



Ninth Annual Build A House...Build A Dream Contest for Kids
Saturday, April 17, 2010
Drexel Athletic Center

About the Contest

Fifth graders in public, private and parochial schools are invited to build their own three-dimensional dream house. Children may enter by themselves or with one other friend who is also a fifth grader. Entries will be judged by professional architects, engineers, builders, and designers based on the criteria described below. All participants will receive a gift, and winners will receive small cash prizes. Participants may be asked to loan their entry for an extended exhibition in another public location.

Habitat for Humanity holds this Contest annually to inform more people about our work in the Delaware Valley. Your participation helps us to do that. Building your dream house is similar to what Habitat does every day — making dreams come true by helping families in need to purchase a home.

Design Guidelines:

Each dream house must be three-dimensional and fit on a base NO LARGER THAN 2ft x 3ft. Participants are asked to prepare a written description of 100 words or less explaining why this is your dream house and highlighting any interesting design features and amenities. On the day of the contest, participants will be asked to discuss their entry with the judges.

Judging Criteria:

- Originality and Creativity
- Use of Materials
- Appearance or Design
- Independent Effort. Remember, this is your project, not your parents'.

Awards and Recognition:

Every child entered in the contest will receive recognition for their efforts and a gift. The finalists will receive special recognition at the award ceremony, and the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners will receive awards and small cash prizes. In the past, additional recognition such as the "Go Green" award, presented by the Philadelphia Eagles, has been awarded to selected contestants who incorporate "green" building elements into their homes.

The contest guidelines, sent to every participant who registers, provide further details on awards and recognition.

Design Pointers:

Be creative and have fun. Feel free to use lots of color and interesting materials. Some ideas for things you can use to build your house: carpeting . . . plastic wrap . . . sponges . . . sugar cubes . . . paper . . . wallpaper . . . contact paper . . . cotton balls . . . soda cans . . . pebbles . . . paper clips . . . twigs . . . Q-tips . . . empty boxes . . . wood . . . or any other creative materials.

Incorporating Build A House...Build A Dream Contest Into the Classroom

The contest is a fun and unique way to reinforce math, social studies and communications skills lessons into the classroom. Below are some helpful hints on bringing the contest to life for your class:

Engaging Students

- Divide your class into small teams. We recommend 2 students to a team as this enables each student to be fully involved with all stages of the effort.
- Depending on the size of your classroom and your existing curriculum plan, you can choose to incorporate the contest as a mandatory classroom or as an extra-curricular exercise.
- Introduce the contest to students by:
 - Providing an overview of Habitat for Humanity using the General Overview provided at the back of this document.
 - Utilizing the contest language provided to get students excited about the opportunity.
 - Leveraging the additional information sent with the contest enrollment package to explain the guidelines—minimal requirements and boundless creativity!
 - Create a classroom timeline with key check-in points to allow students to share their ideas with each other, capture feedback and—most importantly—to ensure that the houses are completed in time for the April 17th event.

Tips for Incorporating into Math Lessons

- As a first step to the process, ask students to identify the size their house would be (in square feet) if it were full-scale. Then have them conduct the conversion from feet to inches, and determine if it will fit onto the specified 2'x3' platform.
- Have students determine the size specifications of each piece of the house (ie, each wall, floor, ceiling, windows, etc.) and measure the pieces in the chosen house material (showing you their work) before cutting.

Tips for Incorporating into Art Lessons

- Leverage the design of the house to reinforce color composition, balance, proportion/scale, contrast and focal points.
- The contest does not put any guidelines on the creativity. However, you can opt to drive the direction of their designs to tie into current lesson plan topics. For example, require that the students incorporate use of a specific material (clay, oil v water paints, sculpture, etc.).

Tips for Incorporating into Social Studies Lessons

- Ask students to research their family ancestry or another culture, and incorporate characteristics into their design. Students can practice using various sources (eg, computer databases, encyclopedias, and interviews, observations).
- Have students incorporate eco-friendly aspects to reinforce environmental learnings, such as green building techniques and sustainable landscape.

Tips for Incorporating into Communications Skills Lessons

- Contest participants are required to prepare a brief description of their house to share with the judges. Ask students to draft their descriptions as part of a writing exercise. This can be used to highlight sentence composition, controlled paragraph organization, and descriptive and persuasive writing skills.
- To help students prepare for the day of the contest, have students rehearse their presentations to the judges. You can act as the judge and ask the students to describe their “dream home” Probe for the inspiration behind their theme, how long it took to build, materials used, etc. This can be used to practice formal speech skills such as correct pronunciation, appropriate volume, speak with purpose, and pace of the speech.



Habitat for Humanity Overview

What does Habitat for Humanity do?

Habitat for Humanity helps low income, working families buy their own affordable home. Many of these families live in unsafe homes, many rent apartments, and many homes are overcrowded with multiple people sharing a single bedroom. The cost to rent a decent place to live is so high that these families may have to choose between paying rent and buying food, medicine, or clothing. Habitat helps low income families purchase a safe, clean, and affordable home. To date, Habitat has built over 444 homes in the Delaware Valley, helping with the affordable housing needs of about 2,000 people. Habitat for Humanity also works in 1,600 communities across the United States and in 100 countries across the world, building more than 250,000 homes worldwide and providing more than 1 million people with safe, decent, affordable shelter.

Why is owning a home so important?

Families that own their own homes feel safe and secure. Homeowners invest time in helping to build their community. Their children are more likely to succeed in school, hobbies and sports because the worry of having a place to live has been eliminated. Owning your own home is something to be proud of. For many families, it is a dream come true.

Who builds a Habitat house?

Families who will be purchasing the home invest 400 hours of "sweat equity" – volunteer labor – into their home. The work might include building walls, painting, and installing windows. They are joined by other people who volunteer their time. Volunteers are not paid for their work, but donate their time in order to help Habitat. By not paying for some of the work, Habitat houses cost less to build and can be sold to a family who otherwise could not afford to buy a house. Volunteers find it rewarding to help others.

What does a Habitat house look like?

Habitat homes are simple and decent. An average Habitat house for a family of four in the United States is 1100 square feet, has three bedrooms, and one bathroom. Roughly 4,876 16-penny nails, about 650 pieces of lumber, and 40 gallons of paint are used to build the house. Lots of materials – wood, windows, carpeting, paint, siding, brick and more – are needed for construction. Companies that donate materials help keep the cost of the house affordable. Other companies and people contribute money to help purchase materials that aren't donated.

What can your class do to raise awareness about Habitat for Humanity?

- Learn more about Habitat for Humanity at www.dvhabitat.org.
- Invite a Habitat representative to your class to learn more about building a house.
- Prepare lunch for volunteers and deliver it to the construction site.
- Attend a new house dedication to learn about how families and volunteers built a house.
- Write goodwill messages on 2x4 lumber to be sealed inside the walls of a new house.
- Share with another class what you have learned about Habitat for Humanity.

For more ideas on how you can help or if you have any questions, visit our website at www.dvhabitat.org or email Contest@dvhabitat.org.

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