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Helping Hands

Each month, Helping Hands features a mortgage professional or group that has volunteered to lend a hand to others in need

Darrick Meneken

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Name Granite Commercial Management

Project Habitat for Humanity build

Site New Orleans

How This past December, 10 attendees of Granite Commercial Management's 10th-annual Strategies for Success in Construction Lending seminar helped paint the inside of a three-bedroom house in New Orleans. The house was in the city's 9th ward, which had heavy flooding during hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005.

As part of a project for Habitat for Humanity, the volunteers worked 7.5 hours the day before the seminar. All seminar attendees had the option of attending the free volunteer event.

Granite also donated \$3,000 to the Louisiana Disaster Recovery Foundation, which works to improve housing and living conditions for people impacted by the hurricanes.

Why In 1999, Granite Commercial Management started Strategies for Success in Construction Lending as an educational and networking event for construction lenders and industry participants. This past year's seminar was the first to include the volunteer opportunity, says Penny Roach, Granite's executive vice president and director of sales and administration.

"We felt as if it were a way for us to give back to the community," she says. "People really enjoyed the event ... and we plan to continue such volunteer events wherever we take the seminar."

Granite originally connected with Habitat for Humanity in 2005 during a companywide "day of service" in Denver. That experience left a desire to participate in similar projects, Roach says.

Impact On top of contributing to a Habitat for Humanity build, the volunteers learned about the status of New Orleans' redevelopment efforts from Louisiana Disaster Recovery Foundation representatives who attended the seminar.

"There is still a great deal to be done [to rebuild the city]," volunteer Richard Lloyd says, "yet it is important to remember every project counts toward the restoration of the area."

Granite's 11th Strategies for Success seminar will take place in March in Denver.

Try it habitat.org, louisianahelp.org and SSCLseminar.com

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