

CAC Corner: June is National Home Ownership Month | CPD

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Many people don't know that June is designated as "Homeownership Month." June 2015 is even more exciting, because agencies across the country are celebrating the 50th year of the Mutual Self Help Program and the completion of 50,000 homes! There are approximately 100 organizations nationwide participating in the Mutual Self-Help Housing Program. Mutual Self-Help Housing consists of families working together to build their own homes. With the assistance of skilled construction supervisors, a group of generally four to ten families is formed. These families provide at least 65 percent of the labor necessary to build the homes. Working together with other families, they learn valuable construction skills and create strong neighborhood bonds. Many people are surprised to learn that there is no construction experience required; licensed construction supervisors are there every step of the way to teach and oversee the work families do. In addition, tasks such as electrical, plumbing and HVAC work are completed by professionals.

The months spent building can save the owner/builders as much as \$20,000 on the purchase price of their home. This "sweat equity" also acts as the down payment and means the owners won't need to pay private mortgage insurance. Add to this interest rates starting at 1 percent and many families find out that their new house payment will be less than their current rent! Mortgage payments are based on a family's income; the house payment is guaranteed to be affordable. And as a bonus, families don't make payments during construction.

Families can choose their own house plan, lot, roofing, paint, carpet, flooring and cabinets, making each house unique to its owner-builders. Homes are built with Energy Star features; many of the homes are fully Energy Star Certified, saving the owners more money each month in utility bills (and in most states, they also qualify for Energy Star rebates.)

In addition to a new home, families gain valuable skills in budgeting, maintenance and home repair. Each participant is given first-time homebuyer education, which provides great information to anyone becoming a homeowner.

There are many benefits to the Mutual Self Help Housing program; visit the [national website](#) for stories and pictures from across the country and to find an agency offering this program near you. If you would like more information about the program in Utah, call Neighborhood Nonprofit Housing at (435) 753-1112.