

Family Health Center Lends Hand With Habitat House

Thursday, 11 February 2010

In the course of building their careers, members of the Family Medicine Residency Program also are helping build homes.

Three resident physicians and several staff members of the Family Health Center took a recent Saturday to lend a helping hand to the Dixon Habitat for Humanity's project to build a new home for a local resident.

Wielding hammers, pneumatic staple guns and other tools were Drs. Poonam Sachdev, Lisa Denobriga and Ivan Boyadzhiev from the residency program as well as Residency Coordinator Melanie Rick and clinic staff members Joann Smetters and Robin Eikenberry. Joann's husband, Kevin Smetters, also participated in the project, which is the 16th house built by the Dixon chapter of Habitat for Humanity.

"The Family Health Center staff worked hard on an extremely warm day hanging siding," said Jim Dixon, President of the Dixon Habitat for Humanity. "Their work resulted in the completion of some three-fourths of the necessary siding for the home. We are very grateful to have their help, as we are every year."

This is the third year that members of the FHC have pitched in to help with the Habitat home-building project. The volunteer work began when Dr. Tim Appenheimer, past director of the residency program, received a letter asking for donations. Clinic Manager Joann Smetters immediately offered to organize volunteers from the FHC, and it took off from there. The first year 10 people volunteered, and since then they've tried to have at least eight working at the home on the designated day.

"We had a great time, even though it was hot," Dr. Denobriga said. "We worked side by side with the owner of the house and got to know more about her and her family. It's a great way to give back to the community that we will spend three years of our life serving."

Melanie said that the volunteer project is a good way for the clinic staff to bond. "We get to know our residents better. We all have a sense of pride and accomplishment when we're done." This is one of the community services that the residents are encouraged to participate in each year. "They are always willing to help," Melanie added.