

Working with our many partners, Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity builds homes, hope, and community in Hampshire and Franklin Counties and is affiliated with Habitat for Humanity International, an ecumenical organization dedicated to assuring decent, affordable homes for people the world over.

Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity Newsletter

VOLUME 13, ISSUE 1

SPRING 2015



Just what happens when vision and wisdom, grit and innovation join forces within a person and then that person finds kindred spirits among a particular group of women? Lives are changed, minds and skill sets are expanded, homes, hope and community are built. We are nine months into the MJ Adams Legacy WomenBuild project in Easthampton, building zero lot line, zero net energy homes for two families from western Massachusetts with a majority female workforce.

LOOKING FORWARD

- **Now through the end of 2015** – Build with us at the East Street, Easthampton site
- **1st Wednesday and 3rd Saturday of each month** – New volunteer orientations
- **Sunday May 10th Mothers Day** – make a donation to PVHH in honor of your mother
- **Wednesday May 20th** – Feast for Habitat at Stone Soup Concrete in Eastworks, Easthampton, 5:30 – 8 pm
- **Sunday June 21st, Fathers Day** – make a donation to PVHH in honor of your father



Meet the Women Behind WomenBuild

In 2014, when Pioneer Valley Habitat sought a new Executive Director who would be able to excel as a team leader, juggle many tasks behind the scenes, and also be an articulate spokesperson, **Megan McDonough** was more than ready. With her Masters degree in Regional Planning from UMass with a concentration in housing and social issues there couldn't have been a much better fit for chief executive as the WomenBuild project was unfolding. "I am so grateful for the extreme levels of dedication that bring construction volunteers out in all sorts of weather, encourage men and women to try new things, and cause people to give up weekends because they care about their community," she says. "The WomenBuild project has generated excitement and laid the groundwork for building more diverse leadership as we move into future projects."



MJ Adams, former PVHH Executive Director, led the move toward energy efficient "green" building during her tenure at Pioneer Valley Habitat. Other innovative Adams initiatives include zero-lot line homes (where two properties share a central wall), and the super insulated, net-zero East Street WomenBuild Project that now bears her name. "I think that speaks to our ability to try things, see if they work and see how we can make them better," she told the Daily Hampshire Gazette, speaking about Habitat when she stepped down from her post of twelve years. "It's a wonderfully complex organization built on a simple concept: recruiting volunteers and empowering them to do all they can." MJ pioneered partnerships with Smith Vocational and Franklin County Technical Schools, giving students broad hands-on experience in construction skills and in working as a team with others. The partnership she forged with Pioneer Valley Photovoltaics will benefit Habitat Families, and the communities they live in, for years to come.



Structures by Design Principal **Edy Ambroz** is the primary construction supervisor at East Street's WomenBuild. Ambroz is a registered architect and holds a Massachusetts Construction Supervisor's License. Trained in net zero design and a member of the Northeast Sustainable Energy Association, she gained her hands on training in construction by working alongside crews she hired to work on her architectural projects. Ambroz, a Nebraska native, has a knack for seeing the big picture, and digesting large amounts of information, a skill praised by her Build Committee peers. Northampton Historical Commission recognized her work with a Preservation Award in 2000.

When **Rachel Stevens**, of Maple Street Architects, was approached by Edy Ambroz to partner on a net zero possible Home for PVHH, she imagined a very hands-on collaboration, with lots of time working on the site. Instead, as she and Ambroz helped the project take the steps from the permitting to the construction phase, she found she was pregnant. Shifting her focus, Stevens instead steadily works on evolving design changes, needed as the Build Team leaders and volunteers deal with the complex construction techniques used on the site. It is important to her that the building comes together safely and the net zero capabilities in the units are monitored to ensure that the East St families reap low energy cost benefits—and the process can be replicated on future build projects. Stevens gave birth to Lillian in late January. "The greatest thing about this experience is the depth of experience there is, together, on the Build Team." Stevens says, "We've had the great fortune of having so many experienced professionals gathered together on the team in every category: design, construction, and management. It's an amazing collaborative project."



Libby McLarty is both a Board Member and Build Committee volunteer and brings formidable project management skills to this challenging Habitat project. Her ability to catch and follow through on various administrative details, track building material supplies and coordinate among Habitat teams allows those leading the construction work to focus on the building. The continuous opportunities for learning about green building, the people and the communities that Pioneer Valley Habitat serves are what draw McLarty to volunteer so much of her time. Also,

“I slept and I dreamed that life is all joy. I woke and I saw that life is all service. I served and I saw that service is joy.”

