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## Women Raise Walls of Habitat for Humanity House



BY CHRISTY VOYTKO



Women volunteers will raise the walls of a **Habitat for Humanity** house on Friday, October 9 and Saturday, October 10 from 8:30 AM-5:30 PM each day at 100 Breed Road in Lansing. The women are building the home with the Little family as part of Habitat for Humanity's Women Build program, underwritten by Lowe's, which aims to get children out of poverty one family at a time.

This is the first Women Build project taken on by Habitat for Humanity of Tompkins and Cortland Counties. "Women have the capability and determination necessary to build Habitat for Humanity houses," says Christy Voytko, executive director of Habitat for Humanity of Tompkins and Cortland Counties, "We are eager to bring this project to our community so women can address the problem of substandard housing in a concrete way and can become advocates for families to have safe and decent homes." According to the Census Bureau over 2,000 children live in poverty in Tompkins County alone.

Nationally, women make up 50 percent of Habitat's volunteer force, yet women account for only 15 percent of volunteers actively doing construction. By involving more women in construction, Women Build projects enable Habitat to build more homes with families in need.

"More than 12 million children—one out of every six—live in poverty in the United States alone," says Linda Sultan, director of Habitat for Humanity International's Women Build department. "Habitat for Humanity of Tompkins and Cortland Counties' build is literally putting the tools into women's hands that enable us to move families out of poverty one house at a time."

Like all Habitat homeowners, the Little family will buy their house through low payments on a zero-interest mortgage. They will also contribute 500 hours of "sweat equity" by working on their home alongside volunteers.

Volunteers of all skill levels are encouraged to sign up for the Women Build Wall Raising on October 9th and 10th at [www.tchabitat.com](http://www.tchabitat.com) or by calling 607.898.4148. Men are welcome to sign up to be on site to assist the women during these two days and are encouraged to bring baked goods.

Two training sessions for Women Build will take place at Lowe's in Ithaca. On Wednesday, September 30 from 6:30–8:00 PM, session one will teach women proper and safe hand and power tool use. The second training will be held on Wednesday, October 7 from 6:30–8:00 PM and will focus on framing skills. All women are welcome to attend.

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