

## The Sun Shines on Habitat Houses



*Photovoltaics atop a Habitat home  
on Stanley Street in Amherst.*

Pioneer Valley Habitat's experiment with photovoltaic rooftop energy collectors has been a resounding success, according to Kathy Perry, who occupies the first Habitat home built with a photovoltaic system constructed on Stanley Street in Amherst. The photovoltaic cells are a win-win combination: not only do they reduce the house's carbon footprint, but they also enable the homeowner to save substantially on her electric bill. The fourteen collectors on the roof of Kathy's house have a total capacity of 2.5 Kilowatts, which is used to power the lights and appliances in the house, as well as her electric cook stove. (Kathy is careful to limit her use of electricity.)

Whenever the electricity produced by the photovoltaics is not all being used by the homeowner, the surplus automatically returns to the electric grid and the homeowner receives a credit. Kathy reports that on several occasions her monthly statement has shown a credit balance of as much as \$80. And when she has to pay, the bill is generally small. The cells are completely maintenance-free.

The other two Habitat houses on Stanley Street are also equipped with photovoltaics and we get similar reports from their owners, Ashlee Cancio-Bello and Jan Lamberg. The fourth and final house, now under construction, will be similarly equipped. The Stanley Street location is ideal for solar energy: all the houses have south-facing roofs and there are no trees to block the sunlight. *(continued on following page)*

## A Young Family Works Toward a New Franklin County Home

It was a whim. Owning a home was too far-fetched even to dream of. So when Storm and Andrea saw the ad in the paper about a Habitat information session, they went without great expectations. But the impossible is now truly happening. Yes, they were qualified. Yes, they were selected. Yes, they are beginning to help build their new home.

Storm Cindir and Andrea Chesnes, a married couple with two children, will live in the home that Pioneer Valley Habitat is building at the end of Warner Street in Montague City. Storm works in the family screen-printing business and is also studying accounting at Greenfield Community College. Andrea stays home to take care of Jack, one year old, and Mabel, who is four. At her pre-school, Mabel is especially fond of the water table--a partial substitute for having no yard to play in. The family currently lives in an apartment in an older building in Greenfield. Coming to the construction site in the woods opens a whole new world. Having a great bike trail nearby will be a future joy. How do they feel now? "Grateful!" *(continued on following page)*



*Soon to be Habitat homeowners, Storm and Andrea, participated in our Hike for Humanity with their two children.*

## The Sun Shines on Habitat Houses

*(continued)*

Equally enthusiastic about their experience with photovoltaics are John and Christine Speek, whose family occupies a Habitat-constructed house in Turners Falls. During the year and a half that the Speeks have been in their home, their solar collectors have produced a total of 5900 Kilowatt hours of electricity. The family has a full complement of appliances, including an electric cook stove. For the past six months their electric bills have averaged between \$20 and \$30 per month (not bad for a family of 7!).

The photovoltaic cells were installed by the Pioneer Valley Photovoltaic Cooperative (**PV2 for short**), funded with a grant from the **Massachusetts Technology Collaborative** at no cost to the Habitat families. So the families began to reap their financial benefits as soon as they moved in, without having to recoup an initial investment. (And PV Habitat was able to run the winter space heaters off the “free energy” before the families moved in!) This win all around for the families and PV2 has led to a new Habitat partnership – PV2d has committed to working with PVH to ensure photovoltaics are part of the package for all new Habitat homes where the solar orientation makes it a worthwhile installation.

### We'd like to thank our November 2010

#### Newsletter Contributors:

Leo Sartori, Patricia Weed,  
Betty VonKlemperer, Doris McLeod,  
MJ Adams, Peter Elbow, Kay Berenson

## WHEN NO MEANS YES

Kudos to voters in the Pioneer Valley who came out in large numbers to VOTE NO ON 2 which was a vote to RETAIN the Comprehensive Permit (40B) legislation in Massachusetts. 40B allows developers of affordable housing to request a 1-stop permitting process at the local level and this simplified process greatly increases the effectiveness of Pioneer Valley Habitat's Site Selection Squad to move through what can be a complicated and time consuming review process. The 40B process simply puts all the local permit granting folks in the same room at the same time and empowers the ZBA to lead and expedite the permitting process.

So thank you all who voted NO on 2 and have helped the spirit and mission of Habitat's work to build homes in partnership with communities and families in need.

## New Franklin County Home

*(continued)*

Storm and Andrea have begun to work on their sweat equity: 250 hours each. Most of that time will be spent building. Their new home will be a one and a half story cape with three bedrooms. PVH is again working in partnership with **Franklin County Technical School**, as we did on the last two homes in Franklin County. The students will work during the week, with Habitat volunteers working on the weekends.

The lot was wooded and PVH extends gratitude to **Ashley Barstow** for pro bono tree cutting. Now the sunlight will shine on the planned photovoltaic cells on the roof. The foundation is going in now and the shell will get underway this month. Watch for the announcement of the wall-raising! This project was long in the planning and permitting phase, so raising walls will be especially sweet.

