

The experts give you the right advice for your DIY and woodworking projects

ask a pro

STEEL STUDS

➤ Our finished basement was damaged in a sewer backup and it has now been stripped back to the concrete blocks. We are going to refinish it, and our contractor wants to use steel studs instead of wood on the exterior walls. The contractor says the steel studs are the only way to ensure a straight wall. I worry about rusting down the road. Should we insist on wood?

John Logan
via email

If your basement is dry, I see no problem with installing metal studs. Your contractor is correct in saying you will get straighter walls, and since they aren't load-bearing, strength isn't an issue.

There are advantages to steel studs, but when using them in a basement, there are a few things to keep in mind to avoid future issues. Primarily, you want to ensure there is a barrier between the metal and the concrete to avoid rusting, and if you plan to have cabinets or heavy items hung on the walls, use conventional wood framing in any areas in which these will be

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NOBODY'S HELP GOES A LONG WAY

A Habitat for Humanity build benefits from someone who didn't lift a finger

➔ **HOW IS NOBODY** helping out a good thing? Well, when "Nobody" is the name of a stuffed toy used by the Grade 1 class at St. Joseph Public School in Penetanguishene, Ont., to encourage helping out in the community, you have some excellent help.

The Nobody program gets students to help out in their local community, and the toy provides both context and a good photo op. This Nobody has also travelled to seniors' residences for some yardwork and to a hospital to volunteer and leave toys in the waiting rooms.

When Nobody came home with my daughter Emily, age 6, it didn't take her long to decide where she wanted to go. Close to the time of the 2009 Canadian Home Workshop Show, she had asked me about the craftsman's chest I was building to donate to Habitat for Humanity. (See page 30 for the plans.) I explained to her that the organization works to build homes for people who couldn't otherwise afford a house. With that conversation fresh in Emily's mind, she asked if there was some way that Nobody could



EMILY SHERVILL
gets a little help from Nobody at the jobsite

help give someone a home. A few phone calls later, I learned there was a build by Habitat for Humanity North Simcoe not too far away and that Nobody was welcome to come to help out.

At the site, Nobody and Emily, who was suited up with her tool belt and safety glasses, were put to work cleaning up tools, sweeping up drywall compound and cleaning up trash. Four hours later, we had a dirty little girl (and a strangely well-rested Nobody) ready to head home. Nobody didn't do much; but since he got Emily working at the build, and she in turn raised awareness of the Habitat for Humanity program through her pictures and presentation to her entire class, I'd say Nobody helped out.

—Ryan Shervill

A STRUMMING PROJECT

Submitted by Sean Barton of Olds, Alta.

Sean Barton put his Mystery Tool to good use. The woodworker from Alta., won a Circa 1850 finishing tool used it on his beautiful harp project. When he told *CHW* how the prize helped him, it was music to our ears.



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