Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity
Newsletter

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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
• September – groundbreaking at Hawthorne Farm, 235 East Pleasant Street, Amherst
• Saturday December 5th – Gingerbread Build 1:00 – 4:00 at Eastworks, Easthampton

Finish Line in Sight at East Street

As the light changes along with the leaves and the nights are again cool for sleeping, as we prepare for the summer to draw to a close, so too is the end of the construction at the MJ Adams Legacy Women Build project in sight and two families are that much closer to moving into their own homes. We have to call out here a few highlights of the project that illustrate just some of the ways in which this project is not only memorable but the way volunteers come together to truly build homes, hope and community:

Four interns funded by the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center contributed many hours of enthusiasm and perspective through the lens of their green building studies to the project. We will remember James Rejniak, Laura Addabo, Mariah Kurtz and Rommel Cordova-Fiori for their good ideas, great efforts, cheerful participation and warm camaraderie.

Sure, the 4th of July calls up images of parades and fireworks and cookouts in the backyard for many of us, but for more than 50 volunteers and staff from Beyond Green Construction and Energia, LLC, the kickoff to the holiday weekend this year will be remembered as Insulation Installation Blitz 2015! It took the persevering, perspiring crew (the work is hot and the day was hot to match) one day to do what it would have taken several of our smaller crews many days to accomplish. And over $3,000 was raised in sponsorships for the day’s volunteers!

Not one month later, other generous colleagues in the building trades – Professional Drywall Construction, with help from Carpenters Union Local 108 and Doctor Drywall – led the charge using donated materials from Westover Building Supply that saw the completion of the drywall installation, taping and mudding for two homes in record time, truly allowing us to get our schedule back on track to finish before the snow flies.

It’s not too late to be a part of the MJ Adams WomenBuild legacy – go to https://pvhabitat.org/volunteer/individual-construction-volunteers and use the VolunteerUp! button to sign up to build at East Street today!

Birds Give East Street the Stamp of Approval

Pioneer Valley Habitat has been fortunate to acquire beautiful land for many of its homes, which is exactly the type of location where affordable housing should be built - where nature can be most appreciated. Proof came at the Team Build on Saturday, May 9, when two Baltimore Oriole couples flirted right above the 9 members of the cohousing team who was there for the day as they sat munching their lunch on the front stoop of unit 1.

Volunteers from Pathways Cohousing (Florence), and Pioneer Valley Cohousing (Amherst), got a front row seat as two brilliant orange males took turns perching and flittering about. The two males seemed to get along and they sang frequently to two more modestly colored females flying nearby and landing in trees near the woods. What a great view and concert! You could practically hear the four of them calling, “This is a great place to nest, new homeowners!” And we hope they DO build their nests in the neighboring trees, and come back again to nest next year with their soon-to-be-born offspring!

Thank You Rockridge Retirement Community: PVHH’s Bulk Mail Champions!

“I wish they could give us a mailing every week,” said Julie Wysk, Director of Program Services for the Rockridge Retirement Community in Northampton. “It’s meaningful work, not busy work,” for residents who pester her for opportunities to give back to their community. Most of them have volunteered in their communities all their lives and crave the satisfaction they get from such contributions. Habitat delivers all the inputs, and Julie sets them up in a central location that quickly becomes a hub of activity.

Organizing the mailing uses long-practiced skills that are easily recalled, regardless of individual limitations on energy or mobility. A typical group of about ten grows over the few days they have to complete the task, allowing for any participant to drop in and drop out. It’s fun, and working together, perhaps with fellow residents they’ve barely met, builds connections and community for Rockridge. “It’s the perfect match,” said Julie, “for Habitat and Rockridge.”
Dear friends,

I always love meeting a new volunteer for the first time – the excitement of connecting with a good cause, trying new things and putting yourself out there takes courage. Hundreds of new volunteers and donors this year have taken that leap of faith to put on a hard hat or write a check. This is community building.

But what really and truly impresses me is the people I see helping PVHH the second time, the third time, the 50th time, the 100th time … This is when that initial spark of excitement becomes a fire that keeps the hope alive for all those who believe we can do something to end poverty housing in our community. PVHH has not one leader, but hundreds of people who step up to do more. This energy is what sustains our “small” organization and empowers us to make a big impact together.

There is no time like the present to sign up for another build day, become a golden hammer monthly giver or ask a friend to get involved with you. Thank you for all you do for your community.

