

Festive Dedication at Stanley Street

On May 2 a yellow and white striped tent appeared next to the new Habitat house at 18 Stanley Street in Amherst. It made you think of a wedding, and indeed the event it announced was as festive and serious and merry as the best of weddings: the Dedication of the new home of Habitat family Ashlee Cancio-Bello, her husband Ernie Sinclair and their son Ernie Jr.

Before the ceremony there was a buffet luncheon for volunteers of all kinds, notably students from Amherst College, which had donated the Stanley Street site to Habitat. Then other people arrived to enjoy each other's company and have a good look at the new house. As one visitor said, "It was a wonder." The expertly planned kitchen was one many women would envy; a downstairs lavatory supplemented the upstairs bath; the three bedrooms, all upstairs, were full of light; a centrally located ductless heater warmed the whole house quietly and economically. Peter Jessop, a local builder and a Habitat Board member, explained the steadily increasing efficiency of Habitat homes: this one, he pointed



out, had greatly thickened insulation and photovoltaic roof panels to catch solar energy.

At 2:00 volunteers and well-wishers, a crowd ranging in age from 2 to 92, filled the new home's living room for the formal Dedication. A number of grown-ups had to stand; on the floor one toddler examined adult feet. All were welcomed by Brandon Braxton, President of Pioneer Valley Habitat.

Ashlee Cancio-Bello and her family were introduced by her mentor, Sue Lee. Ashlee, who attended Smith College and graduated from Alfred University, served with the Peace Corps in Nicaragua before realizing she wished above all

to live in Amherst, where her husband will join her when he finds work. She now thanked the volunteers whose efforts enabled her to fulfill this wish. Sue Lee bestowed on her two traditional Habitat house-warming presents: a Bible and a manual on home repair. Then the house was blessed by Jim Harvey of the Family Support Committee. After talking about the building of the house, he made Ashlee a full Habitat home-owner by giving her an official Habitat hammer and the keys to 18 Stanley Street. The Dedication ended with a benediction by the Reverend Allison Wohler of the Amherst Unitarian Universalist Society and the enthusiastic singing of the Habitat Dedication Song.

—Elizabeth von Klemperer



More Celebration at Stanley Street

The new house on Stanley Street in Amherst was the scene of a further celebration: the twentieth birthday of Pioneer Valley Habitat. MJ Adams, its Executive Director, told a crowd of well-wishers about the astounding amount of work done by Habitat's many volunteers since 1989. Since then, she said, 26 homes have been finished in this area—5 in Amherst, 4 in Greenfield, 2 in Orange, 13 in Northampton, and 2 in Turners Falls.

Pioneer Valley Habitat's recent history includes a connection with Amherst College, donor of the Stanley Street site. Molly Mead, of the Amherst College Center for Civic Engagement. She spoke of an Amherst graduate, Rosanne Haggerty, who was instrumental in turning a derelict New York hotel into housing for low-income people. This year Amherst's generous concern has also been shown by the undergraduates who did extensive manual work on the Stanley Street house.

Drawing on Valley Habitat's 20 years, Steve Goodwin drew three conclusions. First, Habitat's buildings are sustainable; second, every person can do something useful; third, cooperative work strengthens a sense of community. The Building Committee's Peter Jessup said that the Board hoped to extend its outreach even further.

As with most happy birthdays, this one looked forward as well as backward. A few yards away from Ashlee Cancio-Bello's new house the foundations of yet another Habitat house were already in place. That one will be followed by a fourth. Meanwhile the houses themselves showed Habitat's continuing responsiveness to people's needs and to the technological developments that will help meet them. Habitat houses completed in 1989 didn't yet have the equipment and materials that enable Ashlee to save money and protect her environment.

In the yellow and white tent that cheered the scene, celebrants found not only birthday desserts, including Bart's sumptuous ice cream, but also a "Greenfair," an exhibition of the technological devices used in Habitat's new houses. Some sample devices were raffled off. Visitors in the tent, studying diagrams of the ductless heater and samples of photovoltaic panels, were treated to valuable lessons they could apply in their own homes.

—Elizabeth von Klemperer

➔ **Special thanks to local businesses who sponsored the 20th Anniversary Celebration on May 2:**

Amherst Coffee, Rocky's Ace Hardware, The Henion Bakery, Edna Johnson, The Blue Marble World of Gifts, La Veracruzana, Bueno y Sano, Bart's Ice Cream, Northampton Rental Center, Pioneer Sporting Goods, Amherst Cinema & Pleasant Street Theaters, Northampton Brewery.

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Consultants from Habitat International Visit to Help

"To see ourselves as others see us." Not easy. So it is a great advantage to have experienced consultants take a look. Organizational Development Consultation is a service that Habitat affiliates can request from Habitat for Humanity International in order to further their growth and effectiveness. In late April, Jill Olen and Duane Her-

shberger spent three days with us, interviewing Board members, volunteers, homeowners, and community partners and touring our sites. They gave us a "snapshot" of what they learned. Now the Board of Directors is considering their recommendations. Jill Olen will continue to work with us to implement new strategies.

Women Build at Garfield Ave.



The sound of hammers driving nails rang out in Northampton on Saturday May 9th as a group of about fifteen enthusiastic volunteers, undaunted by the drizzly weather, took part in Pioneer Valley Habitat's Women Build event at the Garfield Avenue construction site in Florence. The volunteers ranged in age from high school students to grandmothers. The event was part of National Women Build Week sponsored by Habitat International and Lowe's.

