



# TechNews

Student newspaper of the Illinois Institute of Technology since 1928

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## ASB participates in first Fall Build

**Utsav Gandhi**  
CAMPUS EDITOR

Alternative Spring Break is known as one of the more socially engaged student organizations on campus, focusing on educational outreach and volunteer opportunities to gain and spread better awareness regarding social justice and homelessness. Every academic year spring break, a group of students and staff members makes a trip to a Habitat for Humanity affiliate site around the country, hoping to work towards the mission of providing "safe, affordable and decent living conditions for all." The student team for spring break 2014 was picked last month, and the site location is also conformed at this point, however, the team leaders wanted to add an additional component to the team building experience this year. In order to give the team a better feel of the kind of projects tackled during spring break, ASB decided to visit the nearby Northwest Indiana

Habitat for Humanity (Lowell) site for a one day trip, and came back returned with a very honest, real and refreshing perspective on why we decided to get involved with ASB in the first place.

Located about two hours' drive away from campus, the mid-sized town of Lowell, Indiana had a Habitat affiliate site with a construction project currently going on, and mainly required help that day with a medium-sized house they were building for a divorced mother of one who has been living out of her parent's basement for the last six years. Despite the weather getting increasingly cold, enough for students to shiver even in five layers of clothing, the team members were excited and ready to leave at 6am in the morning; and after a two hour bus ride, we were ready to start the tasks assigned for the team. Some included sighting for the external walls of the house, some included assisting with foam installation for insulation purposes, a couple of team members

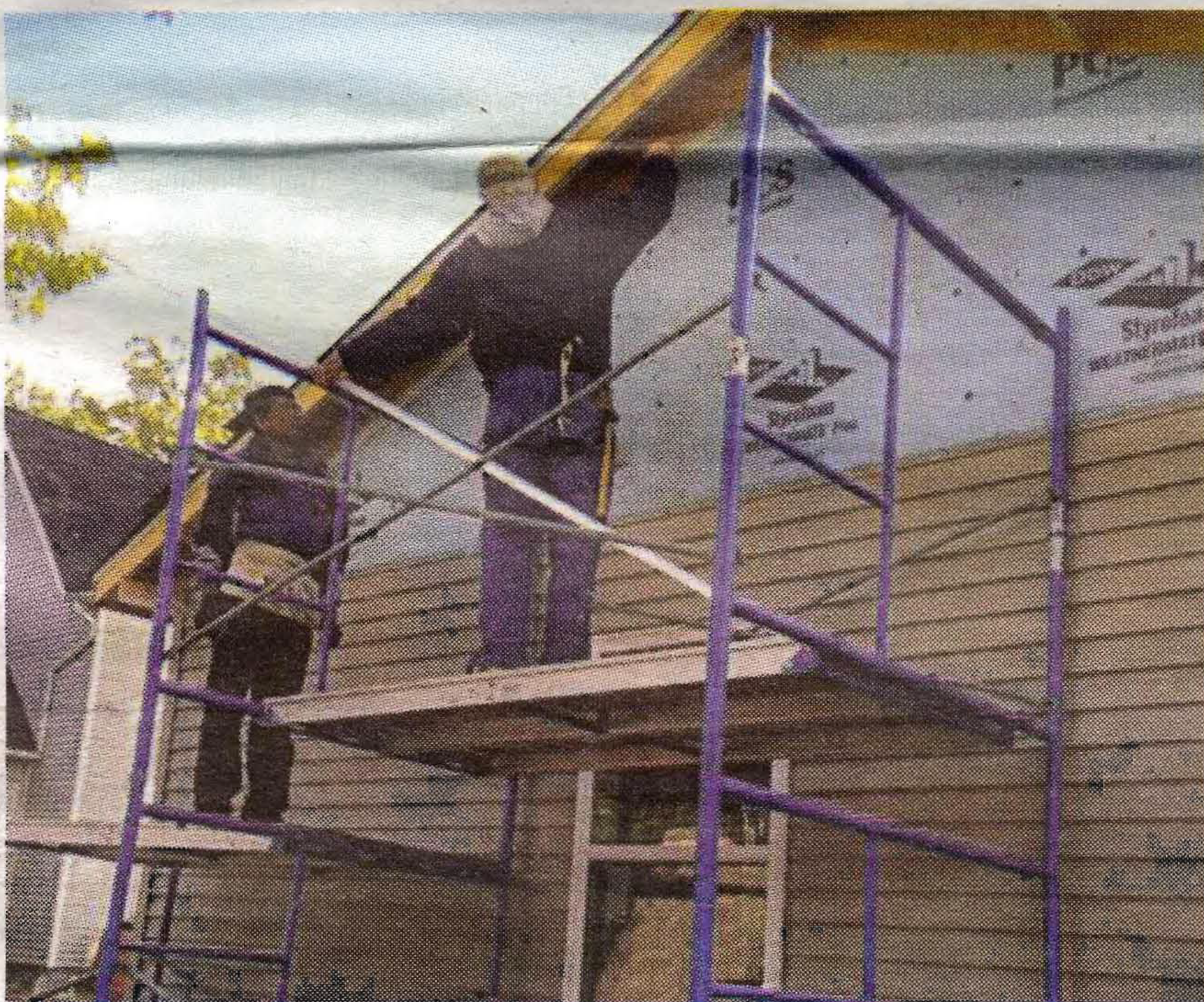
spent the day closer to the roof, whereas some were helping clean up the trailer van.

