

Habitat for Humanity in Haiti



Habitat Resource Center (HRC) where workers learn construction skills while assembling Habitat transitional shelters for earthquake victims. ---- (c) Habitat for Humanity/Steffan Hacker

January 12 marked the first anniversary of a devastating earthquake in Haiti. It destroyed nearly 190,000 homes and left nearly two million survivors homeless or displaced. During the past year, the rehabilitation progress has been painfully slow—leaving 1.3 million people still displaced. Hurricane Tomas and the recent cholera outbreak have badly hampered recovery efforts. Nonetheless, Habitat for Humanity has moved steadily toward achieving its ambitious goal of helping 50,000 Haitian families over five years move toward safe, secure, and permanent homes.

In the weeks immediately after the disaster, Habitat distributed 21,000 emergency shelter kits which contained basic tools. More than three thousand additional kits are stockpiled, ready to be distributed quickly if disaster strikes again. By December 2010 more than one thousand families had received transitional or upgradeable shelters, and by the end of January, two thousand are scheduled to be distributed. Transitional shelters are constructed so they can be dismantled easily and relocated. Upgradeable shelters can be turned into permanent homes. The newest model features a timber-frame skeleton with pressure treated plywood walls, a tin roof and a concrete perimeter foundation. Concrete blocks can be added as resources become available.

Habitat Green Team

For years, Pioneer Valley Habitat has followed “green” principles, building small scale and energy efficient homes and locating them near community amenities and public transit. Such efforts have become even stronger recently thanks to Habitat’s Green Team, a sub group of the Building Committee.

Green Team members, led by Irene Fradet, hope to achieve the chapter’s first LEED certification for some homes on the Garfield Avenue site in Florence. LEED stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design. The program is a voluntary building certification program of the federal government’s Green Building Council. Achieving certification involves a great deal of paperwork in order to show that the building has met standards for performance on energy and environmental measures. The process of working toward certification builds “green” awareness for the homeowners, and also for the community.

Among the changes Habitat has made to become more sustainable are these: siting for energy efficiency (including photovoltaic arrays to generate power), using water efficient plumbing, installing compact fluorescent lighting, designing for less impact on the natural environment, and reducing material waste and site erosion while building. The Green Team has also been working toward using more “green” building materials that are renewable, recyclable and durable. That’s not always easy to do. *(continued)*

Habitat for Humanity in Haiti

(continued from cover)

Some two thousand housing damage assessments have been conducted; the goal is to conduct six thousand more by June of this year. The purpose of these assessments is to determine which structures can be made safe and which need to be torn down.

Five Habitat Resource Centers are now fully operational in outlying areas. Future centers are planned for the capital Port-au-Prince and other locations as funding allows. These resource centers are the heart of Habitat's work in post-quake Haiti. Each center will respond to the needs in its area, providing a wide range of services: vocational training, damage assessments, repairs and retrofits, assistance in securing land and tenure, loans of tools and equipment, materials fabrication, water and sanitary solutions, traditional shelters and shelter upgrades, and other services. According to Claude Jeudy, national director of Habitat for Humanity Haiti,

these Centers support the development and sustainability of the local construction sector — as well as economic recovery—with job creation and business development. And they improve the quality of construction to mitigate the effects of future disasters.

Haitians are playing an active part in the operation of the centers: more than five hundred Haitians have been trained in earthquake-resistant construction techniques and more than two hundred Haitians have been hired to build shelters.

In November of this year, and again in 2012, Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter Work Project (part of Habitat for Humanity International) will be held in Haiti. It will help refocus the world's attention on the work that remains to be done. These back-to-back annual projects are a testament to Habitat's commitment— as well as the Carters'—to serving families in Haiti on a long-term basis. Pioneer Valley Habitat is working to gather a group of individuals to join the work party this year, contact us for more information: 586-5430 or info@pioneervalleyhabitat.org.

Contributions are still badly needed, and may be made at HabitatHaiti.org or 1-800-422-4828.

Habitat Green Team

(continued from cover)

Some of the obstacles the team has run into include the difficulty of obtaining lumber certified by the Forestry Stewardship Council as meeting standards for sustainable forestry. It's also been hard to find affordable paint that meets the highest standards for sustainable building.

The Green Team works hard to incorporate sustainable building practices throughout all our construction projects. But not just for the sake of LEED certification or publicity. What the team cares most about is the fact that such practices are vital not just for the homeowner but for the future of the entire planet.

Habitat Green Team members are Irene Fradet, Aaron Walker, Michelle Serra, Larry O'Connor, Iesha Gomillion, Steve Ferrari and Cathryn Buonocore.

Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity Board members

Sanford Belden, President
Peter Jessop, Vice President
Joseph Bova, Treasurer
Paul McDonough, Assistant Treasurer
Doris McLeod, Clerk
Carole Manning, Assistant Clerk

Kay Berenson
Brandon Braxton
Cindy Caplice
Myra Carlow
Steve Ferrari
Molly Flynn

Mike Fritz
Julie Held
Mike Simolo
Marilyn Woodman
MJ Adams, Ex Officio



[www.facebook.com/
PioneerValleyHabitatForHumanity](http://www.facebook.com/PioneerValleyHabitatForHumanity)



Pioneer Valley

Habitat for Humanity®

Don't forget—Volunteer Orientation happens on the first Thursday and third Saturday of every month.

Walls Go Up in Montague

“Sweat equity” is a big part of the Habitat experience for future home owners. Each adult family spends 250 hours helping build their home—helping them become intimately acquainted with every inch.

To symbolize that effort, a new element was added to the wall-raising ceremony: the presentation of golden hammers. Not the lapel pin that Habitat volunteers wear, but real hammers, spray-painted gold. They may become family heirlooms, but first they have a lot of nails to drive. Storm Cindir and Andrea Chesnes received their golden hammers just before helping lift the first wall of their home on Warner St. in Montague City.



