

Six months later

Earthquake split family's paycheck in half

SANTA CRUZ — On Oct. 16, Dan Taylor was earning \$15 an hour laying tile. Now he's earning \$7 an hour as a maintenance man.

"I'm really topsy-turvy," says Taylor, 39, who lives in a basement apartment with his wife Carol and his teen-age son and daughter at the Blackburn Motel where he works. "I've dropped in status from a construction worker to a maintenance manager."

After the quake hit, Taylor's tile boss folded up business and left Santa Cruz. "He didn't want to go down with the area," Taylor explains.

Taylor's family was living at the Blackburn before the quake. In the past six months the motel has become a haven for quake homeless who are paying their rent with vouchers and grants. Carol Taylor has become something of a central reference for quake victims living there, pointing people toward agencies that might be able to help them.

But the Taylors have received little in the way of aid themselves. They aren't near as bitter about the earthquake disaster as they are about the time and effort they've wasted on applying to government and charitable organizations for financial help they never received.

They've had to skip work a number of times to fill out forms. "You have to spend two or three hours sitting with these people and over time that adds up," says Dan.

Dan was able to get temporary jobs helping with the quake cleanup in the months right after the shakeup, then was unemployed for a while. Now he's been hired as the motel's maintenance man and Carol, 44, has taken a job as a maid at another motel.

Still, their wages put together don't equal what Dan

used to make on his own. And the Taylors have a lot of catching up to do.

Dan's truck was damaged during the upheaval and his work tools were stolen. The family's television set was broken, as was their stereo system. Dishes and other possessions were thrown every which way and broken.

Now two speakers and an unplugged amplifier sit silently atop a table in the family's small kitchen and the Taylors struggle just to make ends meet.

"We've got an \$800 television set just sitting in the living room and I'm still trying to piece back together a stereo system," Dan says. "Nobody seems to think people of our stature need the luxuries we had before the quake."

"I've looked for other jobs but all there is is low-paying jobs. Everybody wants to start you at \$5 an hour," Dan says. "I've got two teen-agers and my expenses are overwhelming."

The Taylors have considered, and are still considering, leaving the county. "We're mainly staying here because our son is a junior in high school and he's an A and B student, he's an achiever," Dan says. "For me to drag him out of here could hurt him."

"Besides, we've been in this area for 10 years," Dan says.

"It's kind of hard to walk away from a community just because it's on hard times," Carol adds.

And so they stay, going off to work each day instead of looking for better work. Still, the Taylors say their busy schedules help keep them sane.

"By working you're not realizing that everything you had before the quake is no longer there," Carol says.



Dan and Carol Taylor have taken low-paying jobs to support their family.