

## **Homebuyer/ Homeowner, “Home Maintenance” Classes offered by St. Tammany Homeownership Center**

**Introduction to tools, power tools and safety-** This is an introductory class for people who are new to the idea of using tools to maintain, repair or renovate their home. We cover all common tools, their use and safety issues. We talk about sheet rock repair, wood repair, ladder safety and smart ways to avoid hazards. This is a, “hands on” class where class members are encouraged to participate.

**Paint, Stain and Finishing-** This is another, “hands on” class where the members are encouraged to practice their newly learned skills and techniques. We discuss the types of paints, tints and finishes. We also go over the various tools used for painting and surface preparation. We discuss staining techniques and the different types of stains as well as the use of spackling, wood putty and caulk.

**Electrical Basics for Home Maintenance-** Here we introduce the homeowner to the idea that their home has an, “electrical system”. We discuss the electrical panel and circuits as a main component of the system. Discuss a general outline of how the circuits are laid out. We talk about the GFI circuits, hot water heater settings, the difference in light bulbs and safe light bulb disposal. Also, we discuss common electrical mistakes and safety issues.

**Plumbing/ Heating and Air Basics for Homeowners-** This class provides a tour of the typical house plumbing system inclusive of the sewage system and the incoming water. We discuss, demonstrate and provide a hands on experience in toilet clog repair, screen cleaning in faucets and P-Trap cleaning. We also discuss the basic workings of HVAC system, common mistakes and critical maintenance issues

**Energy Efficiency, Indoor Air Quality, Green Living-** This class discusses the current energy efficient building trends in home building science. We discuss every system in the house and the major energy savings building guidelines the U.S. Government has suggested. We also discuss indoor air quality and how this has changed with new building practices. Finally we talk about, “green” cleaning as an important component concerning the new building techniques and household maintenance.

**All About Your Yard-** Here we present information covering the basics of yard maintenance. We discuss the lawn care, tree care, bedding plants and vegetable gardens. Insects, weeds, light requirements, watering, recommended plants of our area, trimming and the use of mulch are included in the discussion as well.

**Fire Prevention and Home Safety-**The information given here describes the common ways fire is started in a home, characteristics of fire, smoke alarms and escape plans. Electrical fires, grease fires in the kitchen, portable heaters, the use of generators, Christmas trees are all explored. We also spend time reviewing home safety issues and crime prevention measures.

## List of volunteer presenters we utilize in classes

**Rod Dowie-** Master Gardener since 1999. He has a 60+ year interest in wildlife habitat, native landscaping and trees. He has taught plant care classes at Northlake Nature Center, Camp Salmon and Habitat for Humanity, St. Tammany West. He also taught a citizen forester class for the master gardeners in St Tammany Parish.

**Lara Batchelder**, M.Ed., Certified Homeownership Counselor and Trainer and Licensed Horticulturist. I have been in the field of Counseling/ Training for over 25 years. I have also been an exterior cleaning sub-contractor on a part-time basis for 19 years. I have also worked as a professional painter and helped build my second home. I have a huge interest in building science and native landscaping and have attended many workshops, seminars etc. on these subjects. I have also landscaped 30+ Habitat houses. "My goal is to empower new homebuyers with the skills and knowledge to be successful homeowners for many years to come".

**Nancy Thompson-** is a retired educator and school administrator with 25 years experience. She enjoys teaching others to learn whether it is in the classroom or planning a garden. Nancy became involved with the Habitat For Humanity St. Tammany West since 2002 with various volunteer organizations that helped the new homeowners to build their own homes. She volunteered to become the chairwoman for the Master Gardeners to help coordinate the installation of the gardens and trees to beautify their new homes. Nancy and her committee will be ready help to instruct and answer any questions that the new homeowners would have concerning their plant installation. Mrs. Thompson has often said that her greatest satisfaction has been to help the new homeowners to build and presently it's her ambition to teach the homeowners how to plant their lovely yards and gardens.

**D. Douglas Hoffman-** Executive Director for National Organization of Remediators and Mold Inspectors. Mr. Hoffman said, "In 2005 following Hurricane Katrina, we were able to assist six Habitat homeowners in Slidell, LA whose homes were flooded with 6' of water. They were told, by others, that their homes were unsalvageable and would never be correctly repaired but we were able to assess the homes, write a unique protocol for the reconstruction of each and assist them in restoring their homes to "like new" condition. Part of our holistic solutions toward better and healthier living deals with an ongoing IAQ (indoor air quality) Management program that trains homeowners on the importance of maintaining good indoor air quality by decluttering and keeping scheduled maintenance on all of the equipment their new home includes. Additionally, we have offered advice to those involved in the construction processes to eliminate potential moisture intrusion problems through training in the areas of building science and the latest construction techniques. A well-informed homeowner creates a healthier lifestyle for themselves and their occupants...that is our goal."