

# *Habitat in Haiti*



Drawing upon its 26-year experience working in Haiti, Habitat for Humanity has launched an ambitious three-phase plan to help the Haitian people recover from the catastrophic 7.0-magnitude earthquake that struck their country on January 12. The multi-year plan includes both immediate emergency relief and a long-term effort for rehabilitation and reconstruction. With a strong track record in Haiti (198 of the 200 Habitat-built homes in Haiti survived the earthquake) Habitat's mantra is BUILD BACK BETTER!

"This is a bold goal for Habitat, but the level of destruction and the number of families affected demand a bold response," said Jonathan Reckford, CEO of Habitat for Humanity International.

Habitat has already assembled 10,000 shelter kits to help families make immediate house repairs and construct emergency shelters on their home sites. With no distribution system of our own, Habitat has partnered with CARE to distribute these kits. The kits contain basic tools and supplies such as tarpaulins, ropes, chisels, hacksaws, buckets, and masks. The kits were being assembled in the Dominican Republic and in Atlanta, Georgia.

In the rehabilitation phase, Habitat will help families remove debris, salvage materials that can be recycled, repair homes that received minimal damage, and build transitional shelters that meet basic needs. As conditions improve over time, the material from the transitional shelters can be incorporated into permanent housing. In the reconstruction phase Habitat will build core houses, each with a separate sanitation facility. These units will be permanent and resistant to earthquakes and hurricanes. The goal is to help 50,000 families.

Several organizations are aiding Habitat's effort. They include the Clinton Bush Haiti Fund, the German Foreign Office which has provided a grant of more than \$500,000, Whirlpool Corporation, the Home Depot Foundation, Hands On Atlanta, and the Ricky Martin Foundation.

All these efforts will of course cost money. The emergency shelter kits will cost about \$250 apiece, the transitional shelters between \$1000 and \$2500, and the core houses from \$4000 to \$6000. Donations, which are urgently needed, may be made by calling (800) HABILITAT or by sending a check to Habitat for Humanity International, 121 Habitat Street, Americus GA 31709. A \$10 donation can be made immediately by texting HABILITAT to 25383.

—Leo Sartori

# An Interview with Peter Jessop

Many newsletter readers know that Peter Jessop, President of Integrity Development and Construction, has given much time to Pioneer Valley Habitat. When I recently interviewed him, I wanted to know the background story of his involvement with our non-profit.

His first encounter, in the mid 1980s, was with the Hartford Connecticut Habitat. Peter was living there and wanted to help build homes for people in need. He worked with Hartford's Building Committee, Board of Directors, trained volunteers, and organized a "blitz build."

During this time Peter began doing small construction projects with carpenters he knew in the area. The idea of starting a business was beginning to take shape in his mind. By the end of the 1980s, Integrity Development & Construction was launched.

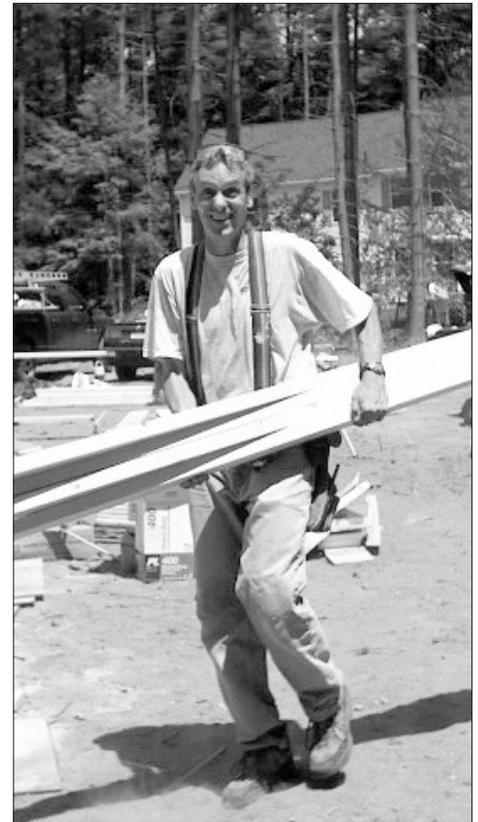
In 1992 the Jessops moved to Western Massachusetts. They were drawn to the Pioneer Valley Co-housing project in north Amherst. The land had been purchased and most of the lots were sold, but nothing had been built. What an opportunity for the president of a construction company! Land owners chose one of five house plans, offering one, two, or three bedrooms. While weekly meetings went on to discuss community living, professionals like Peter lined up financing and approvals from the town of Amherst. The Jessops themselves decided to live in the community, and built Integrity's headquarters near the thirty-two houses.

The prosperous 1990s were generally favorable to the economy. Integrity enlarged its business, built new houses, and did commercial and institutional jobs (like the Northampton Brewery and a new wing for the Hartsbrook School in Hadley). But in addition, remodeling has always been an option in good times and during recessions. In our area, land for building is hard to find and expensive. People realize that it's financially advantageous to keep their home--doing an addition if feasible, plus giving the house a fresh look with "new" rooms. Integrity was ready; they had developed a small employee design team to help clients who need floor plans and advice.

