

## **SCWBA to fund student builders**

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JANESVILLE

Janesville high school students will keep on building houses, but they won't be doing it for charity anymore.

The advanced construction classes at Craig and Parker high schools have built Habitat for Humanity houses for the past 14 years.

No longer.

The students will build houses for members of the South Central Wisconsin Builders Association starting in September.

The result should be even more opportunities for students who want to get into construction and related trades, said Steve Huth, who coordinates the school district's vocational programs.

"Habitat no longer has funding to support this program, so they decided to step aside, and the builders association stepped up to the plate," Huth said.

Habitat for Humanity stopped funding the projects two years ago, but the UAW and General Motors stepped in and paid for the classes to continue making Habitat houses, using proceeds from the UAW/GM raffle, Huth said.

Now, the builders association will finance the houses. The association will designate a builder member to be the contractor each year. Students will build the house on the builder's lot while working closely with the contractor and subcontractors. The builder then will sell the house.

The builder will recoup his costs, and any excess from the sale will go into a fund to keep the program going, said Carol Engebretson, the association's executive officer.

It is hoped that a fund will build up so that eventually financing won't be needed.

The builders association has a vested interest in working with the schools: It hopes to get more youths to enter the building trades, which need more skilled labor, Engebretson said.

The new partnership will mean that more building-trades people will speak to classes, give tours of work sites and mentor students, Huth said.

Students also could have more opportunities to get hands-on experience not only in construction but also trades such as masonry, electrical or plumbing, through the already established Youth Apprenticeship program, Huth said.

The builders association already runs student chapters at Parker and Craig. Those contacts should grow, Engebretson said.

Engebretson said the arrangement would be different from the Habitat houses because the builder will want things done according to the builder's specifications.

The contractor and subcontractors may have a more active role, but students still will be able to learn in a real-life situation, she said.

The students might learn about things they didn't in a Habitat project, such as the installation of a Corian countertop or a ceramic floor, Engebretson said.

Webco of Janesville has agreed to be the first builder to work with the students, Engebretson said. The first site will be on North Wright Road.

Teacher Joe Kruser will continue to supervise the students. Between 25 and 30 students participate in the class each year. Most go on to work in construction or go on to college in construction-related fields, Huth said.