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Habitat for Humanity: A Study of the Homeowning Process

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HABITAT FOR HUMANITY: A STUDY OF THE HOMEOWNING PROCESS

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Habitat for Humanity, an international organization whose purpose is to eliminate inadequate and poverty housing, was founded by Millard Fuller in 1976. The McLean County affiliate of Habitat for Humanity, which is now ten years old, has helped more than twenty-six families in McLean County become homeowners. This project is part of a larger study which focused on the evaluation of the process of obtaining a home through Habitat for Humanity, and the families' experiences after they moved into the home. For this portion of the study, families responded to a variety of questions regarding their experiences with the process of obtaining their Habitat for Humanity home. All Habitat for Humanity families must put in 500 "sweat-equity" hours as part of the homeowning process. This is done by working on their own home, helping build someone else's, or by fundraising. While it is a large and sometimes difficult time commitment, all 26 McLean County families studied responded that they were made to feel welcome at the work sites and felt positively concerning their experiences putting in these 500 hours. Also, interestingly, the most common responses about the part of the families' experience with Habitat for Humanity they enjoyed the most were the new friendships made and being able to build their own home, which would probably not have been possible without this organization. The results from this evaluation will help the McLean County Habitat for Humanity affiliate operate more efficiently in the process of providing homes. This is important because other families are going through the process currently, and a 27-house Habitat for Humanity subdivision is underway in Bloomington.