

12-10-2017

What?

● What did I do today?

Today I met the team on UC's campus, then we made the drive to Winston-Salem, North Carolina. The drive was about six hours and forty minutes so there was plenty of time to get to know the members of the team, that I did not know as well, better before we started working together. When we got to the compound we were greeted by Debbie, who is in charge of the volunteer lodge. She told us the history of the lodge and a little more about the work Habitat for Humanity does in Winston-Salem.

● Who did I talk to?

Throughout the day I talked to various members of the Engineers without Borders group. Many people had questions about what we would be working on this week and what it is like to work with Habitat for Humanity. Today, I was also able to talk to Debbie about our living arrangements for the week.

● What new things did I experience?

Since most of the day involved driving, the only new thing that I experienced today was the volunteer lodge. This is my first experience going on a service trip for Habitat for Humanity and while we are staying in the lodge, we will be joined by a group of nineteen people who will be working with the Salvation army this week. I am excited to learn what the other group is working on this week and interact with new people.

● What did I work on today?

Since we did not actually volunteer today, the only thing I worked on was team building. I was able to get to know members of my team better and I think that will help us to be successful this week.

So What?

● Why were my activities today important?

The activities that I participated in today were important because knowing my teammates better and knowing more about the work that Habitat for Humanity does will help the work I do this week to be more meaningful.

● Who did I help?

The people that I helped today included members of the team who were curious about what it is like to work with Habitat for Humanity. Since I have volunteered with the Cincinnati Habitat chapter a couple of times, I was able to answer questions and let people know what to expect on a work site.

- **What did I think about the new things I learned today?**

The new things that I learned today allowed me to see what the needs are in Winston-Salem and how much the work I am doing this week can help them.

- **Did we collaborate well with the community today?**

We did not collaborate with the community today, but the things that Debbie told us about the community today will help us to collaborate well tomorrow.

Now What?

- **What issues came up today that will need to be solved in the future?**

One issue that we encountered today was that one of our team members was not able to meet us on campus because they ended up being out of town. This shows what can happen when information is not communicated well between members of the team. In order to solve the issue, the missing student is going to take a bus to Winston-Salem and another member of the team will meet her at the bus station to pick her up. Another issue that we had today was motion sickness because we were driving through the mountains and the roads twisted a lot. As a result of this, we had to make more stops and our arrival was delayed. We will need to avoid this issue on the way back by making sure everyone who gets motion sick takes medicine and the drivers will need to be careful on the curvy roads.

- **How can I find out more about what I learned today?**

I can find out more about what I did today by reading the materials that Debbie provided us with and by looking at the Habitat for Humanity website. Before we left Cincinnati, Debbie gave us some information about the Boston Thurmond neighborhood and she also gave us a packet to read about Winston-Salem's African-American neighborhoods.

- **How can we make our project better using what I learned today?**

I can make our project better by better appreciating the work we are doing and by understanding my teammates better.

- **What additional opportunities for collaboration were discovered today?**

One additional opportunity for collaboration that I discovered today was a possible collaboration with the other group staying in the lodge. Since we will all be staying in the same place, it would be easy to talk to them and learn more about what they are doing.

12-11-2017

What?

● What did I do today?

Today I went with part of the team to the Habitat for Humanity Restore. The first thing that we did when we got there was learn more about the restore. The Habitat for Humanity Restore is a place where donated items are sold and the proceeds go towards funding the building of more houses in the area. After we learned more about the stores, we headed out to do a home pickup. A family had just redone their back patio and had a lot of extra pavers and they wanted to donate them. Our job was to load the pavers onto the truck and bring them back to the store. After we finished that job, we ate lunch and asked some questions about the restore. The second job that we did involved going out to a house that was about to be demolished and pulling up bricks from the front walkway. After we collected the bricks, we also took them back to the restore. When we were done working for the day, we decided to explore the area and go hiking.

● Who did I talk to?

Throughout the day I talked to members of my team and restore employees. The people who worked at the restore taught us a lot about how the restore works and they also taught us about the divisions within the city. The street that the store is located on is divided into to ends. On one side of the store you have a very rich area and on the other side of the store you have a very poor area. The idea of the store is that the richer side donates their extra home items and then the people from the other side have goods that they can afford. Sometimes though the people with more money also come and buy from the store because they know they will get a good deal. In this case the store is still helping those in need because the money from the purchase goes towards building new homes in the area so that those who are less fortunate can afford a home for their family.

● What new things did I experience?

Today, I was able to experience a Habitat for Humanity restore for the first time. I have been to GoodWill stores before, but it was interesting to see the restore because the money that the store makes goes towards building new homes in the area.

● What did I work on today?

