

LOCAL & BUSINESS

B MONDAY, MARCH 1, 2010
THE TENNESSEAN

Habitat sells remodeling castoffs to build homes

By Jill Cecil Wiersma
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Secondhand appliances, dining room sets and bathroom tiles are helping three families get new homes through the Nashville Area Habitat for Humanity.

"We've had people call and say, 'I'm remodeling my kitchen and I just feel these cabinets are in great shape. Come and get 'em,'" said Chris McCarthy, the chapter's president and CEO.

Donations such as these diverted more than 330,000 pounds of materials from landfills last year alone, McCarthy said.

Habitat sold that would-be trash at its two HomeStore locations and raised the roughly \$180,000 cost of building three homes in the Timberwood subdivision, where volunteers and the future homeowners will continue construction through April.

It's a boost for Habitat, which saw corporate sponsorship dip last year when 29 homes were built, compared to 43 homes in 2008.

This year, the chapter plans to build 33 homes — three of which will be built with money raised through its two HomeStores.

"If they do really well, we may build another one or two," said Ashley Webster, Habitat spokeswoman. "We'll just have to see. They've been doing really well in this economy."

The stores' popularity is picking up at a good time, Webster said, noting that four of the homes built last year were funded through store proceeds. Twelve



1st Lt. Shannon Clark of the 2nd Battalion 44th Air Defense Artillery Regiment at Fort Campbell wields a sheet of LP TechShield radiant barrier roof sheathing as she helps build one of three Nashville Area Habitat homes being sponsored by the Habitat HomeStores. When these homes are complete, the Habitat HomeStores will have funded a total of 15 homes. PHOTO BY TIM CAMPBELL

houses have been built with money from the stores since the first one opened in 2004 on Eighth Avenue South.

It took a few years for those stores to generate enough money to build that first house in 2006, McCarthy said. But since then, word of mouth has been so helpful in generating store items that Habitat began offering deconstruction services for instances when people are remodeling or rebuilding entirely.

"We had people donate things like a Sub-Zero refrigerator, and we had a \$1,300 wine cooler donated to us," McCarthy said. "It's a treasure hunt when you come to these stores. You

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Nashville Area Habitat for Humanity operates two HomeStores, which generate money to build new homes. The store at 1001 Eighth Ave. S. offers furniture, housewares and décor items, while the location at 908 Division St. offers building materials, cabinets and appliances. For information, visit www.habitatnashville.org or call 254-4663.

never know what you're going to find."

Habitat's service area includes Dickson County, where it's been searching for a location for a new HomeStore. People there are eager to have one, McCarthy said, and have already been calling to ask whether one is open. She said she's glad people are

starting to realize the benefits of supporting the stores.

"You're helping the environment, helping someone become a first-time homeowner, getting a tax writeoff (on donated items) and helping someone get a good deal," she said. "It's just the right thing to do."

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