Habitat for Humanity is an international organization that builds homes for low-income people and requires only a very low, zero-interest mortgage and what is called “sweat equity,” in which the homeowner helps build down to an art.

Porch recalled a time in her childhood when men came to her home and took the front door off of her family’s house because her father couldn’t pay the rent. “I don’t have to worry about someone taking the door off my house now,” she told the audience at the dedication ceremony.

People will come by and say, “My house is falling apart. Can I have some of this?” Littrell said, shrugging and glancing across the room at a half-full, economy-sized bucket of white paint.

Poor living conditions are nothing new for many living in Waco. Porch recalled a time in her childhood when men came to her home and took the front door off of her family’s house because her father couldn’t pay the rent.

Porch stroked one of the still-unpainted columns of the patio, looking at her own, new front door, which stood wide open. Just beyond it was the sight of refreshments atop tablecloths. The smell of homemade spaghetti wafted out into the hazy afternoon.

“I wanted to one day own a home,” said Porch, moving a nervous hand through her closely-cropped black hair. “But I knew it was going to be hard for me.”

Unlike many Habitat homeowners, Porch is single, so she had no one with whom to split the 300 “sweat equity” hours. She is paying $485 per month in her current accommodations, so she said she was glad to save money by owning a Habitat home, which averages $350 per month including mortgage, tax and insurance.

“I’ve been excited,” Porch said. “I’ve been going out and buying things I need for my home.”

The ceremony ended with the introduction of food within the new house, and most adjourned within, each congratulating Porch on her new home before disappearing inside.

“People need to be cared for and need to be loved,” Stanton said.

> Written by Kate Thomas

HOPE HAS PLUMBING

Waco’s chapter of Habitat for Humanity has helped build 10 “dreams” on Brown and Bolt streets. In an economy riddled with inflation and dominated by the difficulty of obtaining credit, the organization helps families living below the poverty line achieve the American dream of home ownership.

> Photos by Kelli Boesel, Design by Anita Pere