The work that I did today included helping with a home pickup for the restore and salvaging items from a home that was going to be demolished.

So What?

● Why were my activities today important?

The activities that I participated in today were important because the restore does not have many

full time employees so they would usually not do pick ups like we participated in today without volunteers since they cannot afford to send many of their employees out to one location.

- **Who did I help?**

The people that I helped today included people who may not have been able to afford to lay bricks or pavers down as a walkway to their house. I also may have helped with a new home build if they end up purchasing the pavers that we brought in to make a patio or a walkway. I was also able to help the restore employees because they would not have been able to pick up those items without our group volunteering.

- **What did I think about the new things I learned today?**

The new things that I learned today allowed me to see how important it is to donate items that you do not need anymore. I know my family has many home items that we don't use and, instead of just sitting in the basement, they could be going to a better cause. I also thought it was interesting that the work sites for building new homes buy their materials from the restore. It is a smart way to make the houses more affordable.

- **Did we collaborate well with the community today?**

We collaborated very well with the community today. Not only were we able to follow the instructions of the restore employees, but we were also able to pick up an extra donation because when we were doing the home pick up the neighbors saw the truck and asked if they could give us fog lights to take to the store.

Now What?

- **What issues came up today that will need to be solved in the future?**

Since we are only spending one day at the restore we do not have any issues that we need to solve in the future, but one issue that we did experience today was that some of the pavers were frozen together and in order to solve this problem we laid the frozen ones out in the sun so that they would start to melt and then we were able to break them apart.

- **How can I find out more about what I learned today?**

I can find out more about what I did today by searching the website for the restore and seeing more information about the items that they sell and where the money that they make is going.

- **How can we make our project better using what I learned today?**

I can make our project better by keeping the restore in mind when we go out to the the actual job site tomorrow. Now I know that if anything goes wrong we will actually have to purchase more materials because I had originally thought that there was just a warehouse of donated materials that were free to use.

● **What additional opportunities for collaboration were discovered today?**

One additional opportunity for collaboration that I discovered today was that our Engineers without Borders chapter could volunteer at one of the restores in Cincinnati. In the past we have just worked at home builds, but now I know there are more opportunities within Habitat besides just building houses.

12-12-2017

What?

● What did I do today?

Today I started out in the compound with the team. There we met all of the people we would be working with at the worksite and we shared a little bit about ourselves. They told us we would be helping with a home restoration for the rest of the week. After we all got to know each other, we headed to the worksite. When we got there several of the Habitat employees went to talk to the owner of the house to confirm what needed fixed. She confirmed that the front porch was dangerous and the roof was leaking. We then proceeded to unload the vans of equipment and then I went back to the compound with three other students to load the scaffolding onto the truck that we would need in order to get to the roof. When we got back, we started to set up the scaffolding, then I went to go help with the porch because that group looked like they could use a little bit more help.

● Who did I talk to?

Throughout the day I talked to various members of the Habitat team and our EWB team. I also briefly talked to the person who bought us dinner. Debbie told us that each night someone volunteers to bring us dinner because of the work we are doing.

● What new things did I experience?

Some new things that I was able to do today included setting up scaffolding and meeting new people from Habitat. I honestly was not sure what scaffolding was before the trip, so I am glad I was able to clear up my confusion.

● What did I work on today?

The work that I did today included unloading vans so that we would have everything we needed for the week, getting scaffolding and helping to put it together, and helping to take the old rotted boards off of the porch.

So What?

● Why were my activities today important?

The activities that I participated in today were important because it is starting to get very cold in Winston-Salem so it is very important to have a roof that does not leak. Also, since the holidays are coming up the woman that lives in the house might have family visiting her so it is important to make sure the front porch is safe to walk on.

● Who did I help?

The people that I helped today included the people from Habitat because they said that

volunteers help to make their jobs easier, and the woman who lives in the house because we are making her house more safe.

- **What did I think about the new things I learned today?**

The new things that I learned today allowed me to understand more about construction.

- **Did we collaborate well with the community today?**

We collaborated very well with the homeowner today today. We made sure that we understood the problems that she was having and told her what we planned to work on.

Now What?

- **What issues came up today that will need to be solved in the future?**

One issue that came up today is that more of the porch was rotted than we previously expected so we had to remove more boards that will need to be replaced later in the week.

- **How can I find out more about what I learned today?**

I can find out more about what I did today by reading about the area that we are working in and by reading more about building porches so that I will be able to participate more tomorrow.

- **How can we make our project better using what I learned today?**

I can make our project better by understanding what needs to be done and by better understanding the people I am working with.

