



# Habitat Happenings

spring 2022



## From the Executive Director's Desk

This is a BIG YEAR for our affiliate — we celebrate the 25th Anniversary of our founding in 1997, and the 15th Anniversary of the opening of our ReStore in 2007!

It was a pleasure to sit recently with founders, Bob and Peg Merritt, as they recalled the early years. Speaking with other founders, Karen and Wayne Barnes, about the dedication and enthusiasm of those original volunteers who put in countless hours to start our organization and build the first homes was very moving. Over the years, hundreds joined the cause to contribute their time and resources to help provide many decent, affordable homes in our local area.

In addition to hearing from those founders, I have enjoyed talking with homeowner families who have partnered with us and have helped create our history through joining the builds and settling into their homes. Their stories repeat themselves, 'Getting a Habitat home made all the difference. We can't say enough about how much we appreciate what people did for us!'

As satisfying as it is to look back, we also look to the future with great hope. We recently started a vitally important project in Plymouth to provide accessibility accommodations for a medically-disabled teenager who is fighting her way through incredible challenges (read more on page 2). This project will span this spring and summer, and after that we hope to be ready to begin a new project in Carver. We are currently working towards developing a rehab project to update an abandoned 1890s Carver house into a handicap-accessible, three-bedroom home for a Habitat selected Veteran family. We are also making progress with the Town of Plympton on evaluating a couple of possible parcels of land for a future build site. Finally, our ReStore continues its important service to local bargain shoppers and willing item donors alike to keep perfectly good materials from going directly to landfills.

Congratulations to all of you who have put your hands and hearts into this critical work. We are all in it together and your collective power is inspiring! The need for affordable housing is at an all-time high and your efforts, without question, bring transformational change to families in need. When the organization looks back in another twenty-five years, I trust they will say with pride, "We have come together to build homes, communities, and hope on the foundation that was established 50 years ago!"

Thank you & stay well,

*Jim Middleton*  
Executive Director



every  
one  
deserves a decent place to live



## Hope & Independence for a SJS Warrior

Work has begun on a major new Brush With Kindness project! HFHGP is providing volunteer labor and construction expertise to execute a significant home renovation to support the needs of a teenage girl who has suffered debilitating health issues. The project is a partnership with our long-time friends at the Church of the Pilgrimage.

At the age of 13, the then-healthy teen suffered a severe toxic reaction to a medication. She is now 18. Symptoms began with a rash, severe conjunctivitis, fever and cough. After symptoms worsened, she was rushed to Boston Children's Hospital where she was diagnosed with Stevens Johnson Syndrome/TENS [Toxic Epidermal Necrolysis].

Due to increasing pain, she was transferred to the MGH Pediatric Intensive Care Unit for nine days while awaiting a humidity tent in Shriners Burn Hospital. She was critically ill as the disease took over her body inside and out. All of her the mucous membranes suffered burns, causing damage to her esophagus, the lining of her lungs and many other internal problems. Placenta bandages on her eyes helped protect her corneas. When this disease starts there is no medication to stop the progression. The pain was so intense that it became necessary to be on a ventilator in a drug induced coma. Her entire body was covered in bandages, with only her mouth, nose and eyes uncovered, despite burns inside and out.

The humidity tent worked well, and new skin began to grow. Through many infections, medications, surgeries, dressing changes, and endless IV lines, this amazing girl fought her way back to life! She had to learn to sit, walk, and speak. Over the past 4 years, countless long hospital stays and doctor appointments in Boston have made her life very difficult and lonely. Falls caused from no depth perception, balance issues and being legally blind have added to the burden.

Education was put on hold for a while and the resulting isolation was hard, with the stress taking a toll on every family member. Their church, the Church of the Pilgrimage, has been a long-time supporter of HFHGP. After hearing about their need for major home improvements, we agreed to help make her home a safer place.

With her family living in a small 2-story condo with no availability for renovations, she moved to live with her grandparents in a larger home in Plymouth. However the bedrooms are upstairs. This is where Habitat comes in.

We will be converting the existing 1st floor living room into a bedroom with a handicap accessible bathroom. A ramp and concrete walkway will connect the back deck to the front yard for ease in transportation and ambulance service. A small 12' x 14' addition will be also be put on to create a new living room and allow for adequate storage of medical supplies.

