

Satisfaction in helping others HABITAT FOR HUMANITY: Japanese visitors help in blitz
[South Sound Edition]

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Habitat for Humanity

Little boys might like the idea of building a house only to knock it down, but the experience wasn't too fulfilling for Hiroyuki Usuda.

Usuda, an architect from Yokohama City, Japan, came to Auburn last year to build a practice house at Armstrong Homes' headquarters, but the company disassembled it almost as soon as it was finished.

Usuda went home with technical knowledge, but little else. This year, he will carry home the knowledge that he helped create a home for Viola Hamilton and her three children, something he finds far more satisfying.

"This is a real house," Usuda said Sunday during a break in construction of the three-bedroom home, one of four new houses going up this week at South 25th and State streets during Tacoma-Pierce County Habitat for Humanity's annual blitz-build.

Usuda is part of a crew of about 20 Japanese home builders helping with this year's Building on Faith Week, in which some 350 volunteers from more than 50 Pierce County churches build new houses for low-income families.

"It's a good time to know what the American people are doing to help people," Usuda said. "For me, I'm a Christian and I go to church in Japan, so it's nice for me to help out."

Tod Sakai, general manager at Armstrong, got the idea to use the Japanese builders after a visit to the Puyallup Fair. Sakai came across a Habitat for Humanity booth and decided that rather than have his employees take down the company's practice homes each year, the company could put them to use.

Hamilton, who was hard at work on her house Sunday, was happy for the help. "I think it's pretty cool they're here," she said.

The single mother is excited to move out of her Tacoma Housing Authority duplex and into the new home, where she will have a view of Mount Rainier out the kitchen window.

Hamilton, a middle school cook and baker, will move into the house Sunday. Her home, and the three houses next door, will be dedicated at 3 p.m. that day.

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[Illustration]

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Abstract (Document Summary)

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