



UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

BOTHELL

Business Administration Program

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LOCAL CHARITY “REBUILDING TOGETHER” AND UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON, BOTHELL MBA STUDENTS RENOVATE LOCAL RESIDENCE

(Bothell, WA) -- This month, dozens of MBA students at the University of Washington, Bothell will apply lessons learned at school toward real life. They will don work clothes and team up with *Rebuilding Together Seattle*, a nonprofit organization formerly called *Christmas in April*, to organize desperately needed repairs and makeovers on a Bothell residence.

About 30 students have been involved in the renovation project, which involves planning and organizing construction tasks to clean and upgrade the home. The residence needs interior and exterior cleanup, flooring, painting and yard work. For over a month, each student has spent fifteen hours per week planning the project to ensure its success. And from March 2 through 9, each student will put in an additional 24 hours of labor.

MBA student Dawn Palmer remarks, "I've done a fair amount of volunteer work in the past, but due to working full-time and going to school at night, I haven't had time for anything else. Being able to participate in this activity fulfills my desire to be active in our community, as well as being a great chance to learn project management skills."

The project has had its share of challenges; chief of which is a compressed timeframe. "The coordination involved with such an enormous project in a short time in confined space is intense," emphasizes team member Angie Gollnick. "Our biggest challenge ... is actually getting everything done and pleasing our client."

So far, the project has raised \$700 toward their initial goal of \$2,500. Material and labor are just as important as cash. The team has solicited and received donations of safety equipment and inspections, hazardous material testing, gardening and building material, and professional assistance with flooring. To become more efficient, the group has divided itself into self-directing teams responsible for individual project tasks, such as landscaping, interior cleanup and decorating.

The rapid organization and planning has provided valuable experience for the project members. "These projects allow MBA students to plan and execute a project that involves an undefined task, a limited budget (zero to be precise), limited time (only three days) and a real client. They not only learn project management and teaming skills from

the experience, but they also develop a sense of the personal rewards that come from community service,” explains Karen Brown, professor of project management in the MBA Program at UW Bothell.

Rebuilding Seattle is grateful for the help. According to John Thuma, Executive Director of Rebuilding Together, “We hope to gain from the insights and recommendations of having a class full of business professionals offer advice on how to improve things here.”

Rebuilding Together has set a goal of growing ten percent per year, which is still outpaced by the number of requests they receive. Recent economic events haven’t helped. According to Thuma, “For 2002, we will see a slight contraction in the program due to the economic slowdown and corresponding reduction in giving by companies and individuals.” He says individuals who want to help can send donations or volunteer their construction skills.

Rebuilding Together Seattle is part of a national nonprofit organization which helps people who own their own home but because of age, physical limitations, or income, are not able to cover the cost of home repairs. Typically, these individuals are elderly, but younger families and nonprofit facilities such as schools, shelters, and daycare centers serving large populations of low-income people are also included in their annual efforts. In 2001, the Seattle chapter coordinated over 2,000 volunteers to work on over 50 houses in the area.

For more information about the Seattle chapter of Rebuilding Together, contact John Thuma at jthuma@rtseattle.org, or visit www.rtseattle.org. For more information on the MBA Program that focuses on managing in technology-oriented businesses at the

University of Washington, Bothell, contact Don Whitney, Manager, MBA Program at
425-352-5434 or visit www.bothell.washington.edu/bus.

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