Rehabilitating Existing Houses for Greater Muncie Habitat for Humanity
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Janet Fick, Instructor in the Department of Technology, Architect, LEED-AP, has led an immersive learning project with Greater Muncie Habitat for Humanity since 2012 redesigning 11 homes for families in need.

Greater Muncie Habitat for Humanity has become dependent on the work completed by this class to complete their mission of affordable housing for lower income families. Lindsey Arthur, Chief Executive Officer of Greater Muncie Habitat for Humanity, stated the immersive learning classes’ contributions have “enabled Muncie Habitat to be more effective in preparation for builds, more efficient with staff time, and has given us a huge advantage in helping our partner families to understand the building process. The students benefit greatly from getting off campus, entering blighted homes, seeing how Habitat is transforming our community and especially from meeting our future homeowners.”

By collaborating with their clients throughout the process, the students gained experience in utilizing the needs and wants of Habitat and the partner family, to produce a final project that accomplished these goals. According to Corey Clark, architecture major in the Spring 2014 course, “Being able to work with the real client who had needs for herself and her children really allowed the team to design a practical and affordable solution to retrofitting an existing home.”

According to Andrew Arthur, architecture major in the Spring 2014 course, “This class allowed me to work with a real client for the first time, an invaluable and rewarding experience.” Interacting with the partner families was an eye-opener for the students and gave them a better understanding of those less fortunate. According to Molly Spear, interior design major in the Spring 2014 course, “Everyone deserves a well-designed home and it warmed my heart to be able to help Habitat design these homes for deserving people who fell on hard times.”

The class impacted the students on a professional level. Including these projects on their resumes/portfolios showed real world ability. Ben McCafferty, construction management major in the Fall 2013 course, added “Various aspects of our course aided a great deal in my internship this summer with estimating”. The class allowed them to demonstrate concretely to future employers their ability to work with other majors to create an actual project that was then followed through to reality. According to Devin Doster, construction management major in the Spring 2013 course, “The course provided a unique experience in being able to work with students from related majors like architecture and interior design.”
The class has had a lasting effect on Habitat and their partner families, since with our assistance Habitat was able to rehabilitate more houses. To quote Lindsey Arthur, our immersive learning class “has completely changed Muncie Habitat’s organizational capacity”.

In conclusion, to quote Lindsey Arthur, “This class is a win-win for both Muncie Habitat and for Ball State”. The students and Instructor wholeheartedly agree.