- **What additional opportunities for collaboration were discovered today?**

One additional opportunity for collaboration that I discovered today was with Americorp. Several members of the Habitat team are Americorps members and the program seems to relate to the work we do with EWB, only it is not international. It seems like our EWB chapter might be able to partner with Americorps for a project in the future.

12-13-2017

What?

● What did I do today?

Today I started out in the compound with the team. We met up with the Habitat workers and then headed out to the worksite. In the morning we laid some cement and started to build the foundation for the porch. We also measured the locations for the cross beams and then we had to break for lunch. When we got back we cut some crossbeams and started securing them to the foundation. We also made sure that we replaced all of the boards that were rotted and had to be removed earlier in the week. Tomorrow we should be able to get most of the porch finished up.

● Who did I talk to?

Throughout the day I talked to various members of the Habitat team and our EWB team. Debbie also came to talk to us today about how everything was going. She wanted to know what they had us working on and she asked if there was anything that we needed.

● What new things did I experience?

One new thing that I experienced today was basically a crash course on how to build a porch. Unfortunately the person who was helping us in the morning had to go somewhere else after lunch so we had to listen to all of the instructions from him on how to build the porch and then try to implement it when he was not there. Luckily, the master builder for the project came over to help us out after lunch to make sure we knew what to do. I also learned that you do not always have to mix concrete, instead you can just pack down the cement where you want it and then when it rains it will harden.

● What did I work on today?

Today I spent the day working on the porch. I was able to help lay cement, attach cross beams, and cut lumber using the table saw.

So What?

● Why were my activities today important?

The activities that I participated in today were important because it is important to make sure a porch has a strong foundation so that it will be able to support any people or items that happen to be on it.

● Who did I help?

The people that I helped today were really the same as yesterday and included the people from Habitat because they said that volunteers help to make their jobs easier, and the woman who lives in the house because we are making her house more safe.

- **What did I think about the new things I learned today?**

The new things that I learned today allowed me to understand what it is like to be given instructions on a worksite. It is very important to listen the first time because the person may not be there to repeat the instructions to you later.

- **Did we collaborate well with the community today?**

We collaborated very well with the homeowner today today. We made sure that we understood the problems that she was having and told her what we planned to work on.

Now What?

- **What issues came up today that will need to be solved in the future?**

One issue that came up today was that when we told the master builder the plan that we were told to execute for the porch, he did not seem sure that it would work like that so we may have to work on a different design tomorrow.

- **How can I find out more about what I learned today?**

I can find out more about what I did today by reading about the area that we are working in and by reading more about building porches so that I will be better prepared if we have to come up with a new porch design tomorrow.

- **How can we make our project better using what I learned today?**

I can make our project better by making sure everyone is on the same page and knows what the plan is before we start building tomorrow. That way there will not be any miscommunication and we will be able to implement the design smoothly and efficiently.

- **What additional opportunities for collaboration were discovered today?**

I did not find any new opportunities for collaboration other than just volunteering with Habitat for Humanity more often. A few of the people on the worksite today were also volunteers, but they were able to give instruction and lead parts of the project because they volunteer regularly and know what needs to be done.

12-14-2017

What?

● What did I do today?

Today we met the Habitat for Humanity workers at the worksite. The master builder had to go to another site so we were low on tools and materials and there was a lot of waiting around as the day started. When he got back, we were able to put the plyboards down on the porch and since there was not that much left to do on the porch, I was moved to a new project at a house across the street. The owner of this home needed a railing put in to help get up the driveway. As we were working on the railing, I was told that the people on the roof could use some help so I went up there to help them. While I was up there, I helped clean out and attach the gutters and I cut some shingles to help finish up the roof.

● Who did I talk to?

Throughout the day I talked to various members of the Habitat team and our EWB team. Since we were planning to go out to dinner as a team tonight, the Habitat people told us more about the area and gave us recommendations of the best places to go eat.

● What new things did I experience?

Some new things that I was able to do today included using a Sawzall reciprocating saw, building a railing, learning how to lay shingles, and climbing on scaffolding for the first time. I felt like I stayed very busy today and was able to try a lot of new and exciting things.

● What did I work on today?

The work that I did today included laying plywood down for the porch, cutting away some old metal with a Sawzall reciprocating saw, working together with a group to build a new railing across the street, cutting shingles to help the people working on the roof, cleaning out the gutters, and putting gutter guard in the gutters so that they will not get clogged in the future.

So What?

● Why were my activities today important?

The activities that I participated in today were important because there were a lot of items that needed to get done today in order to finish the project tomorrow, so it was important for me to stay busy and find little tasks that needed done. It was also important to provide a railing to the homeowner across the street because as it gets colder, the driveway could be icy and the railing will help people to stay safe as they walk up the driveway.

