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The frigid air nipped at any exposed skin while the boys' exhausted gasps condensed into a white fog. The mass of bundled boys slowly erected the pale plywood frames into the skeleton of a house. Giving up their much-needed days of rest, upperclassmen temporarily forfeited the comfort of their homes to provide a family with a home for a lifetime.

Partnering with Habitat for Humanity, an international organization dedicated to providing affordable housing to families who otherwise couldn't afford it, students for eight years have joined together to construct houses. Bonding together under the sun, wind and rain, students diligently work for eight weeks in a row, dedicating the house on the ninth week.

"I think Habitat is definitely a bonding experience for St. Mark's guys," senior Vik Pattabi, one of the two heads of the project, said. "As the project progresses, you see a lot of the same guys coming back each week."

Along with Pattabi, junior Kevin Kim helped initiate the project because of its visible returns to the community. Committing countless hours of their busy lives to the project, students like Pattabi

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Marksman find bonding experience as they work on latest Habitat home

FOCUS With intense precision, senior Brody Ladd steadies his hand as he guides the circular saw across the plank. Ladd was one of scores of Marksman who worked up to nine weeks on the project for Habitat for Humanity.

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under construction.

Students work to build a better Dallas.



HOME BUILDING
Trying to secure a wall in place, (1) senior Oscar Garcia del Rio prepares to hammer a nail in place. Both safe and warm with his hard-hat and beanie combination, (2) senior Ben Wilner swings his hammer at a nail. (3) Director of Community Service Jorge Correa and senior Nathan Ondracek discuss the best way to tackle the task at hand. Hard at work, Marksmen and Hockaday students and teachers (4) focus on individual responsibilities in order to complete the construction of the house.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 66 and Kim love working together to see the project come to fruition.
"Habitat for Humanity is one of the best examples of a project that you can really see the impact of the hard labor that you put in every weekend," Kim said. "I thought I could share my love for the project and convince others to go help with the building of the house."
The house, located on McBroom Street in downtown Dallas, provided a quality home to a family in need. The students worked as a cohesive unit to build the house in nine Saturdays in January.

February and March. In the first day, the pre-built wooden frames were painstakingly put together to form the skeleton of the house. During the next two, the trusses and roof were erected. In the following weeks, students placed the siding, painted the walls, and gardened the yard.
From the dead of winter to the beginning of spring, the lot transforms from a bed of grass into a warm home. One more citizen of Dallas would be without a home this year if it weren't for the initiative shown by Pattabi and Kim.
"I've always thought that Habitat was a fun and rewarding project," Kim said. "At the beginning of the year, I didn't see much information on how Habitat was going to happen, so I went and asked Sr. Correa if I could work on it."
Likewise, Pattabi's devotion to the project lead him to apply to be head.

"I've probably worked around 100 hours over the past two years and will probably put in 80 more," Pattabi said. "The the supervisors at Habitat told Sr. Correa that they liked working with me and wanted me to take a bigger role, so I applied to be head."
Student leadership is key to the success of the Habitat house every year.
"Forty to 60 students come together every year to help build," Pattabi said. "I think it's really special how a group of guys can come together and create a home for someone."

Habitat was a great experience to really help out in the community. I learned just how much work goes into making a house and how much a house means to the people who will live in it. It was fun to work with my friends while also giving back to the community.
—sophomore Crawford McCrary



TEAMWORK Intently listening to the instruction of a construction specialist, sophomores Reid Johannsen and Crawford McCrary prepare to work on the framework of the house, one of the most crucial pieces of the project.

I love Habitat because more than any other project I am able to see the fruits of my labor. In the end, I can see a completed house for a deserving family, and that is something truly remarkable. Additionally, I love being able to watch Marksmen come together and really help the community. — senior Vik Pattabi

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