

How We “Build It Green” in Habitat

A “FAQ” for Habitat for Humanity Affiliates

Habitat for Humanity affiliates in Minnesota lead the way in energy efficient, environmentally responsible, and affordably sustainable home construction. Habitat homes have been built green for years; **you ARE “green”**. What does that mean? How do we know?

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There are five basic elements to building green: Thoughtful design; durability/affordability; energy conservation behavior; indoor air quality; and local resourcing. The goal is to build a healthy, long-lasting home that will **save Partner Families money** in lower utility bills, fewer necessary repairs, and health care costs. Basically it is summed up in the term “Careful Construction.” **This is you!** Read on to find out what you are already doing to “build it green”.

How do we know?

Green is a scale, going from nothing green to everything green. According to experts *outside* of our Habitat world, **Habitat affiliates in Greater Minnesota are higher on the scale than any other homebuilder** in their area. The following are some of the ways in which all Habitat projects in Minnesota are using the five basic elements to “build it green”.

1) Thoughtful Design means that “Green” begins in the planning stages. How we build it green:

- We design a small house
- We consider the needs of the family

2) Durability and Affordability means to build for a stable, healthy home in the long-term while keeping the up-front cost affordable. How we build it green:

- We use the **donated** Valspar paint, a low-VOC product (green!)
- We use the **donated** Dow rigid-board insulation, lasts long AND lowers utility bills

3) Energy Conservation Behavior refers to the products and practices in a home. How we build it green:

- We use the **donated** Whirlpool appliances; Energy Star rated as high efficiency
- We have a **mandatory** homeowner education program that addresses both energy saving tips AND proper use and care of equipment, which improves efficiency

4) Indoor Air Quality addresses the negative effects of improper air exchange, chemical-laden wood products, and material off-gassing. How we build it green:

- We use air exchange systems, such as Heat Recovery Ventilators (HRVs)
- We build with active-ready radon mitigation systems (this is “green” in most places; “code” in Minnesota)

5) Local Resourcing means that a project keeps the revenue in the neighborhood. How we build it green:

- We use local contractors and volunteer labor
- When possible, we buy materials produced locally

Remember, it’s all about Careful Construction, and this is you!

This is just a glimpse of “Green”.

Habitat affiliates are doing much more to build it green. If you would like greater detail, we have materials ranging from a simple “Cost of Green” breakdown sheet; to a full set of green build specifications in use by Habitat affiliates across Minnesota. We also have materials that can be used to share information with the public regarding the great things that Habitat affiliates do to “build it green.” Please call Molly, the Green Building VISTA, for more resources and/or information on building green. Reach her toll-free: 877-804-3466 ext. 7 or by email:

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