The end result will help this teen and her family look forward to a more manageable home life, even with all the medical problems she endures daily. The family is deeply grateful to everyone who has contributed financially through the Church of the Pilgrimage's fundraising effort and to all the volunteers who will be involved in the construction work.

In the words of grandmother Geri: *"It is so incredible to see all this coming together, being made possible through people caring about helping our family and making life better for a girl who has gone through the worst and trying so hard to give life her best. This new bedroom means more than words can say! The addition of a new living room is going to be a blessing for all the family! This is God's love shining through every single person involved in this project! We saw firsthand God's love, through all the fear, from dedicated doctors and nurses who worked so hard and long to save this young girl and still do so today. This is when we shine, helping and sharing with each other!"*



*Gerri H. looks forward to the renovation bringing a safe living situation for her granddaughter.*

## Calling Volunteers!

We will be working most every Saturday through this spring and summer on this Langford Road project and we need help! To sign up and lend a hand on one or more days, go to: [www.hfhplymouth.org/how-to-help/volunteer](http://www.hfhplymouth.org/how-to-help/volunteer). No experience is necessary!



## Commitment and Compassion from a Navy Veteran and Local Realtor Volunteer Spotlight: Den Forbes

by Melissa Guimond

Volunteerism powers the work of Habitat for Humanity of Greater Plymouth, and over the past seven-plus years, we've been blessed by a volunteer who's given so much of his time to our work: Den Forbes. Known to many because of all the teams he's worked with, Den can easily be described as a jack-of-all-trades, and has spent hundreds of hours volunteering his time with us.

Den's first experience with Habitat for Humanity started in the fall of 2014. Executive Director Jim Middleton asked Den to have breakfast with him and the outgoing Board of Directors President Steve Dubuque. As a longtime friend of Steve's, Den was wondering "why me?...Why would they want me on the HFHGP Board of Directors?" During the meeting, Den was reminded of his relevant experience and passion for housing programs on the South Shore. Den and Steve had worked together previously through Steve's role as Director of the South Shore Housing Development Corporation and in Den's role as Executive Director of the Cranberry Area Hospice. During this meeting, Jim and Steve asked Den to join the HFHGP Board because they knew that his experience in the real estate industry as well as his experience with multiple nonprofits (including Plymouth Area Coalition for the Homeless and the South Shore Realtor Assoc.) gave him an unknowing head start to Habitat.

Through Den's time with our affiliate, he's been involved with almost all areas of the organization. Currently, Den can be found at our ReStore, working weekly on the sales floor, helping customers, making minor repairs to furnishings and lighting fixtures that come in, and assembling pieces as needed. In addition, Den has served on our Board as a member and as Vice President. He has also served on the Executive Committee, Fundraising Committee (including as Chair), Site Selection Committee, and Construction Committee. And, has spent time as a construction crew member, where he was involved in four homes, including contributing a great amount of time to the Brentwood Road home in Kingston. Den has also been a crew member in our Brush with Kindness program.

Den enjoys working with his hands the most and gets a great deal of satisfaction from it, which is why

he really enjoys volunteering on builds and in the ReStore. When talking about his volunteer experience, Den explained, "Each and every volunteered day presents new challenges from which to learn new skills and achieve successful outcomes. Working at the ReStore has opened my eyes as to how many people in our service area (and beyond) we can help make their lives happier and healthier, day by day, week in and week out." He added how rewarding he finds the work in part because he is able to aid hundreds of families every month.

When asked what volunteering memory he treasures most, he mentions they "occur upon my hearing the stories from the Habitat families who we have helped both in the past and more recently, as well those heartwarming stories that are witnessed while the construction crew sits down for a delicious meal donated by our Lunch Committee Volunteers."

Den encourages others to volunteer for organizations that give them the joy he gets from Habitat for Humanity of Greater Plymouth, and he reminds everyone that it's never too late to get involved with HFHGP! For information about volunteering, please visit: [www.hfhplymouth.org/how-to-help/volunteer/](http://www.hfhplymouth.org/how-to-help/volunteer/)

**Habitat for Humanity**  
of Greater Plymouth

**RIDE FOR HOMES 2022**

**Riders Wanted!**  
SATURDAY, MAY 7  
VFW, MIDDLEBORO

12 Station St., Middleboro  
Registration begins @ 10AM; Ride @ 12 PM  
\$20/rider; \$10/passenger

Plus, Post-Ride Festivities:  
DJ, Lunch, Raffles & More!  
All proceeds benefit HFHGP

## Launching New ReStore Rewards!

It's been almost two years since we opened our doors in our newest location at 160 N. Main Street in Carver, and the positive reviews continue to roll in. Customers often comment on the high quality products, spacious layout, and easy parking – and the store has been busy! Our long-time ReStore Manager, Gary Miller, continues to ensure the floor is filled with quality items despite the constant turnover with sales. In January, we were happy to welcome new ReStore Assistant Manager, Brittany Wilson, to the team.

