

# Alternative Spring Break builds homes in North Carolina

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Eighteen students and staff members of the Illinois Tech community embarked on an Alternative Spring Break (ASB) trip early in the morning on Saturday, March 12. They endured a fourteen-hour ride in four, and then three, minivans (the fourth vehicle broke down early in the journey) to Goldsboro, North Carolina, and they all were still smiling upon arrival at the lodging site in the small town. Despite all that could have, and did, go wrong before the trip, the core eighteen still made it to Goldsboro, determined to make a difference in that community.

When people think of Habitat for Humanity, they usually think of building a home. Well, the team thought so too, but their previous hopes were dashed when they followed the leader to their first worksite of the week: a public park in the neighborhood. Apparently the home the local Habitat chapter had planned for the team to be working on had a problem with its plumbing, so the

team would, as a result, be hopping around to different sites throughout the week. This situation really could have put a damper on the morale of the team, but it did not. Throughout the trip, the team laughed and laughed together so much that they cried together, because what really mattered to them was being able to learn by giving back. Service learning is the backbone of the Alternative Spring Break student organization at Illinois Tech, and the team this year truly embraced that.

So, instead of working on one house, the ASB 2015-16 team worked in three locations, and impacted many more. On Monday, they were at the public park, working out their back and bicep muscles intensely while shoveling and raking, spreading mulch together to beautify the park in such a simple manner. On Tuesday, the team continued working those same muscles, expanding on what they had learned the day before and applying it to backfilling one of the Goldsboro Habitat chapter's most recently finished homes. They moved tons of dirt, and walked almost eight miles just moving all that material around the home. The team was fascinated to

be able to see a finished home built by a Habitat for Humanity chapter and learn how Habitat is really conscientious about making sure the future homeowners have earned their sweat equity in their new home, that they know how to keep on track with their mortgage payments, and that the home has been built with such high quality to ensure an extremely low energy bill, amongst many other things.

From Wednesday through Friday that week, those eighteen dedicated individuals continued to pour their hearts and souls into accomplishing as much as they could while working on two high-quality sheds. They were so high quality that ASB members who had participated in previous spring builds recognized that these sheds could truly be considered mini homes. When the team arrived on Wednesday, the sheds were framed with wood studs and were partially sheathed. When the team left the worksite on Friday afternoon, the sheds had been completely sheathed, felt paper was on the roof, both were completely shingled, soffit and bird boxes nailed up, building wrap on, and the vinyl siding was almost complete. In

addition, members of the team worked on creatively reusing materials to build and paint lawn decorations in the shape of eggs for the Habitat ReStore in Goldsboro to sell. The team could not have been more proud of all they had accomplished throughout the week.

Besides just working on-site, serving the community of Goldsboro, North Carolina, learning more about Habitat for Humanity, and about what it takes to perform construction-type work, those eighteen students and staff learned so much about themselves and each other. Many students blossomed into confident and outgoing individuals, and the team also came together like they never before imagined. Sleeping in the same building each night, eating each meal together, cooking dinners for the rest of the team alongside other team members, riding with each other in the three minivans that survived the entire trip—this environment was able to foster sure-to-be lasting friendships, bonds, and memories that will survive a very long time, if not as long as they live. ASB is unlike anything people have experienced, unless they have participated in an ASB trip themselves.



Photos courtesy of ASB

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