

Celebrating the Realization of A Dream

Nearly ten years ago an Amherst College undergraduate, James Patchett '02, approached the Amherst College President with a vision of a partnership between the college and PV Habitat. The college agreed to donate land to PV Habitat, students agreed to help build, a site on Stanley Street was selected, and the project was launched. At long last, on September 27th, a festive crowd gathered at the site to celebrate the partnership that resulted in four happy families in beautiful homes, who now constitute a vibrant community.



[Amherst President, Carolyn Martin, at the Stanley Street Celebration]

Three of the new homeowners were present: Kathy Perry, Ashlee Cancio-Bello, and Phyllis Keenan. They spoke movingly of their pleasure and gratitude at the fulfillment of their own dream of owning a home. (Janice Lamberg is a fourth homeowner who couldn't be there and sent flowers and a lovely card of thanks.) Other speakers included Jim Brassord, Amherst College Director of Facilities, Bidy Martin, the College's newly installed President, MJ Adams, Habitat's Executive Director, and Sandy Belden, the President of the Habitat board. State Representative Ellen Story as well as representatives of the Town of Amherst were also present.

Speakers paid tribute to hard work by many volunteers--students and others--that went into the successful completion of the project. Mr. Brassord recalled a hectic 24-hour building session. Charlie Klem and Walt Kohler, who supervised the construction of all four houses, were singled out for special praise. The invaluable contributions of more than thirty members of the Valley business community were also cited for donating both materials and services; their names were listed in the program. The Town of Amherst contributed funds from the Community Preservation Act and helped in other ways. President Martin expressed the hope that the successful partnership between the College and PVHH can be continued into the future.

The Stanley Street project has achieved nationwide recognition as an example of imaginative design and construction. It was featured in the elegant illustrated book *Power of Pro Bono* (edited by John Cary), which describes forty examples of Design for the Common Good. It was also featured in a recent Exhibition of Sustainable Design held at the UMass Gallery. The homes are attractive as well as energy-efficient. They are light-filled. All four have solar panels on their roofs, and these provide a large portion of the electrical power for the households. In short, a great success story for the partnership between Amherst College and Pioneer Valley Habitat.



For more on the Amherst–PVHabitat partnership, including a great slide show of the building and the final celebration, please visit our website's home page at: www.PVHabitat.org

Jimn'Gary

Jim Van Natta and Gary Snyder are known among Valley Habitat people simply as “Jimn’Gary--one team called by what sounds like a single word. Together they are in charge of building at the Warner Street, Montague City site.



Yet Jim and Gary come from different towns and bring to Habitat different kinds of experience. Jim has worked for years as a carpenter and has his own construction company, where his son is a partner. Gary works with the Amherst College Chemistry Department. Together, the two men shape and direct the teams that actually build the houses under their command. They assign and supervise tasks as varied as applying siding, installing wiring, and painting window frames. This requires identifying the skills—or missing skills—of diverse volunteers. At the Warner Street site volunteers now include a group from the Franklin County Technical School who have

taken on much of the work on the house. But there are also men and women of various ages for whom turpentine is still a mystery.

How do Jim and Gary decide which volunteers to assign to what tasks? “That’s easy,” says Gary. “A little quiz will tell us who knows and doesn’t know about building. We can ask the volunteer, ‘What are the measurements of a 2 by 4?’ If he answers, 2 inches by 4 inches,’ he’s wrong. The correct answer is 1 ½ by 3 ½ inches, the dimensions of an actual 2 by 4 beam.”

Jim doesn’t see his work as educational: “The real teachers with us are the people from the Technical School.” Yet his way of guiding his workers is that of a wise instructor. His explanations make unfamiliar procedures and materials seem simple. It’s Gary’s way, too: he says of his workers, “Get them to understand what they’re doing.” Nor do Jim and Gary see each other as unchallenged bosses. Do the future occupants of the new house do anything besides hammering and painting? “Oh yes!” says Gary; “they let you know what they’d like!”

Although Jim and Gary had planned to build three houses on the Montague City site, the town is now allowing only one house to go up. Still, Jimn’Gary hope to add a second. They also hope that Valley Habitat can extend its work northward. That will mean more dwellings for Habitat families and also the spread of Jimn’Gary’s effective teaching.

Please remember that we are always looking for more volunteers!

We would especially appreciate volunteers for our Fundraising, Public Relations, and Faith Relations committees. Please contact our Development Director, Keegan Pyle, if you are interested in serving on any of these committees. If you are interested in volunteering in other areas, including building, please visit our website, www.pvhabitat.org to sign up.

Volunteer orientation is every first Thursday and second Saturday of the month in the PVHabitat office. Thank you!

Board Updates



We have three new Board Members! (From left) Eric Marsh, George “Luke” Goodridge, and Maureen Mahar are welcomed by President Peter Jessop. Eric is a resident of Greenfield and Chief Financial Officer of Greenfield Co-Operative Bank. Luke, who lives in Leyden, is an attorney in Greenfield. He has worked with PVH in handling real estate and site issues. Maureen, a Florence resident, is VP of Commercial Lending at Easthampton Savings Bank, which has been a generous supporter of PVHabitat over the years.

Peter Jessop has been on the PVH Board since 2006 and he is the new president. Peter is president of Integrity Development and Construction in Amherst and his years in building are invaluable in guiding Habitat's work.

Outgoing president Sanford Belden remains with us as vice-president. He has served on the Board since 2007. Sandy has been an excellent spokesperson for PVH, and he has facilitated various organizational aspects of the affiliate. We are grateful that we will continue to benefit from his financial expertise and other sound advice. Thank you, Sandy, for your many contributions.

Hike for Humanity



It was a blustery rainy day on October 1, but several people braved the weather to reach the summit of Skinner State Park to raise money for Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity. Volunteers also helped staff the tables and reward hikers with refreshments and t-shirts. Though the sky was low and coming down, the volunteers' spirits were high. And PVH raised over \$1400 to help build homes in the area! A big thank you to all the supporters, volunteers, and hikers who participated.



Jeff: second from the left; Mark, second from the right

PVH sent two volunteers, Mark Lange and Jeff Dahlberg, to the Jimmy Carter Work Project in Haiti in the beginning of November. We look forward to hearing all about their work there.

If you would like to receive this quarterly newsletter electronically rather than in paper form, please send an email to admin@pvhabitat.org.



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Site updates:

Warner Street, Montague City: Installing hardiplank, photovoltaics complete!

Garfield Ave, Florence: Hardiplank!

Belchertown Rd., Amherst: Proceeding with site evaluation and construction! Land donated by Doug Kohl.

Planning for site in Easthampton and Sunderland continues.

For more information visit www.pvhabitat.org or scan the block with your smartphone:



Sandy Belden is Honored

The Association of Fundraising Professionals (Western Mass Chapter) has named Sandy Belden Outstanding Philanthropist of Hampshire County. Sandy is Vice-President of PVH. The award will be presented on November 16th at the Log Cabin in Holyoke, MA.



Newsletter Contributors: Kay Berenson, Richard Delisle, Peter Elbow, Doris McLeod, Leo Sartori, Michael Simolo



Did you find what was missing?

Donors. You are who make our work possible. It is because of our generous donors that we have been able to provide decent and affordable housing to over 30 families in the Pioneer Valley, and as part of our partnership with Habitat International, for every home we build in the Pioneer Valley, we support the building of a Habitat home in Haiti. Thank you for your support.