



LIFE AT HOME

DECOR • DOMESTIC ARTS • RENOVATIONS • RENTALS • RESALE

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Photo illustration: Kathryn Molcak, Calgary Herald

AROUND THE HOUSE

Design stars take centre stage

EVENTS • If you're looking for advice and inspiration for decorating, renovating and landscaping projects, don't miss the Calgary Home + Garden Show. It runs Feb. 28 to March 2 at the Roundup Centre with more than 450 home and garden specialists, plus some star guests: ■ Sarah Richardson, from HGTV's Sarah's House; ■ Kelly Deck, from HGTV's Take It Outside; ■ Janette Ewen, projects editor at Chatelaine magazine; ■ Alykhan Velji and Tyler Vreeling, Alberta-based designers; and ■ Lori Mitchell, from Tomboy Tools.

Special sections within the show include the Home Entertaining Experience, the Sustainable Living Section, the Tea Garden, Urban Gardens, and Gardening for Grades. Tickets are \$13 for adults, \$7 for seniors (aged 60 and over) and children (aged 7 to 14). Buy them online at calgaryhomeshow.com and you can save \$2 on regular adult admission.

— Calgary Herald

Visualize your colour

DECOR • It's mighty difficult to envision how a paint colour will look on your walls, but an online tool from paint company Sherwin-Williams will give you a head start.

Their "Colour Visualizer" lets you select from a variety of sample room photos, and play with the wall colour based on the hues from their paint menu. Check it out at sherwin-williams.com: click on "homeowner," then "colour ideas & tools" and then "colour visualizer."

Once you've narrowed down your choices, you can drop by their Calgary locations at 3330 Sunridge Way N.E. or 4411 1st St. S.E. (call 265-3323 for directions and hours) to pick up a Colour to Go paint sample container — then try it out on your own walls at home.

— Calgary Herald

Nighttime break-ins

SAFETY • Calgary police are reminding residents to be security conscious after a number of nighttime break-ins occurred recently in the southwest community of Cedarbrae.

Thieves entered the homes through sliding patio doors or basement windows of the residences. In two cases, the victims awoke to find their front doors open after the break-ins.

Police have charged a suspect, but remain concerned when someone attempts to enter an occupied residence, particularly at night. Homeowners are encouraged to ensure lower-level windows are secured, especially at night, that doors are locked and yards and house exteriors are adequately lit.

For more tips about crime prevention at home, visit calgarypolice.ca and click on "crime prevention unit."

— Calgary Herald

YVONNE JEFFERY
CALGARY HERALD

It's 8:15 on a weekday January morning, and the sun is just starting to lighten the sky over Calgary's northwestern reaches. Inside the Habitat for Humanity home in Evanston, sheets of drywall are piled up in the living room, waiting for the day's eight volunteers to down coffee and don toolbelts.

In Puducherry, India, Corinne Wilkinson — Tourism Calgary's vice-president of marketing and sales — has finished her day on the Habitat site 30 minutes from the city. Tomorrow, she'll make the white-knuckled bus ride back out to the beachside village that was devastated during the 2004 tsunami; she's part of seven groups that will build 30 family homes there.

In Rosebud, northeast of Calgary, the Lewandowski family has just returned from Mexico, where they joined their extended family over Christmas to build a home in Vicente Guerrero for a family of seven, courtesy of the non-profit Build-Baja program.

From drywalling at home to laying bricks under a tropical sun, this work is almost fully volunteer driven. As a result, countless families — a dozen last year in Calgary alone — are benefitting from homes that are a far cry from their previous living conditions, while the volunteers gain renovation skills and a sense of camaraderie.

"We have just over 500 in-

BUILDING HOPE

Volunteering boosts home renovation skills — and community spirit

dividual volunteers who come to the construction sites," says Myrna Knoll, volunteer resources manager for Habitat's Calgary operation. The volunteers commit to two full days a month and work on almost every element of a home: framing, roofing, painting, moulding and more.

In Evanston, they're joined by the single mom whose house this will be, as she's putting in some of her 300 required hours of "sweat equity" — but she's quick to say that this is about her eight-year-old daughter, who has Down syndrome and epilepsy.

"This is her home," she explains, pointing out the



Courtesy, Rob Spence

Corinne Wilkinson applies a layer of cement over bricks on a Habitat for Humanity home in India.

wide, wheelchair-friendly doorways and pocket doors, and the modified main-floor bathroom with a tub-less shower. "If anything happens to me, I know that she'll always be safe here."

Like many others, the family ran into trouble when the real estate market spiked beyond their reach and their rented apartment became condominiums. With her daughter needing specialized modifications that most rental properties couldn't

accommodate, she turned to Habitat. "This is like an old-fashioned barn raising — this home has a feeling behind it of friendship and community," she says.

Reaching out

"Our homeowners come from all walks of life," says Knoll. "(But) most of them are one paycheck away from a crisis... we had one family living in a basement suite that had mushrooms

growing out of the carpet and silverfish everywhere. The child was embarrassed to have friends over. Now they're living in a proper home, her friend base has grown. A safe, stable environment contributes to a child's betterment and health, and their self-esteem. This provides stability, development and self-esteem for the parents, as well."

"Children are the important factor in this," agrees Larry Shahan. A retired commercial contractor, he commits more than 500 hours a year to Habitat in Calgary. "There's such a need for this type of affordable housing in our community... it's nice to be able to help somebody else get on their feet and succeed."

Shahan is a crew leader — a volunteer with building skills who guides other volunteers on the work sites. It's one of the roles that Habitat needs most in Calgary, but he echoes Knoll's assertion that anyone — with or without skills — is welcome, as Habitat provides training for everyone.

"You get to do everything, which is interesting. Today it's drywall, last week it was millwork," Shahan says. "And it's not about how many walls you can put up in a day. We want to produce a top-notch product for our customers, so if something's not done right the first time, we can always do it again — it's only our labour, and it's important for the volunteers to have fun."

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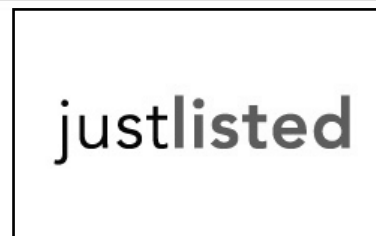
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