

BY LISA MARIE NICKERSON



National Women Build Week

In the week leading up to Mother's Day, more than 17,000 women across the country celebrated this year's holiday in a less-than-traditional way: by picking up hammers, laying drywall, and framing a house to make it a home for a family in need of decent, affordable shelter.

It was all part of Habitat for Humanity's 9th annual National Women Build Week, which took place from April 30 to May 8, 2016. More than 300 Habitat offices hosted activities for this year's event, which included the construction and repair of 650 homes, as well as neighborhood revitalization projects and building to green standards. The week launched with 10 "Girls Night Out" house-framing events in Lowe's parking lots across the U.S.

At each build site, women learned new construction skills from Lowe's Heroes volunteers as well as through how-to clinics. While some volunteers were novices, many others were highly skilled professionals. Because the event took place nationwide, climate often determined the stage of construction: Many of the builds held in the northern part of the country were in the early stages of construction, while in some southern sites, the work had been started earlier in the year and was wrapped up during National Women Build Week.

But whether the volunteers kicked off the project or completed it, their time and effort will have a significant impact on helping families in their local community build strength, stability, and self-reliance through shelter.

Lisa Marie Nickerson is associate director of Habitat for Humanity International's Women Build Program (habitat.org).



Photos: Habitat for Humanity International's Women Build Program