

## College students ‘blitz build’ new Salvation Army shelter

By Sydney Fong –

Ninety [Chico State University](#) (CSUC) students are spending their entire nine-day, spring break helping construct The Salvation Army’s new transitional living facility in Chico.

They’re currently five days into the project, which began Friday, and concludes on Saturday.



“To be able to give back is going to benefit the community and our professional life as well,” said Justin Bestoes, Chico State senior and student project manager. “To give up your spring break says a lot about the students. I [would] rather do this than anything else.”

CSU’s College of Engineering, Computer Science and Construction (ECC) partnered with The Salvation Army for the nine-day construction ‘blitz’ of the new Ann and Emmett Skinner Transitional Living Shelter, which will serve single-parent families who have successfully transitioned out of The Salvation Army Chico’s [Adult Rehabilitation Program](#).

More than a year in planning, the estimated \$500,000 project involves nearly 200 volunteers, 20 industry suppliers, subcontractors and sponsors and financial support from local benefactors. Local residents Ann and Emmett Skinner and other local donors helped fund the two 1,600-square-foot duplexes.

“I know Chico needs something like this really badly,” said Emmett Skinner who donated \$250,000 with his wife. “This [project] shows me how the city, Salvation Army and university can come and all work together.”

Students have participated in nearly every aspect of the project, including: applying for the use permit; managing the public review process; creating estimates and schedules; coordinating with local utilities; and planning site safety and logistics. The estimated student contribution is valued at approximately \$100,000.

“I think this new program will serve as a beacon of hope,” Envoy Dennis Stumpf, Chico Corps officer. “We want to see people come in here and succeed and become functioning members of society.”

Students, staff, faculty, advisors and other community volunteers begin construction activities daily at 6 a.m. and continue until 10 p.m each day. Each seven-hour shift consists of 50 to 60 volunteers hammering, cutting and laboring to aid in the successful completion of the project.

The 20-person student leadership team planned for the two duplex units to be Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design ([LEED](#)) Platinum-certified, the highest rating for LEED-certified green buildings. The homes will also include high-efficiency heating and air conditioning equipment, instant water heaters, drought tolerant landscaping, LED lighting, high-efficiency appliances and solar electricity.

The project is the latest of an annual construction the ECC does to assist those in need. In recent years, CSU students participated in reconstruction home projects at hurricane-damaged areas in Joplin, Mo., and New Orleans, La.

“We just don’t do any project,” said James O’Bannon, Chico State Construction Management professor. “We want to make sure our students are involved in something to meet the unmet needs.”