The project team had been working on the house for the last eight days but had already completed a significant portion of the house - the homeowner was expecting to have the house ready by Christmas, which brought smiles to our faces. The homeowner was herself present, readily helping out in the tasks needed for construction. This is in line with Habitat's idea of "sweat equity", wherein the homeowner is expected to contribute up to 500 hours of service in order to lay claim towards the house. This ensures that they feel a sense of ownership and accomplishment towards their own house, inculcating a sense of giving back to the community and empathy with the volunteers.

Habitat's long standing mission is that the work they do and service they provide is not a "hand-out" but rather a "hand-up"; which is crucial to sustainable development and vastly different from so many volunteer

projects around the world, wherein money and donations are just handed out without a sense of resource building or community empowerment.

ASB 2014 is picking up momentum with significant team building experiences at weekly meetings, in addition to some positive introspection as to the reasons why we do service and how can we as a community become more cognizant of larger issues of homelessness and social justice not only at the sites we serve at but also our immediate Chicago neighborhoods. Besides traditional fundraisers like Rocky's Tip Matching Night and the Taste of IIT, the team is looking to implement more fundraisers centered on our mission and goals. Additionally, even though the spring break team has been finalized, there is still opportunity to get involved with a possible ASB Chicago that is in the works, in partnership with the Office of Service Learning and other IIT/Chicago entities. Email [asb.iit@gmail.com](mailto:asb.iit@gmail.com) for more information.



Photos by Utsav Gandhi

## IPRO 338 improves historical Chicago landmark, Biograph Theater

**Jeffery Petrick**  
TECHNEWS WRITER

After a great deal of success with an energy audit on the Soldier's Field parking garage, the ECA (Electrical Contractors' Association of City of Chicago) sponsored IPRO is back to use the tools of the trade to improve another facility. IPRO 338, led by Dr. Dan Tomal, is tasked this semester with developing insights that support energy efficient improvement strategies. The iconic Victory Gardens Theater, formally known as the Biograph Theater, serves as the candidate for the current energy audit.

"In 2004, Victory Gardens announced the purchase of the historic Biograph Theater on Lincoln Avenue, and two years later, on September 28, the Victory Gardens Theater marquee at the Biograph was lit for the first time during a sunset ceremony. The new venue is a state of the art 299-seat main stage that has greatly extended the company's artistic flexibility. In 2009, Victory Gardens completed the second phase of renovation

at the Biograph, building an intimate, new, 109 seat studio theater on the second floor." - Victory Gardens Biograph Theater Website excerpt.

With LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification on the rise throughout Chicago the ability to take a building with such history as the Victory Gardens Theater and through a renovation, achieve LEED status would be a great icon for sustainability. This also became a great opportunity for the IIT students to become involved with the local community. Because of its history, the Victory Gardens Theater is a recognized Chicago Historical Landmark. As if the challenge of measuring, calculating, and then speculating a renovation for a historic building wasn't enough, the IPRO group will also have to work with strict building codes to ensure the historic status of the building is not altered.

