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Bike ride to raise funds for Habitat

Catt Walk & Bike event will assist in fourth women's build

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Written by **Stephanie Wise**
Iowa City Press-Citizen

This weekend's fundraiser will help build more than just a home, but support and confidence, too, organizers say.

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Iowa Valley Habitat for Humanity hosts its inaugural Catt Walk & Bike fundraising event Saturday to raise money for the Jackie Blank & Jane McCune Women Build, resource development director Maggie Pforts said. Participants will take a nine-mile bike ride around the Terry Trueblood Recreation Area — including a tour of a recently completed Habitat house — or walk two miles on a nearby trail, followed by lunch.

Pforts said the fundraiser is the first of several this year to help raise the \$50,000 needed to construct a new home in Iowa City this fall.

If you go

- **What:** Catt Walk & Bike fundraiser for Iowa Valley Habitat for Humanity.
- **When:** 10 a.m. registration; bike route starts at 10:30 a.m., walk route starts at 10:45 a.m.
- **Where:** Terry Trueblood Recreation Area, 4213 Sand Road S.E. in Iowa City.
- **Cost:** \$15 to \$200 (registration includes a T-shirt and lunch) through www.iowavalleyhabitat.org.
- **Information:** www.iowavalleyhabitat.org.

"Every little bit helps," she said.

This is Iowa Valley Habitat's fourth women's build, a program designed to empower women on the job site, Pforts said. Women are encouraged to take leadership roles in constructing a home they otherwise might not take if men are on site, Pforts said — "so the big idea is to teach women some basic skills to help (build) homes."

"Habitat International found out that the construction industry and building of homes is dominated by males, and they knew a lot of women out there wanted to take part and take on more responsibility and leadership roles, but oftentimes men would step in and women would feel not empowered," Iowa Valley Habitat executive director Mark Patton



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said. "So we decided a few years ago to have a women-led build where women are in charge of organizing and fundraising and construction, with the net result to give them

more hands-on construction and leadership skills in the wider community."

Keeping with the women's empowerment theme, Saturday's event is named after Iowa suffragist Carrie Chapman Catt, a key influence in the state's suffrage movement in the late 1880s. The event is a way to honor women of the past and present, according to a news release.

Patton said he hopes local women of all skill levels will volunteer and participate in the build.

"Women oftentimes say to us, 'I don't have any construction skills. I can't do anything,' but Habitat doesn't strive to be the most efficient builder because we want to take the time to instruct people," he said.

"Even if they don't have the skills today, we can teach them ahead of time and on the site."

Pforts hopes Saturday's fundraiser will help the organization gain community support.

"The big thing is to get our name out there and the project itself out in the community, to give people an idea of what a women build is," she said. "We hope to provide some family fun for the weekend and teach about Habitat, as well."

Reach Stephanie Wise at smwise@press-citizen.com or 887-5403.

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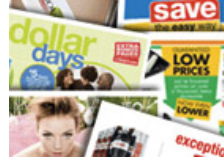
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