● Who did I help?

Similar to yesterday, the people that I helped today included the people from Habitat because they said that volunteers help to make their jobs easier, and the woman who lives in the house

because we are making her house more safe. In addition to these, I was also able to help the homeowner across the street by providing a safe way to walk up to their house.

- **What did I think about the new things I learned today?**

The new things that I learned today allowed me to understand how to use new tools safely, and they could be very helpful to me in the future if I ever want to make any improvements to my own house.

- **Did we collaborate well with the community today?**

We collaborated very well with the homeowner today today. We made sure that we understood the problems that she was having and told her what we planned to work on. We also collaborated well with the homeowner across the street to make sure that the railing was built to their needs.

Now What?

- **What issues came up today that will need to be solved in the future?**

We did not come across any issues today, but tomorrow we will have to make sure that we clean up the lodge completely and make sure everything at the worksite is finished up because tomorrow is our last day.

- **How can I find out more about what I learned today?**

I can find out more about what I learned today by asking the Habitat workers more about the equipment that was used and how to put the shingles on the roof since I just cut them and handed them to other people. The people at the site are very knowledgeable and I should try to pick their brains tomorrow since it is our last day.

- **How can we make our project better using what I learned today?**

I think this experience will be very helpful to our international projects because now the team has various construction skills that will be useful if we take on another project like the schoolhouse our chapter built in Burere, Tanzania.

- **What additional opportunities for collaboration were discovered today?**

I did not find any new opportunities for collaboration other than just coming back as a group to do more work in Winston-Salem. They could always use more volunteers and it is a great way for EWB members to do real engineering work even if they cannot afford to go on one of our international trips.

12-15-2017

What?

● What did I do today?

Today we met the Habitat for Humanity workers at the worksite. Since this was our final day, we made sure all of the projects were finished up and we brought all of the furniture back onto the porch. We then took down all of the scaffolding and made sure all of our equipment was packed up. After we finished cleaning up the site, we said our goodbyes to the habitat workers and went back to the lodge to make sure everything there was clean for the next group.

● Who did I talk to?

Throughout the day I talked to various members of the Habitat team and our EWB team. Since this was our last day, I was also able to talk to the homeowner and she said what we were doing is amazing and she was very thankful that we were able to help her.

● What new things did I experience?

I did not really experience anything new today besides meeting the habitat. The habitat workers all help to take care of a foster cat that lives in the warehouse and we made sure to spend some time with her before we left.

● What did I work on today?

Today I worked on cleaning up the worksite and lodge. We wanted to leave everything better than we found it to show how grateful we were for the people who let us stay in the lodge. We also left thank you notes for people who brought us food and helped us throughout our time at the lodge.

So What?

● Why were my activities today important?

The activities that I participated in today were important because we wanted to show our appreciation for the lodge and everyone who helped to make the week meaningful to us. It was also important for us to clean up the worksite so that the homeowner's yard would be safe for her and her dog to walk in without stepping on any tools or leftover nails.

● Who did I help?

Similar to yesterday, the people that I helped today included the people from Habitat because they said that volunteers help to make their jobs easier, and the woman who lives in the house because we are making her house more safe. We also wrote a note to one of the people who brought us cookies this week because the lodge was named after her son and we wanted her to know how the lodge is helping to continue her son's work.

- **What did I think about the new things I learned today?**

The new things that I learned today allowed me to understand how to use new tools safely, which could be very helpful to me in the future if I ever want to make any improvements to my house.

- **Did we collaborate well with the community today?**

We collaborated very well with the homeowner today today. We made sure that all of her furniture was put where she wanted it and she thanked us for all of the work that we did throughout the week.

Now What?

- **What issues came up today that will need to be solved in the future?**

The only thing at the worksite that will need to be solved in the future is painting the porch. Since we used new lumber when building the porch, it will need to dry out before it can be painted.

- **How can I find out more about what I learned today?**

I can find out more about Habitat by looking at their website and I can also look at the Cincinnati Habitat chapter's website to find more ways for me to volunteer when I am back in school.

- **How can we make our project better using what I learned today?**

Like I noted yesterday, I think this experience will be very helpful to our international projects because now the team has various construction skills that will be useful if we take on another project like the schoolhouse our chapter built in Burere, Tanzania. It will also be good for us to take all of the skills that we learned and apply them to our careers as engineers. If we design buildings someday, we will now understand the process of constructing the designs.

- **What additional opportunities for collaboration were discovered today?**

I did not find any new opportunities for collaboration, but like I noted yesterday, we could come back in the future as a group to do more work in Winston-Salem. We even talked today about possibly sending another group over spring break to volunteer.