The plan for the IPRO group is to apply the skills learned in school to the real world by conducting an extensive energy analysis of the Victory Gardens Theater.

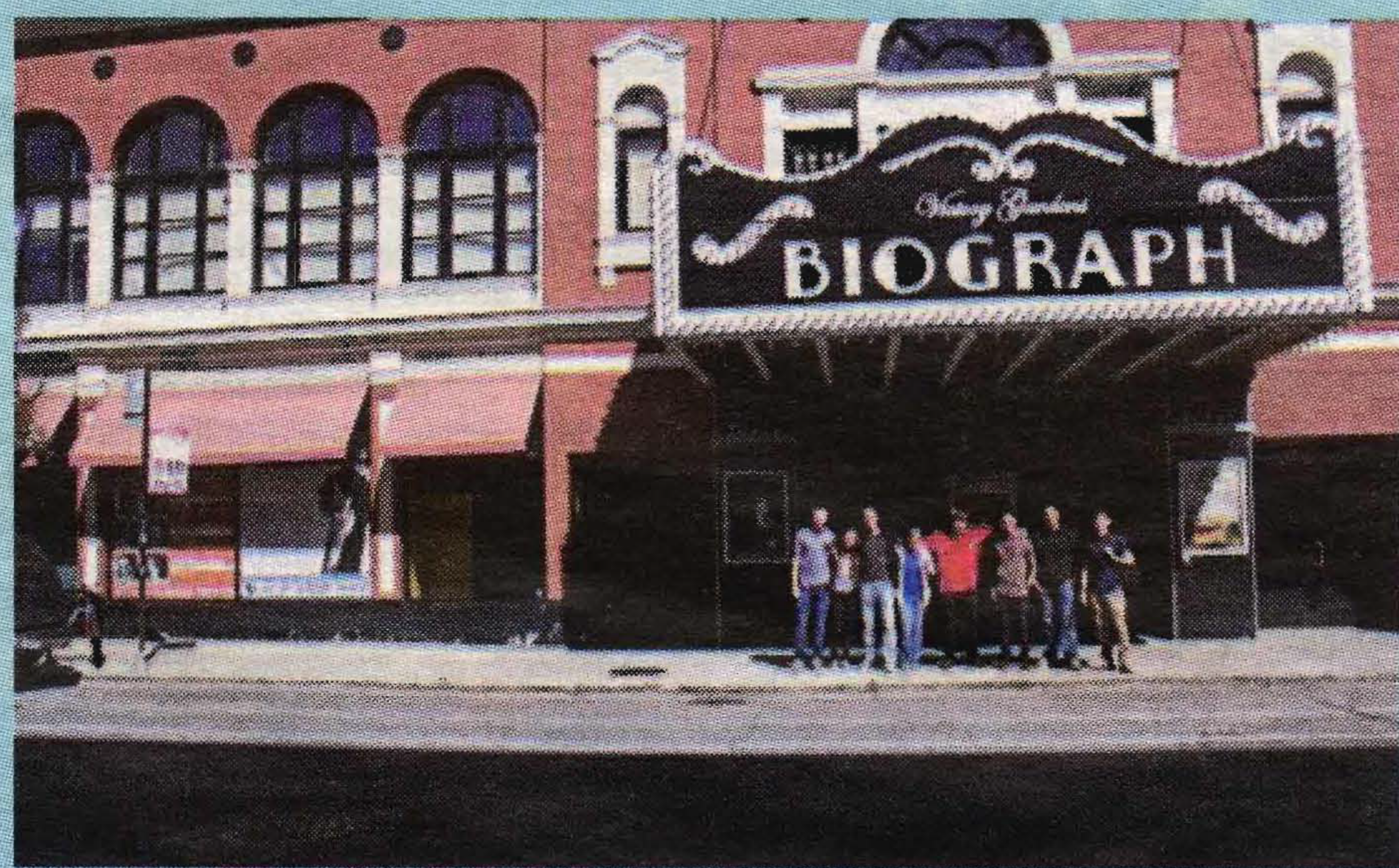


Photo by Jeffery Petrick

The group will use their skills to conduct an extensive energy analysis of the theater. Once the statistics are analyzed, the team will make energy saving recommendations for the

upcoming building renovation. Many thanks to Scott Miller and the Victory Gardens team for their support and cooperation throughout this project.