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# DISCA Donates Drywall Labor and Materials

*to Build Houston Habitat for Humanity Homes*

**H**ouston's wall and ceiling contractors are helping low-income families realize the American dream by volunteering their services and materials to build homes through Houston Habitat for Humanity. Since 1989, the Drywall & Interior Systems Contractors Association (DISCA), the local chapter of the Association of the Wall and Ceiling Industries (AWCI), has supplied all the drywall labor and materials to complete a decent living environment for 16 deserving families who previously were forced into substandard housing.

Spearheaded by DISCA's 1990-91 President Dan Clayton, the group's participation in Houston Habitat for Humanity grew out of the desire to get involved in a charitable endeavor. Clayton and his colleagues examined a number of options, but they chose the Houston affiliate of Habitat for Humanity International because it gave DISCA "an excellent opportunity to help other people in a positive way." Habitat for Humanity International is a non-profit organization that has built or renovated more than 10,000 homes worldwide for low income families in the 15 years of its existence. The houses are sold to deserving and responsible families without profit or interest, and the cost of the house is repaid over a fixed period of time. Homeowners are also required to contribute an average of 500 hours of "sweat equity" as part of their quali-



*DISCA members help Houston's Habitat for Humanity.*

fication to buy their new home.

DISCA was also impressed with Habitat's grass-roots volunteer organization. "There's no government and no bureaucracy involved," Clayton noted.

According to Clayton, the DISCA-Houston Habitat for Humanity partnership was a "natural." He explained, "What we do for Habitat is an extension of what our organization's members do on the job--furnish and install drywall."

DISCA's 1989 commitment to Houston Habitat for Humanity was for the labor and materials to drywall six houses. Since then, the group has

finished 11 more homes, for a total donation value of more than \$34,000. Two of the DISCA-drywalled houses were completed during Habitat's July House Raising "Blitz Build" Week, an annual event. And in one of these, all the drywall was hung, taped and floated in just four hours.

Matt Criswell, Houston Habitat for Humanity's construction manager, called this DISCA effort "fantastic." "We couldn't have met our blitz week schedule without them," he added.

A 17-year veteran of the construction business, Criswell noted that speed is welcome in the building of a Habitat home. Exposed electrical wiring

and pipes are easily stolen, but drywall reduces that risk "I can sleep better at night knowing that DISCA is doing the job," Criswell said.

Criswell praised DISCA's professionalism, as well as its speed. Despite the fact that the group, with its 54 member firms, gets no money for the work, "DISCA always gives us their best work and has come through for Habitat every time."

DISCA member firms, contractors and suppliers contribute to the Habitat project based on their abilities and resources. Some, such as U.S. Gypsum Company, provide materials. Others supply labor. As an example, Clayton pointed to one DISCA member who responded to his plea for help by saying, "I don't have any supplies to donate, but I sure can swing a hammer."

According to DISCA's Dan Clayton, his group, as well as Habitat, benefits from their partnership. Working on the homes, he said, gives DISCA members the opportunity to

work together, an unusual situation in the competitive interior construction industry. Even more important, participation in the project "gives you a good feeling that you've accomplished something and made a difference in other people's lives."

Urging other AWC member groups to get involved with their local Habitat projects, Clayton said, "It's a great reward to see the smile on the homeowners' faces. They're ecstatic."

As for Houston Habitat for Humanity, they are ecstatic about DISCA. Said Carl Umland, executive vice president of Houston Habitat for Humanity as well as a member of Habitat for Humanity International's Board of Advisors, "DISCA represents the essence of Habitat in the sense that our group is about people helping people and sharing their wherewithal without concern for personal gain. We're delighted," he continued, "to have DISCA for a Habitat partner."

## **Contributing DISCA Members**

### **Contractors**

Acous-Tex Co., Inc.  
Capital Drywall, Inc.  
DEL Drywall, Inc.  
Drywall Specialties, Inc.  
General Drywall, Inc.  
International Drywall Systems, Inc.  
Kurio Drywall Co., Inc.  
Marek Brothers Co., Inc.  
Olympia Drywall Co., Inc.  
W.C. Scott Interests, Inc.  
United Drywall, Inc.

### **Suppliers**

Builders Gypsum Supply, Inc.  
CSW Supply  
Domtar Gypsum  
Georgia Pacific Corp.  
Gold Bond Building Products, Inc.  
Gulf Coast R & B Supply  
Langwood Lumber Co., Inc.  
Standard Gypsum Co.  
Tejas Materials, Inc.  
United States Gypsum Co., Inc.  
United Tool & Fasteners, Inc.