A Better Home

Elisa Saenz / Fall 2011

As the summer grew closer and closer to an end, I realized that I had yet to complete my community service hours, all forty of them. This may seem like a lot at first, but finding the perfect volunteering agency can make the number dwindle down so quickly that one is capable of forgetting just how many more hours they need, and focusing on the impact that is being made on others and yourself.

I certainly experienced this phenomenon when volunteering at Habitat for Humanity. If unfamiliar with the organization, allow me to explain its purpose.

Habitat for Humanity’s goal is to provide affordable homes for low-income families. This requirement surprisingly fits many of the residents of Midland and as a result needs more volunteers to help build these homes. One can assist by painting, clearing lots, aiding in the construction, and much more.

I was fortunate enough to meet some of the homeowners and those in process of obtaining one. These people were so uplifting and encouraging to one another that it made my days of volunteering more enjoyable then ever imagined. Working beside them I really got to know them and learn about their situations and future goals for their families.

I can recall one instance in which I met a lady who was a single mother trying to provide a better home for her daughter who had severe allergies. When the home we were building came closer to completion, I wondered if we’d place grass on the front and back yards. Continuously questioning our team leader, I finally received my answer.

No.

It turned out that the lady whom I mentioned earlier would sacrifice having a yard full of grass in order to help her daughter’s allergies, she would also have no carpet due to the dust. After learning of this wonderful deed for the sake of her daughter, I looked up to this woman who was truly unselfish and caring for her daughter’s well being. This home would not only be a representation of her countless hours but also an extension in the preservation of her daughter’s health.

Day after day I would apply my skills in painting these homes alongside others who deeply wanted to provide the best quality in their workmanship for those that would soon be moving in. I can’t even express how many times I tried to make a straight line when outlining the frames of the windows and doors in paint. However, their desire to make things appear the best made me want to try harder.

After completing a home a dedication ceremony would be held in honor of the family moving in. All that work would be expressed in a single reward, a deserving family with a new home. I learned to give of myself in way that couldn’t be more satisfying.

From picking up trash, to painting, not a single hour was wasted, and the time spent with other volunteers made my experience even better.
I believe that I was given more from the people involved than what I had gave through the entire service. I’m truly grateful to be living in a community that continues to give back at every chance.