



Habitat for Humanity Spring Break Trip

Katherine May

College Park Scholars – Science & Global Change Program

Bioengineering

katiemay@umd.edu

College Park Scholars Academic Showcase, May 1, 2020



Introduction

Each spring, UMD's Engineering Alternative Spring Break (EASB) commences, and Engineering students across all disciplines are welcome to apply in the preceding October. EASB travels to Aberdeen, NC, where we volunteer with Habitat for Humanity to build houses for lower income families.

University of Maryland (UMD) Students

Our UMD students had a great time with us and helped complete 3 homes – what a wonderful group. Here they are at Samantha Phillips dedication; they even missed their big game and watched their school win on a phone on the porch after the dedication!



Depicted above is a photo that HFH of the NC Sandhills sent in their monthly newsletter. The dedication we attended was during one of the UMD March Madness games, so on our way out, we huddled around one of our phones and watched the last few minutes. Maryland won!

Issues Confronting Site:

At our site, there were three homes that were in different stages of the homebuilding process, so our team of UMD volunteers performed a range of tasks throughout our weeklong stay to help these homes reach their next stage, and in one case, its final stage.

Service Site: Habitat for Humanity (HFH) of the NC Sandhills

2268 NC-5, Aberdeen, NC, 28315

www.sandhillshabitat.org

Contact: Amie Fraley

910-295-1934

afraley@sandhillshabitat.org

The mission of HFH is to work together to build homes and help families succeed in their homeownership journey.

Activities:

Some of our activities included insulating crawlspaces, building roofs, painting, and framing, among many others. Each day, we'd arrive on site at 8AM and finish at 5PM, with an hour for lunch around noon. We would then shower at the local gym, eat a dinner generously provided by locals, and bond before going to sleep and doing it all over again the next day.

Impact:

The 13 of us on this project collectively transformed each of the three houses we worked on drastically. We ended up finishing the first home we worked on, and we were fortunate enough to attend the dedication of it to the homeowner and her three young children. My favorite part was seeing the happiness and gratefulness across all their faces. It was an extremely humbling experience.



Above are two photos of houses we worked on while in NC. The house on the left was the last one we worked on and was in the very beginning stages- we did the framework and insulation. The house on the right was the second one we worked on and was in the middle stages. At this house, we did a lot of painting on the inside, and we also built a wooden backyard fence behind it.

Future Work: In the future, I think that HFH of the Sandhills could split up a group of our size to attend different sites each day, rather than everyone at one site per day. This way, we could increase efficiency. Hopefully more college students from other places volunteer to help because too many volunteers is a good problem to have!



Here is a photo of me on site of our third house, which we spent the whole day Friday at. I was one of four of us who stood on the ceiling frame to add to it and help position and nail the plywood on top for the roof. Our other volunteers were measuring and cutting wood pieces to hand to me. I got scared when I'd step on a part of the frame that wasn't fully nailed in yet, so it would wobble!



Acknowledgments:

I would like to thank Dr. Merck and Dr. Holtz for their continued support and enthusiasm for SGC. I would also like to thank Amie Fraley from HFH of the Sandhills for helping coordinate our trip. Additionally, thank you to the other UMD Engineering students who I met through this trip and had so much fun volunteering with. Lastly, I want to thank Angela Lee for introducing me to EASB and coordinating every detail and supervising our trip.