Returning to Peter's link with Habitat I was struck by his loyalty and generosity. He talked about the progress PVH has made over the years. Those who attend home dedications are impressed with the good, careful work which characterizes today's PVH houses. "I am proud of them" said Peter. Like a few other companies, Integrity has given in kind. They sent a team of four or five to Westhampton Road a few years ago for a wall raising "battle" with Wright Builders. The men were paid by their employer. Recently another crew spent a day at Stanley Street, raising roof trusses. Those gifts in kind are much appreciated by MJ Adams and the Finance Committee. And the newspaper coverage keeps Habitat in the public eye.

At the end of the interview I learned that Peter speaks Spanish and has made trips to Central America as team leader. He wants homeless people to have shelters made with a very different building style. Given that he's made five trips to different countries, we might call Peter's group Builders without Borders. We salute them all.

—Patricia Weed



Peter Jessop hauls lumber at Westhampton Road frameoff

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**Special thanks  
to the Rendezvous in Turners Falls  
and to Steve's Sugar Shack  
in Westhampton for their  
fundraising events in support of  
Pioneer Valley Habitat's work.**

# “Greening the Valley”: PVH on Exhibit

**G**reening the Valley: Sustainable Architecture in the Pioneer Valley” is an exhibit in the University Gallery at the UMass Fine Arts Center. It’s both beautiful and informative, and Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity is honored to be included. All Habitat folks should find the time to see it. It runs from February 10 to May 9, 2010 (check <http://www.fineartscenter.com> for hours and schedule of gallery talks).

Exhibit panels 1–12 carries the title “Greening Our Homes.” The panels showcase some really lovely places to live, mostly of modern design and mostly “high end.” But take a good look at #9. That’s our Stanley Street! Did you pound nails there without realizing how great these homes are?

Our Stanley Street homes were designed by Kuhn Riddle Architects, with Chuck Roberts AIA as principal architect. The UMass display is a combination of photos, drawings, and written information. Stanley Street is described as “creating a refreshingly new sort of neighborhood” where—viewed across a shared meadow—echoes

of local tobacco shed and barn forms are reassembled in these structures. “These homes are buildable and sustainable. Simple interlocking sheds make up their forms and lend a modern edge to an affordable and accessible building program.”

These homes are designed with many features that save energy. The homes are built on an east-west axis, which creates solar gain. The living space is on the south side and the utility areas are on the north. Building with slab on grade minimizes site disruption. Super insulation and an open floor plan allow mechanical systems to be very simple. (If you attended the mid-winter dedication of the first home, you will remember how that all felt.)

Underlying the exhibit is the concept of sustainability. Here’s a quasi-official definition: “Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” PVH is glad to be a part of that!

—Doris McLeod

## “Zero Lot Line Construction”

**O**n Garfield Avenue in Florence, Valley Habitat now has a Zero Lot Line construction! What, you may ask, is that? Zero Lot Line construction is a way of dividing a duplex so that what separates two units is not just an interior wall but a property line. That property line, set here by Habitat with the help of professional surveyors, clearly divides the land on which the units stand into two distinct properties. It also runs right through a building. It extends downward below ground and upward through the roof. Furthermore, a wall built on a property line is much thicker than an interior wall. It has four layers of sheet rock.

Valley Habitat has long reaped the advantages of combining two dwelling units. A duplex takes up less land than two free-standing units. Plumbing and electricity can be installed at the same time. By sharing one inside

wall two units can be heated more cheaply. It’s no wonder that Valley Habitat began by building duplexes and has added to them ever since.

Each home in the duplex was set up as a condominium and condos require a condo association to be created. Families in a condominium find themselves having to shoulder more responsibilities than they had expected with the joint decision-making required for the exterior maintenance of their homes. The Family Support Committee has also worried about putting two low-income families in close legal and financial contact with each other as happens with a condo association. In dealing with some issues, one party in a condo must sometimes collect money (condo fees) from the other—which can be touchy when both parties have a low income.

A Zero Lot Line seems to be a good way of preserving the advantages of a condo while avoiding its main drawbacks. Units separated by a Zero Lot Line give individual families greater independence—for instance, freedom to construct an additional room. The opportunity to grow a home without leaving it increases the sense of ownership and control. So far only one disadvantage to Zero Lot Line construction has emerged. Our first Zero Lot Line structure has been higher than we would prefer. With so many volunteers we want to keep work closer to the ground.

MJ Adams, Director of Valley Habitat, sees in Zero Lot Line construction a way of promoting what she calls “smart growth”—creating low-cost housing while preserving the landscape.

—Elizabeth von Klemperer



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**What:** Fourth annual PVHH benefit golf tournament

**When:** Monday, June 21st

**Where:** Wyckoff Country Club, Holyoke  
*Catered by The Log Cabin*

*More information and a registration form will be on the Habitat website shortly.*

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## Cars for Homes™ word search

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I F E A Z R R S  
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