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To: [Archive](#); [Shelly L Armstrong](#)
Subject: Ferris Softball Team Builds Homes
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Attachments: [FSU Softball Team.jpg](#)

Included below is a press release regarding the Ferris State University Softball team, which spent time volunteering for Habitat for Humanity during the NCAA Division II Spring Championships Festival in Houston. Further information is available by contacting Leah Nixon, assistant director of News Services.

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Ferris softball team helps build homes, hope in Houston

BIG RAPIDS – Rachel Wade, like many of her fellow Ferris State University student-athletes, swelled with a sense of pride as she joined hundreds of her peers in a concerted effort to create homes and hope for families in need.

Last week, the National Collegiate Athletic Association joined with Habitat for Humanity International as part of the weeklong Division II Spring Championships Festival in Houston. With roughly 800 student-athletes taking part in various national championship sporting events in Houston, including Ferris' softball team, the opportunity to give something back to a local community was too good to pass up. The NCAA and Habitat for Humanity teamed up to help build 10 houses in south Houston during teams' breaks in competition.

For Wade, a redshirt freshman student-athlete from Canton, having the opportunity to lend a helping hand to people in need was a major highlight of Ferris' five-day stay in Texas for the national softball championships. Some of the recipients of the new homes were victims of Hurricane Katrina who evacuated New Orleans and ended up in places like Houston and elsewhere around the United States.

“It’s great for us not only to be able to come down here to compete in the softball nationals, but also to be able to do something for families and to just, in general, help others,” said Wade, a Bulldog outfielder who helped lead the Bulldog softball team to a fifth-place finish at the championships in Houston’s Memorial Park. “It’s a great feeling to know so many student-athletes came from all over the country and were able to help make a better way of life for families here in Houston.”

This spring’s effort was the largest building project in the collaboration between the NCAA and Habitat for Humanity since 2005. The two organizations have worked together to construct low-income houses for families in Houston, Pensacola, Fla., and Indianapolis.

“It’s very fulfilling to help others who are in need and it’s really a small thing we can do to help other people get back on their feet,” said sophomore Rhea Flores, a Dearborn Heights native, who is a pitcher and designated hitter for the Bulldogs. “Being down at the festival was one of the best times of my life and being able to do something like this, for Habitat for Humanity, was definitely a part of the great time I had.”

In addition to the Bulldog softball team, athletes from all across the country in sports like lacrosse, tennis and golf were involved in the effort as they traded in their bats, rackets and athletic helmets for saws, hammers and hard hats.

“It’s a great feeling knowing you’re doing something to help others who really need it,” said sophomore second baseman Amanda Harrington, a native of St. Joseph. “Sometimes we can take a lot of things for granted and this is good because it helps us get out and do something to help other people.”

Important lessons can be learned by this partnership between the NCAA and Habitat for Humanity, according to Ferris Athletics Director Tom Kirinovic.

“These are important and valuable lessons for our student-athletes being down in Houston and taking part in this effort by the NCAA and Habitat for Humanity,” he said. “There are so many times in life where we spend so much time worrying about what’s going on with ourselves and we don’t spend enough time doing things to help others. It was really rewarding to listen to a husband and wife of one of the homes built speak about how much it meant to them to have a place to live. The NCAA’s work with Habitat for Humanity has been a tremendous and worthwhile cause that teaches lessons beyond athletics that I think will serve our student-athletes for the rest of their lives.”

- 30 -

CAPTION – Ferris State University softball players Lynsay Weaver of Bay City (foreground) and Katie Kraai of Zeeland (background) help build a home in Texas. The two Bulldog softball players and teammates were participating in the effort by Habitat for Humanity to build homes in Houston as part of the 2008 NCAA Division II Spring Championships Festival.

- 30 -



FSU Softball Team.jpg

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