

Tim Landis: Habitat planning women-only build

TIM LANDIS 09/15/2012 - 11:30 PM EDT

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY OF SANGAMON COUNTY is planning a first next month – for women only.

Executive director Sarah Mackey said women-only build days have proved popular with Habitat for Humanity chapters elsewhere in the country. She said the first such workday here will involve exterior repairs to a home. The date has not yet been scheduled.

The local build is through a partnership with Lowe's and the Junior League of Springfield.

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“It’s a great opportunity for them to get involved and try things on a build site they may not be familiar with or have used before,” said Mackey.

Mackey said women volunteers are sometimes uncomfortable, at least at first, when working on traditional projects combining men and women

“It can be intimidating for women who are not familiar with construction tools or terms or processes,” said Mackey. “The women-build provides a safe environment where women can come together, and learn together, and try new things.”

As women volunteers become more comfortable with their construction skills, they are more likely to take part in the traditional projects, Mackey added.

The partnership with Lowe's is the latest in the expansion of corporate partnerships for the local Habitat for Humanity. The group recently announced employees with Levi, Ray & Shoup, a Springfield technology firm, are working on construction of a home in Grandview.

Mackey said additional women-build events will be scheduled, and volunteers of all skill levels are welcome.

“We have some women who have already stepped up to volunteer who have experience in the trade,” said Mackey, “and we have other women who have never set foot on a building site.”