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Students Spend Spring Break Helping Others

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BLOOMINGTON, Ill. — During Illinois Wesleyan's spring break in March, one group of University students chose hard work over relaxation. Twenty members of IWU's campus chapter of Habitat for Humanity (a subsidiary of Habitat for Humanity of McLean County) spent a week in Sumter, S.C., where they volunteered their time and energy to build an affordable home for a low-income family.

After a nearly 14-hour drive to Sumter, the Illinois Wesleyan volunteers worked side by side with students from the University of Massachusetts. They spent March 14-18, eight hours each day, on the construction of two houses, erecting the walls for one house and completing roofing and exterior work on the other.

“We put all of the walls up from scratch,” said Amy Cadwallader, vice president of IWU's Habitat for Humanity. “We felt such a sense of accomplishment when we were actually able to see the house with all of the walls in place.”

According to Cadwallader, even a little inclement weather didn't spoil the group's enthusiasm to help others. When rain interfered with construction, Illinois Wesleyan students spent time tutoring at the local Boy's and Girl's Club.

Participants paid \$150 each to go on the trip, most of which went toward building supplies. St. James Methodist Church in Sumter provided free lodging for the students as well as a few meals. Other churches and several restaurants also made food donations, and Illinois Wesleyan's Student Senate reimbursed students for gasoline.

In past years, IWU's Habitat for Humanity members have spent spring vacation working in Miami, New Orleans and Colorado. The chapter also partners with Illinois State University to do construction work year-round in Bloomington/Normal. Students work in conjunction with Habitat for Humanity McLean County, a non-profit housing ministry that partners with families in need and local volunteers to build decent, affordable homes, for which the homeowners pay an interest-free mortgage. This year's Illinois Wesleyan/Illinois State University Collegiate Chapters Habitat house marks the 10th house in 10 years of the universities' partnership.

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