



## DBU Partners with Habitat for Humanity for On-Site Build

The months of October and November saw a whirlwind of activity around the Dallas Baptist University campus as over 130 students, faculty, and staff volunteered daily to work on a Habitat for Humanity house that was built right outside the University's John G. Mahler Student Center.

The concept to build on campus was sparked when DBU administration noticed an article in a local paper about a church partnering with SMU for an on-campus build. With DBU President Gary Cook's support behind the project, the idea was then taken to Matt Luevano and Melissa Johnson, co-presidents of the DBU Habitat student chapter. Together they worked with the administration to make the dream a reality, planning the logistics and publicizing the build to various DBU student organizations.

"Our students are very active in Habitat, and we have organized a week-long Spring Break build trip for the past twelve years," explained Dr. J. Blair Blackburn, DBU executive vice president. "The possibility of building a house on our very own campus was a natural fit."

During the initial planning stages for the build, Robert Erickson, director of physical operations and co-coordinator for the on-campus build, began raising funds for supplies and worked with numerous contractors who volunteered their time and skills toward the construction of the house.

On October 21, the building crews arrived in full force. Volunteers came from all over the campus as students, faculty, and staff framed the walls, put up sheet



*Habitat for Humanity founder Millard Fuller delivers a benediction during the dedication ceremony for the new house.*

rock, hammered in nails, and took action wherever needed as each one worked to make the dream of Dee Wright, the new homeowner, a reality.

"Dee was out there almost every day, working as hard as she could on her new house," said Peter Murrell, student Habitat build co-coordinator for the on-campus project. "Her excitement was contagious, and we all loved working with her."

Dee Wright, a single mother with four children, was thrilled to be moving into her first home. While three of her children are grown and out of the house, she has a seventeen-year-old son who is still at home. With the completion of the house, she knew that her grandchildren would have plenty of room to run around.

A few weeks into the build, a tragedy occurred. Matt Luevano passed away unexpectedly of heart problems he had developed as a child. Matt had poured all of his effort into this Habitat build, and he even on occasion left the build site for class with his tool belt still on so he could get back to work after class was over. Students were heartbroken, and many were in shock to hear the news of Matt's death. In response, efforts doubled as students came out to the site to assist in any way they could to see the project come to fruition. In memory of Matt Luevano, Dr. Gary Cook has decided to name the DBU Habitat for Humanity House Build after Matt.

At the dedication service, a teary-eyed Ms. Wright accepted the keys to her new home and thanked all those who gave of their time and energy to see her dream of owning a home become a reality. 🏠



*Pictured from left to right: (front row) Julie Turner, chair of the DBU board of trustees; Dee Wright, new homeowner; (back row) Gary Cook, DBU president; Millard Fuller, founder of Habitat for Humanity; Troy Dungan, WFAA-TV chief weather anchor; and Blair Blackburn, DBU executive vice president.*