It was a sunny day in December, with only a little snow. Family and friends had gathered. Reverend Sue Bowman gave a blessing. Mentor Jocelyn Croft introduced the family – Storm, Andrea, Mabel (age 4) and Jack (age 1). As a staff member at Franklin Tech, Jocelyn also spoke of the importance of the “living classroom” that students would have. She stressed the value of moving from carpentry, plumbing, and electrical classrooms to the hands-on experience of building a home for someone. She conveyed the staff’s goal that students get an additional kind of learning: the value of helping others.

Then the wall was raised.

Through the snow-filled weeks of January and February, the Franklin Tech students continued to work on the walls—walls which now show a home beginning to take shape. As spring arrives, Habitat volunteers will work on weekends. Already a group from UMass has built a storage shed. Walls and hope rising from the snow: it’s enough to make you want to volunteer! Any takers?

Mary Serrano: A Future PHV Homeowner

“I’m getting the American Dream!” exclaimed Mary Serrano on learning that she would have one of the Habitat houses going up on the Garfield Ave. lot in Florence. Mary and her family have lived for years in an apartment in downtown Northampton. Today only her daughter Ellie, 16, lives with her regularly. Her three older children live nearby—Joe (29), Lydia (27), and Gregory (23). Joe has cerebral palsy and depends on Mary in emergencies; Lydia just had a fourth child of her own and needs grandmotherly help.

Mary has worked for years as a certified health care aide, going into homes throughout the area. An address in Florence will be as convenient as her present one, and will also suit her daughter Ellie, who attends Smith Vocational School. It will also be a center for Mary’s extended family, especially on holidays and birthdays. She recently celebrated Joe’s birthday by baking him his favorite chocolate cake.

Mary’s present home doesn’t lend itself well to family festivities: the rooms and yard are too small for lively children. And it’s not just space that presents problems. Even though Mary makes



repairs herself, her rent still goes up.

When she owns her own Habitat home, such difficulties will be a thing of the past. True, her new home won’t fulfill all her wishes. She’d like to have a basement, but that won’t be possible on the lot assigned to her. Habitat designers must respect the facts of Mother Nature, including the lay of the land.

Nor does Mary expect Habitat to provide instant gratification. It will be at least another year before she can move into her new house. Meanwhile she works on it, or on equivalent Habitat projects, in order to store up sweat equity points toward her own place. Her daughter Ellie helps her, having special permission to do so at sixteen. “She loves the work,” says Mary.

Mary Serrano knows that getting her American dream requires more than wishful thinking: it takes patience, courage, and hard work. But these are virtues that she is already demonstrating.

Thank you to Earth First Flooring & Tile in Florence for donating tile for Rosa home on Garfield Ave, as well as to the following people who helped us with plowing this year:

Eric Doolittle (Warner St., Montague City)

Steve Morse (Stanley St., Amherst)

Steve Parsons from Yardworks (Garfield Ave., Florence)

We’d also like to thank our Newsletter Contributors

Kay Berenson, Richard Delisle,
Peter Elbow, Betty von Klemperer,
Doris McLeod, Leo Sartori,
Patricia Weed



Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity
P.O. Box 60642
Florence, MA 01062
413-586-5430
www.pioneervalleyhabitat.org

Non Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 15
Northampton, MA

Upcoming Habitat Events:

A Home Dedication in Florence! After months of hard work, another Habitat partner family is getting ready to move into their new home. Please join us on Saturday, April 9th at 2pm as we dedicate the Rosa home at 4 Garfield Avenue in Florence.

Hope & Olive – Free Soup & Games Night! Join us for soup & games on April 4th from 5-8pm at the Hope & Olive restaurant at 44 Hope Street in Greenfield. Here's how it works: On soup & games night, folks gather at Hope & Olive to enjoy a free buffet of soup & bread and spend time with friends. Those who are so inclined can make a donation to the selected charity (PVH in April!) via the donation jar, by purchasing items from the bake sale or by buying raffle tickets for awesome prizes. See you there!

Save the Date! Miniature Golf Fundraiser in June. Watch our website for information on a Pioneer Valley Habitat MINIATURE GOLF tournament at Family Golf Center in Hadley the weekend of June 10, 11, and 12.



Girl Scouts Out Front for the “Paint-A-Palooza”



Habitat's first “Paint-A-Palooza”, a four-day painting blitz during the last days of December, was a hit, especially with some Conway Girl Scouts.

Realizing that local high schools and colleges would be on vacation, MJ Adams thought the week would

be a good time for a giant painting party to work on a Garfield Avenue home interior.

Thanks to a publicity blitz, with stories in local newspapers and on local radio as well as e-mails to PVH volunteers and crew leaders, young men and women from Amherst, Florence and UMass and

elsewhere filled the rooms with activity. The future homeowner came to work on her own home, bringing several guests.

Dozens of photos of the event turned up on Facebook! They show volunteers painting sheet rock walls or ceilings, using poles equipped with rollers— spreading the universal color, white.

Andrea Llamas, Buckland Town Administrator and troop leader for Conway Girl Scout Troop 40588, a group of Ambassador and Senior Girl Scouts, brought a group of girls for the event. Some of the girls had worked on Habitat projects before, Llamas said and “really didn't want to miss the chance” to participate. So they didn't let a snowstorm stop them from showing up.

Llamas has been leading a Girl Scout troop for more than a dozen years, since her own daughters were very young. What really pleases her, she says, is that the girls in her troop actually enjoy working for Habitat. They've helped on several projects before and are already talking about when they can go back to work again.