- Kahlil Gibran

she says she was raised to, “look around. See what needs to be done. Then, do it.” McLarty graduated from Iowa State with a degree in Family Environment. “Home and families is what I’m about... making sure everybody’s taken care of.”

As Senior Estimator at Wright Builders for eight years, chair of the East St Build Team **Lynne Badgett** has been with several high performance projects. In 2011, a Wright project won a Home Builder of the Year Award from GreenBuilder magazine for a project in Hadley, and Wright is also one of the few builders in western Massachusetts who pursues LEED for Homes certification for most of its residential new construction projects. Ms. Badgett has shared her knowledge of high performance building materials, techniques and best practices with the team, and is the perfect choice to play a primary role in on-site coordination of volunteers. “What drew me to this project is that I live in Easthampton and that it engages all kinds of women in learning about building techniques. This project, for me, is all about being on the construction site and being a part of teaching women of all ages these skills and knowing that two women and their families are going to have these homes to call their own at the end.”



WomenBuild is about empowering women, not about excluding men! It's not too late to go to <https://pvhabitat.org/volunteer/individual-construction-volunteers> to sign up to be a part of this ongoing build.

PV Habitat by the Numbers

Last fall's Flamingo Challenge benefited from the 83 households who helped the birds migrate, raising a combined total of \$3,525. Our 25th Anniversary challenge was met with the help of 392 donors who brought 35,998 new dollars to our work of building affordable homes in the Pioneer Valley (exceeding our goal by more than 40%) in three short months. We are deeply grateful for the participation of our generous community of contributors.

PVHH Board

Mike Simolo
Reverend Janet Bush
Paul McDonough
Sheila Klem
Marybeth Bridegam
John Ebbets
Steve Harrington
Christine Karlberg
Walt Kohler
Libby McLarty
Anna Novey
Ann Parizo
Emily Schwarz
Keith Woodruff

PVHH Staff

Megan McDonough
Executive Director

Janet Bordwin Kannel
Volunteer Coordinator

Amy Landry
Director of Resource Development

Gratitude to our volunteer graphic, photo and editing artists who bring their talents to bear on this newsletter and other PVHH outreach materials: Hailey Brown, Alicia Ralph, Peggy MacLeod, Shawna Stern

A Letter from the Executive Director



Dear Habitat Community,

I think Habitat volunteers might be some of the most dedicated and giving people I know. Today five volunteers stood in 10F weather at the construction site to plan tasks for this weekend's construction days. Yes – we are still building in Easthampton through this cold and snowy winter! We have had to cancel days due to the extreme cold and deep snow, but the walls have gone up, the roof is on, and the windows should be installed by the time spring comes.

We invite you to participate in our builds, but also in building our organization. Bundling up to swing a hammer in all seasons is critical; but so is helping write policies, taking leadership roles and asking your friends to help support our work. Sometimes this organization building happens organically – the regular construction volunteer who builds skills over time and becomes a crew leader – and sometimes the right person sends an e-mail or calls, just in the nick of time to help out with an urgent need.

Where do you think your time and talents can be of most use? As a leader on the board of directors? Putting your business skills to use in long-term strategic planning? Putting your love of precision cutting and getting very messy into hanging dry wall? As a party-planning extraordinaire to help us have fun and raise money at the FEAST for Habitat? Your archival skills in helping better organize 25 years of documents and policies?

There are some volunteers I talk to several times a week as we work on the business of running a great non-profit. There are some volunteers I never get to meet. But I know that these many faces of Habitat are what make us a strong and vital organization in the quest to end poverty housing in our community. So, thank you. Thank you for finding time in your lives and hope in your heart to make a difference.

In gratitude,
Megan McDonough

Final Habitat House on Garfield Ave Sold!

In January the Wolcott family made the final step to homeownership, less than one year from the date they were selected to be homeowners for the fifth and final Habitat home on Garfield Ave in Northampton. The house was dedicated to a packed house of family, friends, and volunteers who came to wish Chris and Katie Wolcott and their family well. Chris's grandmother, Reverend Agnes Thomas White, provided a personal blessing for the grandson she helped raise. Family mentor Carole Manning presented the family with a "Dare to Repair" book to help them in the years ahead.



This project was the culmination of many years of planning in coordination with the city of Northampton. The visionary ideas of community leaders over 20 years ago planted the seed for what is today a vibrant extension of the community in Florence. The support of the city was felt in many ways – from the hard work of Smith Vocational students and teachers, to the expert guidance from the planning office, DPW and building departments to the support of the city through the mayor's office and CPA committee.

In Other News...

