

Women Build constructs confidence

Event backed by Habitat for Humanity to provide homes

By Jennifer Rios
Staff Writer

Linda Sanders, who began volunteering with Flatirons Habitat for Humanity last fall, came armed with experience in framing, HVAC, electric work and plumbing.

Sanders, who volunteered Wednesday at the Flatirons Habitat for Humanity's Women Build at King's Ridge, worked as the general contractor on her family's basement renovation while she was — until recently — a stay-at-home mom.

"I got really interested in being part of construction," she said.

She also wants to help make affordable housing a more reliable resource.

Sanders, who recently joined the Broomfield Housing Opportunity Coalition, hopes to get even more involved with local projects and plans to continue to build houses for Habitat.

She enjoys seeing the builds in each stage. Wednesday, she and others worked to put up walls on the third floor of a home.

"There's still a lot of work to be done over the next several months from plumbing and electrical to putting up drywall and siding (some of that will be done by subcontractors)," Jennifer Hallaman, Community Development Manager at Flatirons Habitat, said.

Habitat's Women Build Week celebrated International Women's Day with builds at King's Ridge and Palo Park, both in Boulder.

Each year, Habitat groups across the country invite women to devote at least one



Brandon McMahon / Flatirons Habitat for Humanity

AmeriCorps National Member Zach Payne and Linda Sanders of Broomfield review building plans at Flatirons Habitat for Humanity's King's Ridge build site during Women Build Week.

day to help families build strength, stability and independence through housing.

"Women can play an important role in addressing affordable housing," Executive Director Susan Lythgoe, said. "Women Build events embolden area women to join us in creating a pathway to homeownership for local families."

The events also highlight homeownership challenges faced by women. According to the International Center for Research on Women, households participating in government assistance programs for housing are overwhelmingly headed by women.

The center attributes this to the fact that the minimum-wage and tipped workforces are disproportionately female, and that women experience poverty more often than men.

Hallaman said this is the first year Habitat has held a

Women Build day just for Broomfield women.

"We're looking forward to engaging more Broomfield volunteers during future Women Build events and on a regular basis out at the build site," she said.

The last Habitat project completed in Broomfield was two home renovations in 2011, Hallaman said. The nonprofit currently has several ongoing Broomfield projects, including working with Discovery Christian Church for four triplexes and improving and repairing existing homes.

Nine of the Discovery units will be traditional Habitat homes and three will be transitional housing in partnership with the City and County of Broomfield

The other is a project with Critical Home Repair program, again in partnership with the city, where the organization makes inexpensive, but "vital repairs to

homes to keep them accessible and livable."

One example, Hallaman said, was last fall when they completed a wheelchair-accessible ramp leading to a local mobile home. The previous ramp was in disrepair and made it difficult for the resident to safely enter and exit his home, especially during icy weather.

Habitat leads the Broomfield Housing Opportunity Coalition, a group of leaders in Broomfield dedicated to driving equitable housing solutions.

Barbara Trager, who has always wanted to be involved in a Habitat build, was grateful for the fair weather.

"It was really fun. That's the only word that comes to mind," Trager said. "I had such a good time. It really made me feel good I was doing something that was not only helpful for others, but I was getting exercise

along with it."

She felt herself smiling all day as she learned to use a circular saw to cut two-by-four planks and measured for studs.

"It was fairly simple kinds of stuff," she said. "I definitely would go back and do more, or different, tasks."

After telling her friends about the experience, some of them plan to join her.

Habitat workers showing the women what to do weren't demeaning, but patient and easy to work with, she said.

"It was a great experience all around," she said.

Johnna Shepard, a Broomfield social worker, and her children will be one of the three families to move into the triplex. All three families could be moved in by late 2019 or early 2020.

She learned more about Habitat when a coworker, who knew Shepard was

See WOMEN on 18

WOMEN

FROM PAGE 3

struggling with rent prices and looking for a place to settle down, left a flyer on her desk over the summer, according to the Habitat website.

Shepard moved to Broomfield four years ago and since then has tried several times to buy a house, but each time she put in an offer at the asking price, she was outbid by tens of thousands of dollars.

“I constantly worry about having to move my family from our apartment,” Shepard said in the Habitat bio. “It will be so amazing to no longer worry about whether or not we will be able to remain in our home.”