

ASB Fall Build lands in Northwest Indiana

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Less than an hour away from campus lies Hammond, Indiana, where 21 students and staff spent their Saturday, November 8, partially demolishing and rebuilding a house with Habitat for Humanity. These students all applied and got a spot on the Alternative Spring Break (ASB) team for this year. ASB is a student organization at IIT that volunteers with Habitat for Humanity and fundraises almost all year for their week of volunteering during Spring Break. Last year, ASB started a new tradition of the team attending a Fall Build day trip during the fall semester, both to wet the new members' feet in that sort of volunteer work and as a team-bonding experience.

Riding out on a yellow school bus, the team departed early in the morning for Hammond. At first the bus stopped at the wrong site, but the team still managed to make good use of time by playing team-bonding

games together. Once everyone climbed back onto the bus, music played and the team all sang along, until they pulled up to the actual site in Hammond. Joining another small group of volunteers, they all got safety glasses and set out towards the house.

The site they were working on was an abandoned house, without any occupants for about 10 years. Habitat for Humanity of Northwest Indiana acquired the house and is now in the process of making it habitable once again. Many things were wrong with the house, mostly structural problems with the interior framing and especially the roof. Therefore, the team first got the oriented strand boards out of the house and ready to be put on the roof. Then, while some people climbed up the ladder to the roof to knock down all the drywall from the ceiling and clear out the attic, the rest of the team on the ground was taught how to properly put on respirator masks (which were really helpful in keeping their faces warm and protected from the cold wind).

As part of the team stood on the roof clearing out the attic, various things were unearthed from up there: raccoon skeletons, a vintage suitcase with only men's ties inside, boxes and boxes of toy trains, an old gun, two vintage glass lanterns, plenty of children's clothes, and a rubber ducky (which became the mascot for the students manning the dumpster.) Many scary stories were made up once they connected the house number (6606) with all the curious things coming out from between the rafters.

Once the entire previous roof was ripped off from the trusses beneath, the rest of the team climbed up the ladder to nail down the oriented strand boards to the old trusses, creating a sturdy new roof. Not everyday do people get to balance on the trusses of a roof with nothing beneath them but fallen debris, crumbled drywall, and piles of trash layering the ground floor of the single-story house. They were all having such a blast hammering their lives away up there on the new roof that a

few of them had to be begged before agreeing to stop for lunch. After lunch, they finished nailing on the boards for the roof, covering the boards with a synthetic plastic, water-resistant wrap and nailing that down, and bringing up the packages of shingles onto the roof. While others were up on the roof, some were down below learning how to use teamwork to better take nails out, rather than yanking on each nail and pulling for dear life.

By the end of the day, they were all laughing and having lots of fun together. Out of the team of 24 people, they were only short three team members, so the organization had a great turnout. They even bonded with Larry and Brandon, who were the site leaders from Habitat for Humanity in charge of construction on the site and coordinating the volunteers. There is truly nothing better than volunteering and helping provide homes for people in need, while also having so much fun with amazing ASB team members.

