

"Building Women" help out with the Habitat house

By the Oasis Centre

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The Nipawin Oasis Community Centre submitted a proposal to the Status of Women Office for an opportunity to provide First Nation and Métis girls and women from Nipawin and the First Nation communities to explore the building trades. One of the aspects of the proposal was to work on the Habitat for Humanity home with role models from SaskWITT (Saskatchewan Women in Trades and Technology).

On June 27th with the assistance and guidance from Pat Fayant and Valerie Overend the women built the deck at the Habitat for Humanity home in Nipawin. Pat and Valerie were the Project Managers for the All Women Build Habitat for Humanity Home in Regina recently. Pat Fayant is the first Métis woman in Canada to complete the Carpentry program and is working in Regina as a contractor. Her family makes Red River Carts without using any power tools. Valerie Overend a Carpenter, is retiring as Executive Director of SaskWITT (Women in Trades and Technology) and she recently retired from SIAST as the WITT Facilitator and is a Trades Consultant for several Provincial and National projects.

The women also went to Wagner School and talked to the students in a general assembly about themselves and what they are building at the Habitat for Humanity home. A lovely delicious lunch complete with homemade buns was prepared by the Anglican Church women which was much appreciated. In a couple of weeks the Oasis Building Women group will be working on the Fence at the Habitat for Humanity home.

We asked the women that took part in helping with that Habitat for Humanity home, here's what they had to say: (A follow up evaluation of the day was completed)

What were your Likes? Everyone loved it, Finding out more information about building homes, Hands on work, Using tools, Working with a crew, Outdoor work, Variety in the jobs.

What were your Dislikes? Out of shape, Boots weren't broken in. – sore feet.

Would you do this again? “Yes, because it keeps me occupied. I liked the volunteer part. It motivated me to pursue carpentry as a career.”

“I enjoyed it. I had helped my brother with his job, we did insulation.”

“There are lots of benefits for a lot of different directions. It's great knowing that you're helping your community, this person, and his/her family.”

“I'm learning and doing something productive and positive for myself and my community.”

What did you learn?

“Learned the structure of building the deck.”

“Learned about the chalk line, the radius edge of the deck boards.”

“Learned how to measure, toe screw, and flushing the boards.”

What were your favorite tools? – drill, circular saw, chalk line.

What are the benefits of today?

“I will use this newly learned skill to build a pantry for a family member.”

“Mostly giving to the community that was the most important to let people know that I am a good person and that I want to help out”.

“I'd tell every woman that they should know how to do these jobs, and that helping out on a Habitat house has many benefits for the volunteer, as well as the community. Learning new skills and giving time to help the community are equally important to us all.”

“This was a really great project because it gives women the opportunity to learn new skills that they may have not learned if they had not had the chance to do this project. It gave us a chance to show our community that women can get together and make our hometown a better place to live. A special thanks to the women who came here to teach us these new skills and we hope that there will be a lot more opportunities like this in the future.”

Some of the ongoing projects the Oasis and the Oasis Building Women Group are exploring are:

To host a Skills Work! Young Women's Conference in partnerships with SaskWITT, SIAST WITT and Skills Canada Saskatchewan.

To host a First Nation Metis Girls Exploring Trades and Technology Camps (FNMGETT) partnering with SaskWITT (Saskatchewan Women in Trades and Technology Organization).

To host an Introduction to Tools project for girls from 5 – 8 years old.

An All Women Build Week on the next Habitat for Humanity home in Nipawin.

Encourage women to apply for the Carpentry Level 1 course offered at the Cumberland College (Nipawin) in January 2013. This course was dropped last year due to funding not enough funds for the ones that had applied.

If you have any tools that you are not using and would like to donate to the Building Women project contact Joy Hanson 276-7548.