We're also doing a project in partnership with Habitat for Humanity of Sussex County that is our first LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design)-certified 'green' build," added Ramirez. "We are still looking at what level of certification we want to get into, but we think it is important to get on the bandwagon of being green. So we're going to strive for a little bit more than Energy Star." ■

*For more information about Habitat for Humanity, visit [www.habitat.org](http://www.habitat.org). Taylor Management Company can be found online at [www.taylormgt.com](http://www.taylormgt.com).*

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