

Working in partnership with members of the community, Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity builds homes, hope, and community in Hampshire and Franklin Counties.

# Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity Newsletter

VOLUME 10, ISSUE 2

SUMMER 2013

## LOOKING FORWARD:

- Now – Build with us at Garfield Avenue
- June 16<sup>th</sup> – Father's Day Cards Available
- Mid-June – Help landscape the Amherst home
- June 23<sup>rd</sup> – Dedication of Pinero Home
- September 24<sup>th</sup> – PVH Annual Meeting
- October 7<sup>th</sup> – World Habitat Day

## PVH BOARD

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## New Executive Director

It's been just about six weeks since I walked through the doors of the community center in Florence to assume my new position as Executive Director of Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity. On that Monday morning, I was filled with nervous excitement. I had big shoes to fill, following someone as special and committed as MJ Adams, and I was brand new to the community having just moved here from Cape Cod where I spent the last twelve years working at a non-profit community development corporation.

Before I opened the door, I took a deep breath and reminded myself why I chose this path. Simply put, Habitat for Humanity puts into action so many of my core values and the impact of the organization's mission is far reaching. The most obvious impact is in the tangible product of our work – a decent and safe house for a family who could not otherwise afford a home of their own. But the process itself is transformative – for the family who helps build their own home and for the community of volunteers who come together to help.

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**This is why so many volunteers keep coming back to collect what a friend of mine calls the "emotional paycheck."**

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Take Lesley Pinero for example. Lesley has been a single mother for 16 years. While juggling work responsibilities and the busy activities of her three children, she committed to a rigorous schedule of helping to build her

new home in Amherst - every single week for a year! That's a lot of sweat equity, and when Lesley receives the keys to her home later this summer, the community of volunteers who taught her tangible carpentry skills, cheered her on and helped build her home will be there to celebrate with her.



*Elizabeth Bridgewater*

Many spiritual traditions hold at their core that the key to a life full of meaning and contentment is a life lived in service to others. The early founders of Habitat for Humanity knew this too, which is why they crafted Habitat's unique approach in helping low-income people move up a notch economically by providing them with a real asset of their own: a home. Our model doesn't just simply allocate money to families in need – it connects people in very personal ways to help one another. This is why so many volunteers keep coming back to collect what a friend of mine calls the "emotional paycheck."

This is why I'm here too. I'm inspired by people like Lesley and I'm inspired by this amazing community of generous and compassionate people. It is truly an honor to be a part of the leadership team who will help the organization grow and thrive so that together, we can help more families in our community.

## Match Met!

This year a generous Amherst family offered to match the first \$7,500 donated during our spring appeal that was sent in March. Many thanks to each of you who responded so generously! In all, this helped boost donations enough to buy framing materials and all windows and doors of our next house!

# Where Are They Now?

## The Keenan Family

Your Home Phyllis Keenan and her two sons, ages 13 and 11, moved into their Habitat house in 2011. At that time they were full of hope because their prior home had been a ramshackle apartment only half the size of their present house. But what they actually found was better than anything they had anticipated. For one thing, Phyllis finds that owning her own home is easier financially than renting. Still, the legal and financial tasks of buying and maintaining a new house are daunting for many new owners. Phyllis is grateful to have learned many crucial things from her mentor, Jean Miller. For instance she learned how to handle insurance and now deals with it herself.



*The Keenan house during construction*

She was pleasantly surprised by the manual work she had to contribute to her Habitat house – “sweat equity.” Had she ever done anything like that before? “Oh, no!” Yet she found that her supervisors were such excellent teachers – so knowledgeable, patient, and encouraging – that whatever fears she had melted away. She became especially fond of carpentry and setting tiles. This last called on the mathematical skills she had used in other ways.

Phyllis teaches math at Greenfield Community College – not arithmetic but algebra and precalculus: the math that students need for many other college courses. She loves it. But she can also show her classes the practical applications of “book” geometry. As a special project she had some seniors design railings to make stairways safe for the elderly. She finds it exciting to see her ideas come to life in class.

What excites Phyllis still more, however, is gardening--something she experienced for the first time when she moved into her habitat house. Before that she had no land; now she has almost half an acre. She raises everything from corn to raspberries. When she read about raised beds, she bought the needed materials and built two. As she says, she loves to learn.