The volunteers have been hard at work to close in the building through the tricky snowy, cold winter months and can't wait till spring! Volunteers of all backgrounds are needed, but skilled women carpenters are in high demand. Women with experience installing vinyl siding, installing cellulose insulation and/or sheetrock, please call.

WomenBuild - has encouraged lots of new volunteers to get involved. In 2013 before we started our WomenBuild, 51% of new volunteers that year were women. In 2014 that number increased to 77%! Those women are showing up at the construction site in unprecedented numbers.

Team Builds - We will be building at the East Street Easthampton WomenBuild project throughout 2015, but our schedule for Team Builds is filling up fast! If you know a group that would like to sponsor a day of construction (men can come too) please have them contact our volunteer coordinator now! It's not too early to pencil in that summer date.

Hawthorne Farm Amherst

The leadership team is hard at work on getting the needed zoning and permitting approvals and finalizing the house design for the property donated to PVHH by the town of Amherst. Walt Kohler and Charlie Klem are acting as team leaders and are excited to get started on building. Michael Broad has been working on the construction drawings and will oversee the construction with Walt and Charlie. Wetlands expert Chuck Dauchy has drawn the first site plan with input from professional engineer Terry Reynolds, both of whom donated their time to this effort.



Wish List

- File storage in a clean dry environment to archive older records
- Two Windows 7 laptops able to withstand modern computing needs
- A wireless mouse and keyboard
- Recycled printer paper
- Lots and lots of cellulose insulation for our East Street House
- Lead safe certified renovation contractor to volunteer for a pilot repair program
- Building lot in Franklin County
- Wheelchair accessible office space within 20 minutes of I-91 for less than \$600/month

Oklahoma City OK for Alternative Spring Break!

As this newsletter goes to print, 22 members of our sister chapter at UMass-Amherst are setting out on their 24-hour drive to Oklahoma where they will spend their spring break helping to build homes, hope and community in a state "none of us has visited previous to this trip," according to Christine Karlberg, president of the 600-member chapter who also sits on the PVHH board of directors. The students' choice to spend their week off engaged in community service was made possible after weeks of creative fundraising events and activities throughout the greater Amherst community.

Save the Date! FEAST for Habitat Wednesday, May 20th 2015 | 5:30 – 8 pm

Mark your calendars for 2015 FEAST for Habitat, a fun afterwork party held this year at Stone Soup Concrete in the Eastworks Building in Easthampton. For a mere \$45 per person, feast on delicious food, enjoy a beer or a glass of wine, bid on silent auction items that celebrate the long-awaited arrival of spring, meet new people and check out the concrete... it's what Habitat does best: have fun, build community and do good work with power tools (well, the tools will be off, but we'll be in the workspace of Stone Soup Concrete!).



Habitat for Humanity[®]
Cars for Homes[™]



Nice car.

EVERY DAY IS EARTH DAY

When you recycle a vehicle, you help Habitat for Humanity build homes.

carsforhomes.org

Shop at AmazonSmile
 and Amazon will make a donation to:
Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity

Get started

amazon smile



I FINALLY UNDERSTAND
 FOR A WOMAN IT AIN'T EASY TRYIN TO RAISE A MAN
 YOU ALWAYS WAS COMMITTED
 A POOR SINGLE MOTHER ON WELFARE, TELL ME HOW YA DID IT
 THERE'S NO WAY I CAN PAY YOU BACK
 BUT THE PLAN IS TO SHOW YOU THAT I UNDERSTAND
YOU ARE APPRECIATED - TUPAC SHAKUR

Tribute Giving

Express your support, respect, gratitude or love with a gift that will help low-income families have access to decent and affordable homes in the Pioneer Valley. Tribute Gifts can be made for Christmas, New Year's, Hanukkah, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Birthdays, Anniversaries, or any reason you have to celebrate someone special. When we receive your tribute gift online or in the mail, we will mail a personalized tribute card in your name to the individual or family you are honoring.

"What better way to show our moms how much we love and appreciate them than to invest in the dreams of mothers around the world," said Jonathan Reckford, CEO of Habitat for Humanity International. "A Mother's Day Gift from the Heart is a beautiful way to say 'I love you.'"

Another great gift...

This fine lithograph (limited edition, signed and numbered) was created to support Pioneer Valley Habitat's efforts to make home ownership available for low income families in the region, using an image from local famous children's author and illustrator Eric Carle's Draw Me a Star.



The image is available as a poster (26"x20", \$120). Price includes shipping and handling. Call (413) 586-5430 to order.

Sign Up Today to help VolunteerUP

GET INVOLVED!

SCAN THE QR CODE TO SIGN UP AND VOLUNTEER!



140 Pine St. Room 9, Florence, MA

413-586-5430

www.PVHabitat.org