

Local Campus Chapter of Habitat for Humanity at Seton Hall University is growing rapidly while building homes and hope

Editor's Note: Seton Hall University is home to an active chapter of Habitat for Humanity which is chartered via Habitat for Humanity Newark and while the collegiate chapter operates separately, they worked on several projects in conjunction with the Newark Organization. For example, when Habitat Newark needed assistance with a new computer system for Volunteers, Matthew Dudek of the SHU Chapter came to our aid and helped us evaluate and install a new system effectively, and still keeps our staff trained.

By: Moria Kelly, Seton Hall University

Habitat for Humanity is all about extending yourself in service to others. It is about creating affordable living and sustaining community. It is about building hope through building houses. Seton Hall University's chapter is no exception to these ideals.

Seton Hall's chapter of Habitat for Humanity has been in active existence for over ten years. Since its start, it has more than tripled in members, increased its budget from the university, and travelled to various parts of the country on Collegiate Challenge trips during our spring breaks. This past year during Spring Break 2011, the chapter was lucky enough to travel to the Davidson, North Carolina.

As a member of Habitat for Humanity that participated in last year's Collegiate Challenge, I can say that it was a fantastic trip. We were welcomed by the family-like staff of the Davidson affiliate, who provided us with many hot meals, working tips, and laughs. We started off each morning at work with a prayer and ended each day with dirty clothes and sore feet. We showered at the local YMCA and spent the nights sleeping on army cots in classrooms of a church. Every night, we had a reflection on the day's work and discussed what our service meant to each of us personally. The trip as a whole was a unique experience for all of us, both those who had previously been members of Habitat and those who were on their first Collegiate Challenge. After the week was over we left with many new friends, not just at Seton Hall but in North Carolina as well.

Seton Hall's chapter does a lot more than just Collegiate Challenge every year. We are recognized by our Student Government Association as one of the top six highest funded clubs on campus. In addition to this competitive honor, we take pride in so many of the successful fundraisers we hold annually. Each year we celebrate World Habitat Day on our campus and hold events for Act, Speak, Build Week! This year some of our events for the week included a movie screening of *The Soloist*, a candlelight vigil for the homeless, and our infamous "Bail-out." For the Bail-out, we build a jail cell on the Green in the center of campus and have our members stand inside until they are "bailed out" by passers-by who help them reach a monetary goal. Outside of our campus, we participate in service events that help our community as well. Every autumn we spend at least two weekends in mid-November raking leaves for families in South Orange and Maplewood. This year we have also spent a day on site with Habitat Newark building a home.

Seton Hall University's chapter of Habitat for Humanity is a thriving one. We meet every Wednesday night at 9 PM and always open our meetings with an icebreaker so that members can get to know each other and grow closer as a family. Our school's Catholic mission teaches us to be servant leaders to others, and as members of Habitat for Humanity we take that to heart. We believe in the power of changing lives, one nail at a time.



Everybody lift now! A wall goes up on a home in Davidson, NC where students From Seton Hall University Habitat for Humanity Chapter spent their Spring Break helping build a home for a hard working low income family.



The Seton Hall Chapter of Habitat for poses in front of the home they helped build during their Spring Break



It took a lot of leaves to help raise the money for the trip to North Carolina, so the students worked during the fall in Maplewood and South Orange to rid homeowners of their leaves and put dollars in the bank for the trip.



A creative, fun way to raise the funds needed to support the trip to North Carolina as the bail me out project. A "jail" was erected on campus and members of the Seton Hall University Habitat for Humanity affiliate lured their friends to bail them out with the funds going to support the home building trip.