**Our sincere gratitude goes out to George L. Goodridge, Esquire as well as Dr. Laurence Klein and his partners at the Connecticut River Internists—our supporters and future neighbors in Montague City.**

## Welcome, New Board Members



Pioneer Valley Habitat has four new members on the Board of Directors. Paul McDonough is controller of inResonance, Inc., customizers of databases for non-profits. Marilyn Woodman is Director of Corporate and Foundation Relations at Smith College. Julie Held is a realtor at Delap Real Estate. Molly Flynn is a sophomore at UMass and the student representative to the Board.

## Cathryn Buonocore, Our New AmeriCorps Employee

Cathryn earned her BA from the University of Pennsylvania and was eager to move on. Like many college graduates in this time of scarce jobs, Cathryn was drawn to nonprofits. A Penn State administrator suggested that she look into AmeriCorps VISTA, a program begun in 1965 under President Kennedy. Men and women age 18 to 24 commit to a year of service for a nonprofit whose goal is to bring low income people out of poverty.

Cathryn studied a list of Habitat affiliates, mailed applications, and was hired by the Newburgh Habitat in New York. Those directing the program last summer must have seen right away that Cathryn was at ease and skilled with computers. She spent a lot of time in the office--more than she'd anticipated. This said, whenever her secretarial jobs were completed she biked to Newburgh's building site, met volunteers, answered their questions, and showed them how to do the task assigned by the site supervisor.

Life in Newburgh went along smoothly at first, but unexpectedly Cathryn's year's work commitment was cut down and became a summer job—very upsetting news. Once again an administrator came to her aid. The Newburgh executive director showed her a

list of AmeriCorps jobs on Habitat's international website.

Cathryn continued in her perseverance by doing a second job search in a few months. After mailing applications to many affiliates, she learned that our Pioneer Valley Habitat had an opening and wanted to interview her. After phone conversations with MJ Adams and a long distance interview, she was offered the job. MJ was won

over because Cathryn was so used to computer office work, but also enjoys helping volunteers on building sites and hopes to learn more about new construction techniques. Her official PVH title is "Construction Coordinator Assistant" (to Manager Michael Broad). Her email address is [build@pioneervalleyhabitat.org](mailto:build@pioneervalleyhabitat.org).

Congratulations, Cathryn, and accept our vote of confidence!



Construction Coordinator Assistant,  
Cathryn Buonocore

## *Douglas Kohl's aim, like Habitat's, was to do good in the real world...*

With the death of Douglas Kohl on October 13, the Northampton area lost one of its most constructive citizens, and Valley Habitat for Humanity lost a devoted and effective friend. He was a rare creature in this era of fierce competition and obsession with the bottom line: a shrewd business man committed to the common good.

In 1986, at the age of 27, Kohl founded the Kohl Construction Company. After building some high end homes, he moved on to build whole developments. By 2006 he was one of the biggest property owners in downtown Northampton and took part in forming the Business Improvement District--even though it would result in higher property taxes for him. He believed that the public benefits of the District, including beautification measures, outweighed its costs. Northampton city planner Wayne Feiden called him "one of the best and most responsible developers and a key player in land conservation efforts."

The connections between Kohl's business and Pioneer Valley Habitat remained informal. It was not his way to advertise his generosity. For years, however, he encouraged his employees to work on Habitat projects. Recently, he made possible a new Habitat building site in Amherst. He appeared before the Amherst Planning Board to seek approval for a new subdivision--which must by law include a lot for affordable housing. One member of the Board asked him just how he would accomplish this. At this point he spotted MJ Adams, Executive Director of Valley Habitat among those present and asked her, "You're from Habitat, right?" "Yes," she replied. Kohl continued, "Would you like a building lot?" "Most certainly yes," said MJ. A few months later Kohl transferred the lot to Habitat at no cost and with no strings attached. Thank you, Doug. God Bless. ■



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*Our thanks go to Charlie and Shelia Klem for hosting our annual donor appreciation event. The Klems are top-notch volunteers. Charlie heads the Amherst Building Team and Sheila is a member of the Family Support committee. Thanks for all you do!*

## 15th Annual Amherst Artisans Fair Amherst College Alumni House Saturday, Dec. 4 from 9-4pm

Local artisans welcome you to the  
Amherst College Alumni House  
for a crafts fair with a holiday open house feeling.

No entrance fee but donations will benefit Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity

*Don't forget —  
Volunteer Orientation happens at our  
office in Florence on the first Thursday (7pm)  
and third Saturday (9am) of every month.*

## Stanley Street Building Marathon

September 25th was the date and the Stanley Street Amherst site was the location of Pioneer Valley Habitat's annual "Dawn to Dusk" build. From 7 a.m. until 7 p.m., Amherst College students worked at the site in four shifts. At least five students took part in each shift.

The first shift worked on seeding the lawn at the Lamberg home. Their efforts were successful; the lawn is now looking good. The later shifts worked on laying the foundation for 10 Stanley Street, the last house under construction at this site. Amherst College students have generously contributed their time, energy and enthusiasm to the construction of all four of the Stanley Street homes.

According to Charlie Klem, one of the majordomos at the Stanley Street site, work on No. 10 is proceeding well. The building team still hopes to have the frame closed in before really cold weather sets in so that interior work can proceed through the winter months.



*Amherst College Students pose for a picture with soon to be Habitat homeowner, Phyllis K.*