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**But acquiring a Habitat house has taught her the joy of solid accomplishment. For this she thanks the whole organization.**

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Her elder son has an even more promising future as a gardener. She’s pleased that “gardening has come to be his great joy.” At 13 he is growing a butterfly garden with the flowers those insects like best. He plans to study horticulture. Now he helps his mother, wanting to make their garden a neighborhood project, producing the vegetables needed for a big community pizza.

The neighborhood has proved important to the whole Keenan family. There are four Habitat houses on the same lot. Their occupants help each other weather minor crises: during power outages the Keenans’ gas stove helps the three families who have electric stoves. The neighborhood children are close in age and attend the same school; playing together, they enjoy the space that this Habitat lot provides.

The Keenans’ relationship to Habitat seems divinely ordained, although Phyllis doesn’t refer to scripture when talking about it. Her needs and what Habitat offers fit each other perfectly. Living in Amherst, she must spend an hour a day commuting to her job. But acquiring a Habitat house has taught her the joy of solid accomplishment. For this she thanks the whole organization.

And grateful to Habitat, they try to give back to society some of what they have received.

**Next month we will hear about the Johnson family. Stay tuned...**



## Home Sponsor

The Greenfield Cooperative Bank recently became a Cornerstone Sponsor with a \$5,000 gift. The bank employees are excited that this also enables them to build on three different days at any of our sites. Most have no previous construction skills - but that is not necessary; they will learn while having fun knowing they are helping a Habitat family. Thank you, Greenfield Cooperative Bank!

You too can encourage your companies to become house sponsors! Adopt-A-House helps us continue building in our Valley. [Contact us](#) today.



# Feast For Habitat '13

Our annual fundraiser, FEAST FOR HABITAT was a success! Cowls Building Supply generously hosted our event in their warehouse in North Amherst. They helped us present a classy event in a rustic setting! We exceeded our goals by bringing in \$17,042 ~ and that's only a preliminary number since many silent auction items still need to be paid for and picked up. Also, the stores who supported us by selling tickets (Cooper's Corner, State Street Deli, Amherst Books, and World Eye Books) will soon be presenting all that they collected.

Thirteen restaurants generously donated delicious food and desserts while four beverage companies showed their generosity too! If given the chance, let them know that you appreciate their support of our FEAST FOR HABITAT.

They are: Amherst Pub, Artisan Beverage Cooperative, Black Sheep, Coca-Cola, Esselon Café, Fitzwilly's, Gregory's Bake Shop, The Harp, Hope & Olive, Johnny's Tavern, Lazer Sauce, Loose Goose, Magpie, MRKT, Mt. Tom's Homemade Ice Cream, Paul & Elizabeth's, Provisions, Queen Bee Cupcakery, Rendezvous, and Teapot. Don't forget the great smooth tunes by Coop Jazz!

Sponsors included Cowls Building Supply, Integrity Development & Construction, Nicky D's, Greenfield Savings Bank, Puffer Printing, WRSI, Sandford Belden, Bova Harrington & Associates, Freedom Credit Union, Robinson Donovan, and WEBS.

The Dream Builder Awards went to volunteers who are honored for their long-term and consistent service to Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity: Marylou Wittig, Sandy Belden, Charlie Klem, and Walt Kohler. [Click here](#) to watch Sandy Belden's comment upon receiving the Dream Builder Award.

A huge thank you to all of you who volunteered that night. Brute strength was used in setting up and taking down; others of you used finesse and patience throughout the night while working our reception and auction payment tables, serving food, and greeting our guests. We appreciate all that you do!



# Independent Fundraisers for Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity

## •Steve's Sugar Shack:

Habitat Day: Once again Steve's collected more than \$500 for us by making a Pioneer Valley Habitat Day at the Shack. Folks came from near and far to enjoy his delicious maple syrup and pancakes! Visit Steve



and let him know you appreciate his support of our affiliate! The Shack is at 34 North Road in Westhampton.

•**Northampton InterAct Club:** This ongoing fundraiser (through bake sales and matching gifts) has a goal of \$500 to buy a water heater for the next Habitat house. The eight Northampton High School girls of this club think they will reach their goal by the end of this school year.