In gratitude,
Megan McDonough

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**Get Involved!**

Scan the QR code to sign up and volunteer!
Habitat at Home…

Hammer a Nail for Habitat
Need some practice to shore up your hammering skills? Can’t make it to one of our construction sites but want to support Pioneer Valley Habitat? Stop by the Unitarian Society of Northampton and Florence at 220 Main Street in Northampton on a Sunday soon and pay a token fee to hammer a nail into a door in support of Habitat’s work to open the door to homeownership to families in Hampshire and Franklin Counties. Between 9:30 and 11:30 a.m. on September 13th, 20th, and 27th and on October 4th, master hammerer Bob Barker and a rotating crew of volunteer hammering instructors will set up on the UU lawn and invite all would-be carpenters to stop by and have a swing at it.

Green Fields Market
During the months of October, November, and December, shop with our friends at Green Fields Market, 144 Main Street in Greenfield, and drop your spare change in the container at the checkout. You will be supporting the growing movement toward sustainable member-owned food cooperatives while contributing toward another local low-income family’s first home.

…and Homes Away from Home

Rebuilding Haiti
Even as we build homes with local families, Pioneer Valley Habitat supports with an annual tithe the work that Habitat for Humanity is doing in Haiti to engage people in building construction skills and building shelter for families in a country torn apart by poverty and natural disaster. Since the devastating earthquake in January 2010, Habitat in Haiti has helped more than 55,000 families.

Fearless Peerless Leader
For the 32nd consecutive year, former president and first lady Jimmy and Roslyn Carter host the Habitat Work Week bearing their names, this year in Nepal in November, just after the former president celebrates his 91st birthday. His indomitable spirit and commitment to the work of Habitat is evidenced by President Carter’s determination to participate in the week as usual, even though it will mean foregoing some of his treatments for the cancer that has spread to his liver and brain. “If he can’t make it,” said Jonathan Reckford, HfHI CEO, “we will be there building in his honor.”

“Building homes shoulder to shoulder with families around the world is a humbling and transformative experience, reminding me on a daily basis the importance to all families of a safe, stable, decent place to call home,” remarks former PVHH Executive Director MJ Adams, who will be there as part of the Nepal team. “This year will be particularly meaningful – for we know that even if President Carter is not with us in body, he will certainly be present in spirit. I can’t think of a better way to honor his long standing leadership and commitment to Habitat than to build in Nepal.”

In Guatemala, Habitat’s Work Adapts to Local Need

For a week in June, longtime PVHH volunteer Charlie Klem shifted his Habitat construction hours from western Massachusetts to northwestern Guatemala (Tecpan). Charlie was one of a group of 20 from the US and Canada who spent nine days installing Health Home Kits in the area. Due to the uncertainty of land titles, true homeownership is difficult to obtain there, which limits Habitat from its usual model. Habitat has recently expanded its programs to upgrade the quality of life for squatters or leasees by improving the cooking facilities and updating latrines. In five working days the group fabricated (literally from the soil) five “air tight” stoves and built the above ground structure of five latrines.

Wish List
• File storage in a clean, dry environment to archive older records
• Barn or warehouse storage space for tools and supplies
• Two (2) Windows 7 laptops able to withstand modern computing needs
• Recycled printer paper
• Lead safe certified renovation contractor for Greenfield rehab
• Locking office file cabinet
• Construction vehicle or trailer
• Perennial plants and straw for fall Easthampton plantings

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Ready, Set, BUILD!

Get ready for the fourth annual Gingerbread Build on Saturday, December 5, 2015 from 1-4 pm at the Eastworks Building in Easthampton! Your registration fee of $100 ensures your basic building supplies of gingerbread siding, roof pieces and buttercream mortar will be laid out for you upon your arrival, ready for you to unleash your wildest architectural fantasies with the extra trimmings you provide in the space of two hours. Design and build to win one of our categories or come up with your own creative idea!

Go to www.pvhabitat.org/gingerbread-build today and register! Awards given for youth entries, several whimsical prize categories and the teams that raise the greatest number of pledges/donations and the most money.

A Holiday Gift that Helps Habitat Families

Give the gift of affordable homeownership to someone you love this holiday season by making a donation to Pioneer Valley Habitat in their name and we will send them (or you, for you to send if you’d prefer) a holiday greeting card to let them know. Your tribute contribution helps a low income family to someday begin their own holiday traditions in a home they helped build and then own.

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.