

Women wield hammers

Habitat for Humanity's women's week lets ladies in on the action

Carolyn Pope
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Hey, sweetcakes!"

Although the desire was in me to let out a screeching whistle and catcall or two, it just wasn't going to happen.

To begin with, I can't whistle. I leave that to my friend Connie. Also, the traffic of men sauntering by the Habitat for Humanity jobs site in Eagle wasn't exactly heavy. And lastly, I just didn't think I'd get the rush from making a fool of myself by imitating some men at a construction site in the Bronx.

I do, however, now relate to the manly, testosterone thrill of wielding a hammer and slamming it hard into a stud — a long, wooden stud, that is.

I joined a group of women in Habitat for Humanity's Women's Week. We were a mixed group — a couple of us had some experience building, like Sienna Shaw, who, before attending architectural school, decided to work construction to see how things were really built. We sure needed her.

Melanie Roberts pent her entire week at the job site and, day by day, her expertise was increasing.

The construction manager, Don McBee, who made a few jokes about our skills, but applauded and encouraged us as we learned the ropes.

Briana Bell and Anne Morris move some studs.
Carolyn Pope/Vail Dail



Ladies living on the edge.

Carolyn Pope/Vail Daily

He said that women actually do pretty well — we pay attention during instructions and don't get caught up in the chit chat. Also, we don't tend to consider building a birdhouse in shop in junior high a

true construction experience.

"I am excited by the progress that was made on the triplex during Women Build Week," McBee said. "The volunteers worked hard and should be proud of what they accomplished. Most importantly it was fun."

I don't know if I measured up to his confidence in us. It took me a good couple of hours before 70 percent of the nails I hammered in didn't come out because they I bent them by the third or fourth whack.

Many of the women are regulars, including Anne Norman of Mountain Craft Cabinets, whose company donated the cabinets for all of the homes built in Leadville.

"When I left Leadville, I was in tears. The family was there," she said. "At the end of the day, progress was made. It's fun to watch it progress."



Maggie McManus, Siena Shaw and Sally Brainerd of RKD Architects.
Carolyn Pope/Vail Daily

Others, like myself, were first-timers. Siena coerced her boss, Sally Brainerd, and co-worker, Maggie McManus, to spend the day. Briana Bell and Jen Morris drove up from Denver.

All of us came because it felt right. All in all, 12 women per day worked six-hour shifts for a total of 432 woman-hours.

Due to the overwhelming interest and enthusiasm in Women Build a second week is scheduled for Oct. 23 to Oct. 27.

Habitat for Humanity of Eagle and Lake Counties is in the process of building seven homes in the Bluffs neighborhood of Eagle. Building experience isn't necessary.

For more information on our local Habitat for Humanity of Eagle and Lake Counties, visit www.habitateaglelake.org or you call 748-6718.



Don McBee, Vicki Crawford, Jen Morris and Briana Bell.
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