



# Laboratory volunteers help build hope in Taos

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Recently, two teams of volunteers from across the Laboratory traveled north to help Habitat for Humanity of Taos build a house for a local family.

“I like to give back,” says volunteer Zach Pribyl. “With Habitat for Humanity you’re not just giving money, you’re giving time and effort. Plus, you get to meet the people you’re helping.”

The future homeowners will be the Padilla family, and Angela Padilla was more than grateful for the work of the volunteers. “As well as enabling us to buy this house for around half the market price, the project has changed my perspective on things. It’s great to see that there are all these people who are willing to come and help.”

The volunteers hung drywall and installed insulation in the three-bed, 1.5 bath that will be home to Angela, her husband Augustine, their three-year-old daughter and their twin two-year-old boys.

Volunteer Zach Pribyl at work attaching drywall.

Habitat for Humanity of Taos Volunteer Coordinator Kevin Miller explained the difficult economics for families looking to buy property in the area. “The median family income in Taos County is around \$32,000, but the average cost of a house is between \$290,000–\$300,000. According to the State Housing Authority, 90 percent of the people who live and work in Taos cannot afford a home of their own here.”

Laboratory volunteer Metodi Iliev had previously worked on another Habitat for Humanity build in Española. “Affordable housing can make a huge difference to people. And you get to come out and learn new skills, too.”

All the labor on a Habitat for Humanity build in Taos comes from volunteers, who are guided by a professional foreman. The future owners have to put in 500 hours of work themselves, and enlist their friends and relatives to provide another 250 hours of labor.

The Saturday team of helpers from the Laboratory were treated to a hands-on lesson on making adobe bricks—all the Habitat houses in Taos are constructed out of adobe.

The Padillas’ is the 31st new house Habitat for Humanity of Taos have constructed. They have also completed 38 retrofit projects weatherizing older houses, or making them suitable for the owners to age in place.

Volunteer Rob Briscoe measuring up.

Volunteer Kris Fronzak getting to grips with the screw gun.

The Saturday volunteer crew from the Laboratory pictured with the Padilla family, whose house they were helping build.

The Padillas' new home will allow them to move out of the house they are temporarily sharing with their parents.

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