



PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Homeowners swing hammer alongside MLK Day Volunteers**

Americus, Ga. (Jan. 18, 2010) — A group of volunteers with The Fuller Center for Housing made it a “day on” Monday in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr.

The Americus-Sumter Fuller Center, an organization that builds and renovates homes for low-income families, is partnering with two community members to build a handicap-accessible duplex on Elizabeth Street.

Volunteers helped the walls come together and the foundation was poured from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on the national holiday.

“I came out because it’s a day of service, and I enjoy getting into the community to do something good,” Alyssa Hostetler, a volunteer from Americus, said.

Thaddeus Harris and Chuck Davis, the new homeowners, were among those out working on the home.

Davis was born with cerebral palsy and the disease progressed during his adulthood to the point where a wheelchair was necessary.

He was selected to partner with the Fuller Center in March and is thrilled to finally be working on it.

“I’m learning things,” he said. “I’ve never built anything in my life.” Throughout the day he tried his hand at hammering, moving lumber and had a certain gleam in his eye while he ran the power saw.

Davis has a degree in Fine Arts and taught art in schools for a while. Now he enjoys watercolor, printmaking and cross-stitch, but hasn’t had room to do much of this in his current small apartment. He plans to devote the extra bedroom in his new home to art projects.

Harris has building experience. He was working construction when injured in 2001 after being thrown off the back of a truck.

“For about nine years I’ve just been existing,” he said. Confined to a wheelchair, he moved in with his parents and survival was often all he accomplished in a day.

But he glimpsed hope in October when he heard The Fuller Center was looking for another homeowner for the other side of their handicap-accessible duplex.

“Before, I was living for me. These people are making me want to be more like them,” Harris said, pointing to the volunteers hammering plywood that will become the wall he and Davis will share.

Davis and Harris met for the first time Monday. They look forward to getting to know each other.

“We are two different people, but we are the same,” said Harris. “We have the same need. We can watch out for each other.”

Americus’ Tom McFarlane is a member of the Americus-Sumter Fuller Center board and he helped organize the build on Monday. He noted the significance of the holiday.

“They say: It’s a day on, not a day off,” he said. “This is a way to be on and to make positive change in our community.

“We will later hopefully have more volunteers opportunities reflecting the diversity of our community,” he said. The Fuller Center plans to partner with a variety of churches for sponsorship and volunteer projects.

“I am so delighted that so many people came out to help build Chuck and Thaddeus's house today,” Kirk Lyman-Barner, chair of the local Fuller Center board, said. “The Fuller Center encourages all of its Faith Builder partners across the United States and around the world to create service opportunities in honor of Dr. King. The day of voluntarism symbolizes the attainability of community renewal.”

The duplex is partially sponsored by First Presbyterian Church in Americus—whose members take part in the Faith Builders program, which guides churches who want to work on or organize their own Fuller Center projects.

The Fuller Center is a nonprofit ministry that partners with low-income families to build and renovate homes. To learn more about the Faith Builders or other Fuller Center programs, visit the Fuller Center Web site: [www.fullercenter.org](http://www.fullercenter.org).