



141 Cushman Road
St. Catharines ON L2M 6T2
Tel: 905-685-7395
Fax: 905-685-7396
Email: habitat@habitatniagara.on.ca
www.habitatniagara.on.ca

MEDIA RELEASE

April 8, 2009

DSBN Students Sign Apprenticeship Papers While The Community Signs A House.

Port Colborne, ON – DSBN students have been putting their education into action at Habitat for Humanity Niagara's build site in Port Colborne. Exposed to sub-zero temperatures, wet snow, and even a few Spring-like skies, sixteen District School Board of Niagara (DSBN) students in the Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) Construction program have been enthusiastically building a Habitat home and gaining on-the-job training for future careers in construction.

Today students signed their Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Papers from the job site at 25 Paul Street in Port Colborne. With the guidance of their teacher Ken Willms, the students are giving back to their community by helping Habitat Niagara build safe, decent, affordable housing. These students have also been exposed to valuable hands-on learning opportunities that will prepare them for a future in the trades. "The Specialist High Skills Major programs allow students to refine their skills, gain confidence in their ability to succeed and see the connections between their studies, the world beyond high school and their future careers" explains Colleen Fast, Specialist High Skills Major Facilitator.

The students weren't the only ones signing. Concurrently, the Rotary Club of Port Colborne Centennial and donors took black magic-markers to the wood frame of the house in a fundraising effort. Members of the community penned messages of good will and hope to the future Habitat home-owner family. "The wood signing event is a remarkable community experience. The people of Port Colborne showed tremendous support for our first Habitat home build in 2008. This time around we've been building this house on faith that the fundraising dollars will come. Our goal is to raise \$60,000 and we're falling short" explains Sandy White, President of Rotary Port Colborne Centennial." Alastair Davis, Habitat Niagara CEO adds, "Despite the economic slowdown, we continue to build. The demand for affordable housing continues to increase, families are counting on us and we are counting on private and public business to pull together to support our mission of eliminating poverty housing in Niagara".

To make a donation to Habitat for Humanity's Port Colborne build project, please contact Rotary Fundraising co-chairs Lori Oskam or Shelley Campbell at 905-834-7104.

About Habitat for Humanity

Habitat for Humanity Niagara is an independent, not-for-profit housing organization, dedicated to the elimination of poverty by building homes in partnership with families in need. We build safe, decent, and affordable houses and provide no down payment, interest-free mortgages to qualifying families who would otherwise not be able to purchase their own homes. Habitat is not a giveaway program; we provide "a hand up, not a hand-out". Qualifying families contribute sweat equity hours through involvement with Habitat or other community charitable endeavours.

Established locally in 1993, Habitat has constructed 28 homes in Niagara and served more than 30 families in need. We are a member of Habitat for Humanity Canada: part of a worldwide network that spans more than 90 countries, has built over 300,000 homes. It is now building a new home every 24 minutes.

Interested in assisting Habitat through the donation of building materials, services, your time, or cash donations? Please contact us online at www.habitatniagara.on.ca or at 905-685-7395.

About DSBN Specialist High Skills Majors

The District School Board of Niagara offers 19 Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) programs which will increase to a possible 33 for next year. These programs let students focus on a career path that matches their skills and interests, in sectors as diverse as Hospitality, Construction and Information and Communications Technology. By making courses more relevant to students, educators ensure that the students get a better understanding of a subject because they learn it in a real work environment. Students learn on the job with employers, as well as in school. At graduation, students receive a specially designated diploma and an SHSM record outlining all of their achievements within the SHSM sector. For more information, go to our website www.dsbn.org/TechEd.

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Contact:

Lisa Aceti
Director of Marketing and Communications
Habitat for Humanity Niagara
lisa@habitatniagara.on.ca
905-685-7395 ext 204

Colleen Fast
SHSM Coordinator
DSBN
Colleen.Fast@dsbn.edu.on.ca
905-227-5551 ext 2340