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**THE THOMS ESTATE & ASHEVILLE AREA HABITAT FOR HUMANITY
PARTNER IN PIONEERING DECONSTRUCTION PROJECT.**

Asheville, NC: Who would have ever thought that taking down a house would be a great way to build affordable housing?

That's exactly the plan, though, when volunteers gather at The Thoms Estate, 75 Elk Mountain Scenic Highway, April 23rd to 25th at 9 am to deconstruct a home that was originally slated for demolition.

The private residence, known as "the yellow house" sits on land that is being developed by Global Development Resources (GDR) in cooperation with the heirs of Harold Thoms, who purchased the property in the 1950's. Since the house did not fit in with the development plans, the only alternative was to move it or demolish it.

That is, until Dale McCourt, chief operating officer of GDR, caught a television segment on PBS about Habitat for Humanity.

"The program showed how Habitat for Humanity was developing the expertise to salvage the valuable components of homes before they were torn down and then re-selling them to help fund their projects," said McCourt, who immediately thought of the yellow house.

He took the idea of partnering with Habitat for Humanity to Selene Thoms, who approved it enthusiastically.

"All I can say is 'Thank goodness for PBS,'" said McCourt, "Had I not seen that program, we might have lost a tremendous opportunity."

The next step was Asheville Area Habitat for Humanity (AAHH), to determine if the local chapter had embraced the national program. As luck would have it, they were ahead of the curve.

"We've been trying our hand at deconstruction for the last nine months or so," said Paul Reeves, Habitat's Home Store development manager. "The Thoms Estate project is about our fifteenth deconstruction project."

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Now the project is in the hands of Gary Nelson, project manager for The Thoms Estate.

“I was really happy to hear about the Habitat for Humanity partnership,” said Nelson. “The yellow house had been remodeled in recent years and it just seemed such a shame for all of that to go to waste. Now much of it will be reused. To top it off, the profits will benefit a great charity.”

Asheville Area Habitat for Humanity will have volunteers on site Wednesday and Thursday, April 23rd and 24th. On Friday, April 25th, volunteers from The Thoms Estate will finish the job, with an eye toward recycling as much of the building materials as possible.

The items to be removed – which include stainless steel appliances, wood cabinets, new windows and hardwood flooring – will be sold to the public at the Habitat Home Store, located at 30 Meadow Road, just north of Biltmore Village.

Proceeds from the Home Store help fund AAHH’s building program. In fact, the Home Store has been so successful that the organization has been able to double its annual house production in just a few years. Today, Asheville Area Habitat for Humanity builds sixteen houses annually in Buncombe County. More than 165 safe, decent and affordable houses have been built by the organization since its inception in 1983.

“We’re delighted to be partnering with Habitat,” said Kent Smith, chief executive officer of GDR. “In all of our projects, it’s important for us to be a good neighbor. And I believe this collaboration is not only good for The Thoms Estate and Asheville Area Habitat for Humanity, but for the community as well. By promoting our event, we hope to bring attention to this innovative program and encourage other builders and developers in the area to participate.”