And, we're thrilled to announce the launch of our new ReStore Rewards program! For every \$100 spent in the ReStore, shoppers will receive \$10 in ReStore Rewards for use on a future purchase. These rewards are valid at our Carver location only, but they are transferable – feel free to share your rewards with friends or family. As a perk for our newsletter audience, a bonus Rewards coupon can be found on page 7. We hope to see you at the ReStore soon!

As always, we are open to the public and offer great deals on new and gently-used items for bargain shoppers and treasure hunters alike. You never know what perfect fit you'll find here!

- ✓ Furniture
- ✓ Vanities / Cabinets
- ✓ Appliances
- ✓ Flooring
- ✓ Lighting
- ✓ Paint & Building Supplies
- ✓ Doors & Windows

Please remember us if you're looking for a **great way to donate your household items** too. Whether you're remodeling, downsizing or just spring cleaning, please consider donating your furniture and items listed above to the ReStore. If your item has good life left, shoppers will give it new purpose while you can be satisfied knowing that your donation will support affordable home construction for local families.

To arrange your donation, call us at 508.866.4199 and send photos of your items to [restoredonations@verizon.net](mailto:restoredonations@verizon.net). Plus, we offer **FREE** pick-ups for larger items!

Visit [www.hfhplymouth.org/restore](http://www.hfhplymouth.org/restore) to learn more.

### Location/Hours:

160 N. Main St. Carver  
(next to Tractor Supply)

Tues.: 10 am – 1 pm

Wed. – Fri.: 10 am – 6 pm

Sat.: 9 am – 3 pm



## BSU Tackles ReStore Marketing

Last fall, we participated in Bridgewater State University's Collaborative University Business Experiences program. Students in two classes took on the challenge of how to market the ReStore to millennials and Gen-Z. Their work resulted in analysis of consumer behavior and recommendations for marketing tactics to effectively reach that demographic to encourage them to shop at the ReStore for deals.



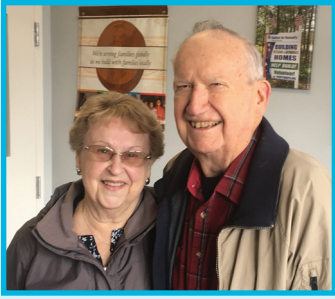

# CUSTOMER Appreciation Day

Join Us!

**June 11, 2022**

**\*Discounts, Giveaways & Refreshments\***  
*Celebrating the 15th Anniversary of our ReStore!*

**160 N. Main St., Carver**



## Reflections on Our Early Days

by Kristen Walsh

Back in the mid-1990s, Rev. Bob Merritt was sitting in his office at United Parish of Carver, when Karen Barnes, a nurse for the Town of Carver, stopped by to discuss an idea: the

creation of a Habitat for Humanity affiliate to serve southern Plymouth County. Karen's husband, Wayne, had first approached Bob about the possible initiative, and they all agreed there was a great need for affordable housing for families living further from Boston, in the towns of Carver, Kingston, Lakeville, Middleboro, Plymouth, and Plympton. Bob said "yes."

"There were people interested in creating a chapter and it isn't something you can do alone," Bob recalls of the new venture. "I was in a situation where I could make contacts and help get things started. I knew it was what I was supposed to be doing as a minister committed to the community." Bob and Wayne were joined by Rev. Dick Coleman of Plympton Congregational Church. Bob's wife Peg cleared out an extra room in their home to set up an office and a phone line. And the work began.

"We reached out to Habitat International about requirements to be eligible to create an affiliate," Bob says. "Peg and I made a couple trips to Rochester, New York, and Hartford, Connecticut, for workshops." Bob credits his wife for keeping things in order and keeping him on track. Committees were formed and volunteers came together. The process took about two years, during which time the small group tackled a roofing project. "One of the first things we did was shingle the roof for a woman with two small children in North Carver," says Bob. "I worked on the project with Steve Dubuque, then director for South Shore Housing. Every time I see Steve now we look at each other and laugh because we don't know how we got away without breaking our necks."

