



Make *Build a House...Build a Dream* a Learning Experience

“This project incorporates all students’ academic skills, from planning to teamwork, problem solving to writing.”

-Debbie Wile, Wallingford Elementary School teacher

While students are more than welcome to do the contest on their own time, if you have the flexibility in your curriculum, there are many ways to incorporate the contest into lesson plans. The contest is a fun and unique way to reinforce art, math, social studies, and writing lessons into the classroom. Below are some helpful hints on bringing the contest to life for your class:

Introducing the Contest to Students:

- Provide an overview of Habitat for Humanity using the overview provided at the bottom of this document. More helpful material can be found at www.hfhcc.org.
- Leverage 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 March 7th 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 (i.e., 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, 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.
- Have students incorporate eco-friendly aspects to reinforce environmental learning, such as green building techniques and sustainable landscape.
- Tie in the connection between location and natural resources and lifestyle into the design of the home.

Tips for Incorporating into Writing and Public Speaking 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 their model, or what materials they used. This can be used to practice formal speech skills such as correct pronunciation, appropriate volume, speaking with purpose, and pace of the speech.

Overview of Habitat for Humanity

What does Habitat for Humanity do?

Habitat for Humanity of Chester County helps hard-working, low-income families achieve homeownership. Habitat homes are not free and are sold to partner families using a no-interest 30-year mortgage. These partner families are chosen based upon their need for affordable housing, their ability to pay their monthly mortgage, and their willingness to complete 200 hours (or 400 for a couple) of volunteer labor, or “sweat equity,” at the construction site. Since 1989, Habitat for Humanity of Chester County has given a hand up, not a hand out, to over 185 families thanks to countless volunteer hours and the financial support of our community. For more information, visit www.hfhcc.org.

Why is owning a home so important?

Families that own their homes feel safe, secure, and proud. Children of homeowners 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?

With limited staff, Habitat relies heavily on community volunteers to build homes. Last year, over 250 volunteers gave over 14,000 hours of their time to help build Habitat homes in Chester County. Partner families who will be purchasing the home also complete their sweat equity helping to build their future neighborhood.

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 1,100 square feet, has three bedrooms, and one bathroom. Habitat homes are designed to fit seamlessly into the existing neighborhood. In fact, you cannot distinguish a Habitat home from a non-Habitat home.

Please contact us at the information below if you would like a Habitat representative to come to your school or organization to speak about the contest and our work in your community.

For more resources, visit www.hfhcc.org.

23rd Annual Build A House...Build A Dream! Contest for Kids

Benefitting Habitat for Humanity of Chester County

For more information, please contact:

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