On June 30th and July 2nd, Self-Help Participants in Elk Ridge and Heber celebrated the completion of their Self-Help Homes with Open House and Ribbon Cutting celebrations. 2015 was a special year for the Mutual Self-Help Housing (MSH) Program. It has been 50 years since its beginnings and it reached a milestone of completing its 50,000th home. Self-Help Homes participants in Elk Ridge released balloons to represent the homes completed through the program. Everyone in attendance then enjoyed a catered meal from JDawgs. At the Open House program, Jim and Adele Chase were presented with Self-Help Homes first “Volunteers of the Year” Award. They have spent many hours volunteering for families that have built on the MSH Program. Self-Help Homes appreciates their generous help and wanted to recognize them for their efforts. Families in Heber also opened their beautiful homes for interested people to walk through. Both events were great successes. Congratulations to all 20 families!
May 27, 2015 brought changes to Self-Help Homes Board of Trustees. Denton Alexander had been serving as its Board President for 17 years. Denton is a CPA and brought many years of helpful accounting experience to the board. His expertise along with his kind and gentle personality will be missed greatly. On the same day, Lynn Robbins who had been serving as the Board Vice-President was also released. She brought much experience and insight and served on the board for 17 years. MaryAnne Christiansen also was released from the board as her husband was called to be the Mission President of the Maryland Baltimore mission. We will surely miss all three of these wonderful people and thank them for their dedicated service.

Scott McCauley began serving as a Board Member in November 2012. He quickly became a great asset to the board and was elected as President of the board at Denton Alexander’s release. Scott and his wife, Marni, were past participants of the Mutual Self-Help Program and with that brings a great understanding of our mission. We are grateful for his willingness to serve. Other new members of the Board of Trustees are: John Baer, AnneMarie Howard and Heidi Sanders. We thank them for their service.

Self-Help Homes Moves Into New Offices

Tuesday, October 13, 2015 was a big day for Self-Help Homes. We packed up all of our office belongings and moved them into our newly purchased and remodeled offices. We moved from our offices in the 820 North Business Park where we had been since January 2005. Having six (6) larger offices and an open area for our Construction Team, it will allow us room to grow in the years to come. The office building also includes a Staff Room, Board Room, Pre-Construction Meeting/Selection Room, Tool & Storage Area, five (5) restrooms, a beautiful lobby, an open work area and a much awaited Employee Breakroom. The dark wood accents and cabinets, stone wall and stained concrete floors bring a rich beauty to the interior of the new offices. The exterior received a fresh coat of paint and the front of the building will include our new Self-Help Homes sign and some window skins accenting families building their Mutual Self-Help homes. Our more convenient location is in downtown Provo. We are located a half block North of Center Street on 400 West. Come and see us!
Thank you for your donations and continued support of the Mutual Self-Help Program. It is greatly appreciated!

WHERE IS SHH BUILDING?

ELK RIDGE

Self-Help Homes is currently gathering families for our last group of 10 families in the Elk Ridge Meadows Subdivision.

TOQUERVILLE

We are also gathering families for our first group in Southern Utah. We have recently taken over the Washington County Mutual Self-Help Program and are in the process of purchasing lots in Toquerville, Utah.

HEBER

Self-Help Homes has purchased some land in Heber that is in the process of being developed. We are very excited about this new development and hope to have it ready sometime in Spring or early Summer 2016.

If you are interested in building in any of these areas, please contact us for information to apply for the program.

Four Families Earn Referral Bonus Checks

Just in time for the holidays, four families were rewarded for referring their friends and families to the Mutual Self-Help Program. Self-Help Homes paid $500 Referral Bonus checks to three (3) families for their referrals. The families that received these referral bonuses are: Jeremy & Amy Chapman, Craig & Lauren Jensen and Tiffany Pust. David & Jessica Durrant earned a $250 check for being the fourth family to refer someone to the program. Thanks for your referrals! Keep them coming!

Brad Bishop, Self-Help Homes Executive Director, shared a video presentation about the Mutual Self-Help Program in Utah County. The National Rural Housing Coalition reported on 50 Years of Mutual Self-Help Housing at a Capitol Hill Briefing on November 17, 2015. 50,000 families have built sweat equity and gained affordable, decent housing over the last 50 years thanks to the Self-Help Housing Program through USDA-Rural Development. Please see the press release for the NRHC Mutual Self-Help Housing Program Report:  http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/national-rural-housing-coalition-reports-on-50-years-of-mutual-self-help-housing-at-capitol-hill-briefing-today-300180252.html?tc=eml_cleartime
We heard about the Self-Help program through a string of incidents that can only be described as divine intervention. The minute we heard about it we knew it was for us and we started the application the next day. We were so excited and quickly told everyone. We took the packet of house plans everywhere we went so that we could show anyone who asked and shared our excitement openly.

We knew going into this project that it would be difficult. We knew that the strain it would place on our family would be immense. However, we were committed; we knew this struggle would bring great blessings. The group was split into smaller teams and we were the first team to begin work as we started laying the green plate along the foundation walls. We made arrangements for our two children so that we could be together as a couple and those first few nights were long but so fun! Kieran’s father started coming down from West Jordan to help and his sacrifice was instrumental in us getting all our hours each week.

The weeks were long and if it weren’t for moving in with my parents during the build I probably would have gone crazy. It was difficult not to see our daddy every night but any time we could spend as a family was made that much more special. Simple opportunities to grab some dinner at Wendy’s became the highlight of our week.

Soon we began to see progress on our home and bare walls never looked so good! It brought us great joy to walk on our plywood floor and to build our stairs, even if it was in the pouring rain. When it started to snow we welcomed it, snow was so much easier to build in than rain. However, it too gave us trouble. Those winter nights chill you to the bone and I didn’t last through many of them before I couldn’t do it anymore. Luckily, Kieran had his dad coming out every night to help so my absence wasn’t detrimental.

Unfortunately, the winter months brought additional struggles but we strove to stay positive and focused on the incredible opportunity that we were blessed to be part of. The excitement mounted when cabinets were delivered and installed in the spring, and when sod was laid in the early summer we could almost taste the finish. We loved taking our kids over to see their room and to tell them that Daddy built their house.

It truly was the hardest thing we’ve ever done physically, mentally, and emotionally. However, we would do it again in a heartbeat. Rather than straining our marriage, the time spent apart just made us appreciate each other that much more and we cherished every moment together as a family. We were so blessed to have our family’s support during this time. I would not have been able to spend so many evenings alone had it not been for them (we were also pregnant with our third child). We had built in babysitters who moved their schedules around so they could be available for us.

Now that we have moved in, we see that the blessings of the program are more than simply owning a home. Our relationship with Kieran’s dad is stronger than it has ever been and his life has been immensely blessed from his service. Kieran grew in self-confidence and my appreciation and respect for Kieran’s sacrifice has blessed both of our lives. We know that we were led to this program and not a day goes by that we are not grateful for the opportunity to build with Self-Help Homes.