•**South Amherst Girl Scouts:** These six young girls are selling drawings of houses they drew for \$1 each. They have almost reached their \$100 goal.

•**Cars for Homes:** Car donations are another way to support the mission of Habitat for Humanity. When you donate a car to Cars for Homes, you will help the Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity build and rehabilitate houses with families in need of affordable shelter. The car donation process is quick and easy.

It can be accomplished online or with a toll-free phone call to 1-877-277-4344. If you donate an automobile or other vehicle, you may be eligible for a tax deduction. To find out more click



•**You too can put on your own FUNdraiser this summer!**

Build and sell bird houses, have a community car wash, make Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity the beneficiary of your game night, collect through your church...[Contact us](#) for engaging ideas.

## Team Builds



The InterFaith UMass Team worked twice in March as half-day builds. Larry Goldbaum lead groups of 8 students each day at the Garfield Avenue site where framing was accomplished and long hours of painting were completed at the Belchertown site.



A very productive Team Build with the volunteer group from Mount Holyoke College worked on the Garfield Avenue house in April. Six highly motivated women from MHC showed up early. Bill Gemmell, Steve Ferrari and George Hollywood put them straight to work. They installed the second floor decking and the framing of the south facing second floor wall. By the end of the day they had almost completed all framing of the second top plate!

In late April teams of four students from the Four Rivers Charter Public School in Greenfield volunteered on two different days. They framed and added shelves to the storage room, spackled, painted, laid wood flooring in the upper hallway, and the kitchen area. They worked hard and had a great time. Many of them remarked at how fortunate they were to have worked alongside Lesley Pinero the Habitat homeowner who was working off sweat equity hours on her home.



More than thirty students from the UMass Habitat Chapter spent their spring break in Florida, spending more time on ladders than sand. They were joined by students from other colleges in working on a multi-home site in Ft. Lauderdale. The group's president, Molly Flynn, has been a member of our Board of Directors for three years - she graduates with our thanks and best wishes. [Sign up](#) for Team Build fun now!

# Build Updates



This Belchertown Road house in Amherst is complete. Blinds have been ordered, and landscaping will be done later this month after the construction sheds are moved. The electrical inspection is complete. The plumbing inspection will be done soon followed by the fire department inspection, the final inspection and the CET energy star inspection. The house dedication is being planned so watch for that date when all are invited to celebrate with Lesley Pinero and her family.



The Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School students will be participating on the site until the close of school in June. Sign up now to help us build at this house on Garfield Avenue in Northampton.



The Franklin County Technical School students in Turner's Fall will continue to work on Pioneer Valley Habitat sites ~ including those in Easthampton

[Sign up](#) to help us build during the summer

# Help Us Build Our Next House



Right now...from where you are reading this you can buy materials for our ongoing builds.

- \$15:** 3 studs for framing a window
- \$30:** Paint for the living room
- \$50:** Nails for a 2-bedroom house
- \$100:** Primer paint for the house entrance and hallways
- \$145:** Window for any room of the house
- \$200:** Kitchen cabinet
- \$450:** Front door
- \$500:** Water heater for 3-bedroom house
- \$1,000:** Landscaping
- \$2,500:** Trusses and Roofing



In partnership with low-wage earning families in our Valley, we thank you for your generosity.

# Father's Day

Father's want stability for their family, as well as a decent house that they can afford. It is increasingly hard for fathers – single or partnered to realize such a dream. Pioneer Valley Habitat helps by building decent, affordable homes in partnership with working low-income families in our Valley. This Father's Day, in your father's name, will you consider helping a family realize their dream? Make a donation [online](#) and send us an email with your father's address so we may let him know you thought of him so generously. We'll send him a card (see above) with a drawing that a Habitat family child drew of her house! You could build with your father: sign up now by [clicking here](#).



Your Father's Day card



Newsletter Contributors – Feature Writer: Elizabeth von Klemperer, Editor: Peter Elbow, Graphic Design: Hailey Brown, Photography: Jill Apolinario, Steve Ferrari, Mary Savarese, Aaron Walker, Jonathan Woodbridge.