



"I'm proud of him," says Krista Waldrop of her father (with her outside a nearly completed project).

# GIVING SHELTER

After putting up a cottage for his daughter, born with Down syndrome, Harold Waldrop found a new mission: building homes for the poor

**T**welve years ago Harold Waldrop and his wife, Minta, set out to build a second home on their 15-acre property outside Madison, Miss. But this was no ordinary guest cottage; it was a house for their daughter Krista, who was born with Down syndrome but, at 20, longed for more independence. "We wanted a place she could call her own," says Waldrop, 69, a retired JCPenney store manager.

But Waldrop didn't stop there. After finishing Krista's house—a two-story pine cottage that sits about 100 feet from Waldrop's own—he decided to help Madison County's poorest inhabitants, whose shacks and trailers dot the countryside. Using volunteer labor and donated materials, Waldrop—who calls his program Krista's Kottages—has built homes for 20 families, all of whom earn less than \$1,000 a year and

pay a token monthly cost.

"He made me famous," jokes Krista, now 32. "I get to do all the ribbon cuttings." In fact, Krista, who attended mainstream school and volunteers at a nursing home, helps homeowners pick out curtains and furniture for the cottages, which come equipped with appliances and a water heater. A spiffy home was a dream come true for Willie Jackson, who, at 64, was raising two teenage grandsons in a barely habitable trailer. "I always dreamed of having a house with an upstairs but never thought I'd get one," says Jackson, whose new house sits on two acres her family acquired after the Civil War. "This is the best thing that's ever happened to me."

Hurricane Katrina took a toll on Waldrop's efforts, damaging several cottages while diverting volunteers. For now, he's focused on making repairs and may even get around to a home-improvement project of his own. "The roof of my house caught it in the storm," he says with a chuckle. "Maybe I'll catch up by summer." ●

"It's a different world from what we had," says Louella Winston (touring her new home with her granddaughters).

