UL architecture students build 1020 House out of shipping containers for Habitat for Humanity

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Students from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette's School of Architecture and Design began work on building a single-person home out of shipping containers for the Habitat for Humanity.

"Working on the 1020 House has been a valuable learning experience," said Katie Murphy, a graduate architecture student. "Many of us have not had hands-on experience on a construction site. It's so great to see the design go through, and working with Habitat for Humanity has been great as well."

Geoff Gjertson, a professor of architecture at UL Lafayette and Co-Director of the Building Institute, said after shipping containers are imported to the U.S. from China, only about 60 percent get reused. Instead, the containers can be transformed into a living space for people who need a small, comfortable and affordable place to live.

Nicole LeBlanc, an interior design major, said the project is a process that helps students become more knowledgeable designers, all the while helping the community.

During the spring semester, 12 undergraduate students worked on the design for the home. Now, with design completed in June, the building process has begun. A new team of students will set out to finish the project in the upcoming fall semester and are hoping to complete the project by December 2018.

"It has been a great learning experience for the students and to see the complexity of welding and wood framing being brought together by them," Gjertson said. "It has always been my desire to bring innovative and sustainable design to the masses. We are HGTV Mythbusters! That is why we are exploring tiny houses and container houses like the 1020 House."

The 1020 House, named for the size of the containers in feet, is the first ever of its kind, according to Gjertson. Similar to the nine other "tiny houses" created in previous years, the 1020 house will include all necessary rooms such as the kitchen, bathroom, dining area and bedroom, all within its 435 square-foot space.

The materials used include wood framing and siding, insulation, steel, wood and sheetrock, all housed within the two steel shipping containers. Two porch spaces are also being added for the future resident.

So far, the students involved in the project have raised $30,000 and need another $30,000 to complete it.

Sponsorships and fundraising are available. For further information contact Geoff Gjertson at (337) 278-2722 or at Gjertson@louisiana.edu.