Under the supervision of Edy Ambroz and Barb Graves the volunteers worked on layout of the interior walls on the second floor. The skies cleared just in time for lunch—provided by male volunteers.

The house under construction is the first part of the Garfield Avenue project, which will eventually comprise five homes. Smith Vocational High School students have been working on the house Monday through Friday.

The project is supported by a number of generous contributors. The land was donated by the City of Northampton; the Northampton Lions Club contributed \$15,000; Edwards Church sponsored the foundation and Lowe's donated a \$5000 gift card for Pioneer Valley Habitat's participation in National Womenbuild Week.

—Elizabeth von Klemperer

Wall Raising Brings Smiles

The sun was bright and the smiles were brighter. Kelly Bowler and Iris Rosa clutched the hands of their young children and they all smiled—for the cameras and for the joy of raising the walls at #2 and #4 Garfield Avenue, which will be their homes. Mayor Clare Higgins smiled too, as she recalled the history of how the city donated the land.

Rev. Peter Kakos smiled and offered a prayer, blessing the foundation that had been underwritten by the congregation of Edwards Church. Members of the Northampton Lions Club smiled and presented a check as partial sponsors of the homes.

Everyone else smiled too as they took marking pens and wrote their good wishes on the 2 x 4's and the walls about to be raised. Smith Voke students smiled as they pushed the walls upright and braced them.

Now our donors can smile as they see another phase of their investment in affordable housing taking shape in Florence.

—Doris McLeod



10 Tidbits For Readers

1. **40 under 40.** Business West features young leaders every year, and this year, there was our president, Brandon Braxton. Congratulations, Brandon!
2. **Hot off the presses:** Pioneer Valley Habitat just came an agreement with Our Lady of Peace Roman Catholic Church to receive a new building site in Montague near the Farren Care Center.
3. **Prospective Partner Families?** Family Selection Committee has an information meeting June 17th at 6pm at the Franklin County Technical High School for prospective families. Applications will be due July 6th. If you know someone who would like to apply to become a partner family, tell them to call the office (586-5430) or to come to the Information Session.
4. **Father's Day gift for the Dad who has everything! Give the Gift That Gives Twice.** (see www.pioneervalleynhabitat.org)
5. **Like to hike?** Recruit a group of friends to Hike for Humanity, October 3rd at Skinner Mountain in South Hadley. See the insert. Spread the word.
6. **First Baptist Church of Greenfield.** Huge thanks to them for their gift of \$15,000. Having dissolved and sold their building, they are leaving a wonderful legacy to carry on good works in the Franklin County area.
7. **Michael Bulman and Donna Wexler.** Big thanks to these attorneys for their pro bono work on the real estate closing for Ashlee Cancio-bello's home.
8. **Wanted:** persons to represent PVH in their faith community.
9. **Joe Bova** has been elected treasurer of PVH. Interim treasurer Sarah Darling now has the title of Assistant. Thanks, Sarah, for your help!
10. **Residents of Amherst and Northampton.** Warm thanks to you all. Your Community Preservation Act funds are a very important part of our ability to build.



Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity

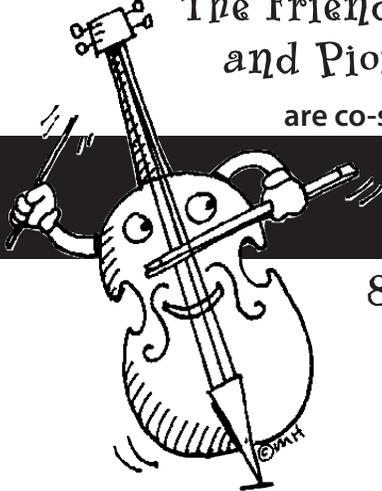
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are co-sponsoring a special benefit



CONTRA DANCE

Friday, June 19

8pm - 11:30pm

minimum \$10 donation

401 Chapman St., Greenfield

www.guidingstargrange.org

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Caller: Nils Fredland ★ Music by Randy Miller, Peter Siegel, Brendan Taaffe ★ and friends...

PVH Wins at Golf

Forty three avid golfers and Habitat supporters enjoyed a beautiful spring day at **Hickory Ridge Country Club** on May 11 while participating in Habitat's third annual benefit golf tournament. The hard work of the organizing committee (Jeff Smith, Sasan Taheri, Lyn Heady, Bob Page, Amy Boviard, and Kathy Perry) bore fruit, as over \$3000 was raised to support Habitat's programs.

Dinner was followed by a raffle and tournament prizes, with the winning team of Chris and Paul Dziengelewski, Steve Carson, and All Wilson who have supported us from the start.

Special thanks are due to **Hickory Ridge** for hosting the tournament for the third straight year, as well as to the major sponsors (**The Bank of Western Massachusetts, Integrity Development and Construction, and New Alliance Bank**) and to all the tee sponsors. Special thanks go also to the hole-in-one sponsors, **Teddy Bear Pools** and **Fran Johnson**, and to the hole sitters, MJ Adams and Kathy Perry.

Save the date for next year's tournament, scheduled for the Monday after Mother's Day in 2010! Once again, a hearty thank you to all the participants who helped make the day a success.

