



## Habitat for humanity going to Florida

By Maggie Samole / *Staff writer*

Spending spring break in Florida usually means parties and lounging on the beach. For members of UPG's chapter of Habitat for Humanity it means something a little different — helping a family build their own home.

For the third straight year, seven students and two staff members will drive nearly 1,000 miles to Walton County, Fla., to help the county's chapter through the Collegiate Challenge program.

One might think it would be difficult to recruit people willing to spend their vacations working, but the UPG Habitat advisor, Brian Root, said he didn't have to twist arms to get volunteers.

"It was totally optional and we were able to get some of our most active members to willingly chip in \$100 to attend," Root said. "I'm sure the fact that the trip is to Florida makes it more lucrative, but I think most of the people who are going on the trip would still be going if it was in Ohio or New Jersey."

Habitat members helped to defray trip costs through various fundraisers including a raffle and carnation sales. The SGA also contributed \$800 to fund the trip. During the week, the workers will spend eight or nine hours a day working on building houses, helping with the early stages of construction.

Melissa Wojtaszek, president of UPG's Habitat for Humanity chapter, will be going on the trip for the third time.

"When we get there, the affiliate members have basically planned our week," Wojtaszek said. "We attend dinners at local churches ... and spend time with the families we are helping."

Wojtaszek said the nearly 1,000 mile drive is an experience in itself. The first year she went, nine people and their luggage were squeezed into a 12-passenger van.

"We have played every car game under the sun, probably stopped at a majority of the rest stops between here and Walton County, caught up on the sleep lost previously in the semester and discovered gas stations are great for meals on the go," Wojtaszek said.

As the trip draws closer, Root is glad to see excitement from those going.

"One of the young ladies going just said to me 'I can't believe it's only three weeks away!'" Root said.

One of the excited members is junior Lisa Rendos. Looking forward to her first trip with the group, Rendos said that the trip is worth the money she put toward it.

“It’s by far the cheapest spring break trip ever, plus we’ll be helping people in the process,” Rendos said. “You can’t really lose...and it’s Florida!”

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