## HABITAT FOR BIRDS AND PEOPLE



PHOTOS BY ARISTIDE ECONOMOPOULOS/THE STAR-LEDGER

Mackenzie Kagle, left, puts together a birdhouse with the help of fellow volunteer Jessica Titterton yesterday. New York Life employees were building birdhouses and garden benches at the company's Parsippany office for Habitat for Humanity homes in Denville.

## Crafting warm touches for new homes

BY AL FRANK STAR-LEDGER STAFF

With bottles of glue and gobs of acrylic paint, the conference room in a Parsippany office building had all the looks of a kindergarten on an arts and crafts rampage.

But this was New York Life Investment Management and the 40 employees — and some of their children — were laboring after hours yesterday for a good cause.

Having already built two Habitat for Humanity homes on Hussa Place in Denville, the employees now were preparing a couple of housewarming gifts: outdoor benches and birdhouses and feeders to hang in the backyard.

The teams of about 10 donated a Saturday every six weeks for 18 months to help build the homes. But the housewarming parties a few weeks back left them hankering to put in a few more hours on top of the 1,000 they had already spent on building foundations, putting up drywall and landscapner.

"Both (homes) have nice wooden porches and so we can just see these benches with the parents sitting there watching their children," said Jim Kucharski, of Green Township, vice president of information technology, who has coordinated New York Life's participation with Habitat for the past three years.

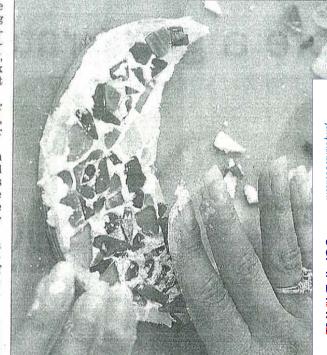
Enter Susie Schub and her Morristown company, Jumpstart, which links corporate volunteer programs with needy entities.

Schub confacted artist Karen Titterton of Whippany. Her dad cut the pine for the birdhouses and feeders, and the kits for the cedar benches and planters were purchased from a garden supply company.

Each is to be embellished in keeping with the families' decorative preferences. The children of one liked animals and plants, while the other favored the extraterrestrial.

So Titterton assembled cutouts of butterflies, dogs, flowers and horses to paint and suns and moons and stars to tile. The items

[See HABITAT, Page 39]



Morristown, NJ 0796 973-540-1142 phone 973-898-1022 fax jumpstartss@aol.com

President

JUMPSTARI

A decorative tile moon is worked on by volunteer Carmalee Foster.