Habitat for Humanity of Greater Plymouth was officially incorporated in 1997, but the group initially faced a challenge finding land. "What really got it started was when Karen and Wayne donated property in Halifax," Bob recalls. "That was a lifesaver."

The first home built was for Bethany Casoni and her two daughters. "There were well over a dozen volunteers building every Saturday, and Bethany was there every week working alongside us. She was a tremendous person. When she moved in, it wasn't a house anymore, it was a home."

As the program grew, so did Peg's role. "I had no idea how big it was going to be, until one day we needed a volunteer coordinator," she says. "I figured I had a home office and phone line, and all the paperwork in order, so I said 'I think I can do that,' and someone said 'Are you sure? That's a big job.' I found out that they were right!" But, Peg adds, "People were great. A lot of men and women in churches and from the community came through. We were a small group but we worked hard."

Bob says a key moment was getting a formal office upstairs in the Landmark Building on Route 58 in Carver. Peg remembers when the affiliate introduced a newsletter. "When the newsletter was printed, I would pick it up at Powder Horn Press in Plymouth and meet a group of about a dozen volunteers at South Meadow Village to fold and staple the newsletters and sort them for the post office," she says. "I would bring snacks and drinks and we would have a lot of fun."

As of today, the affiliate has built 13 homes for families, including 58 children collectively -- and has made important repairs on several dozen more. Though Bob and Peg formally stepped away from their hands-on roles after about 10 years, the couple still supports the organization and holds their passion project close to their hearts.

"I'm thrilled that it has grown the way it has," Peg says. "It makes me smile every time I think of it." "When I see how Habitat for Humanity of Greater Plymouth has grown, I feel accomplished; it's what I was created to do," Bob says. "The organization has done more for me than I ever did for them. It's really great to work with people who are so committed and dedicated to something that takes time out of their lives. It's a great feeling to be part of that community."

He likens it to family. "Even though I've been away from it for a while, I still run into people I worked with. It makes you feel good to know that you're still connected in a real spiritual way. It's a reminder that there are great things happening in the world."

thank you!

## Our Volunteers are the lifeblood of our organization!

The gift of your time and dedication to our mission allows us to continue to transform the lives of deserving families, helping them achieve the strength, stability and independence they need to build a better life for themselves and their families.





### SAVE THE DATE

Friday, October 7, 2022  
Hotel 1620, Plymouth

Join us for a special evening to mark our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary milestone!

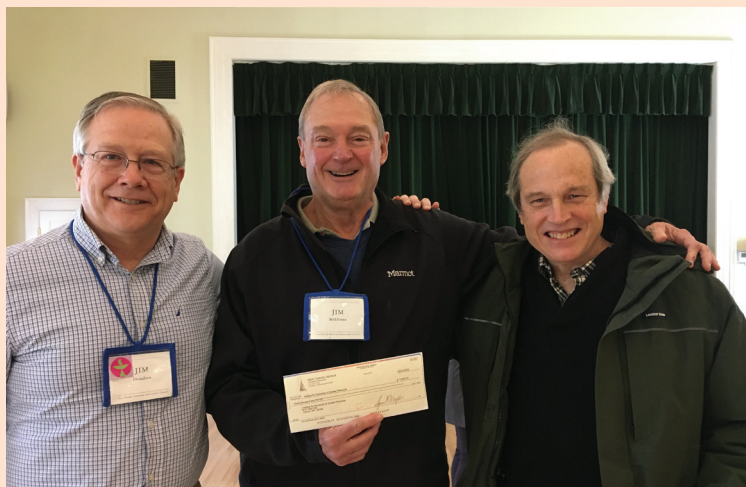
Dinner - Live Music & Dancing - Silent & Live Auctions  
Share Fond Memories & Support Our Future

## Join our Gala Committee

Help us create a night to remember! It'll be three years since we last gathered for our Hearts & Hammers Gala and we can't wait to bring friends and supporters together again. But we need volunteers to help pull the pieces together and create a wonderful celebration of our 25th Anniversary. To join the group or learn more, please contact Amy at [amy@hfhplymouth.org](mailto:amy@hfhplymouth.org) or 508-866-4188.

If committee work isn't your speed, please consider lending a hand in other ways:

- ✓ Ask your business to sponsor the Gala. *Levels start at just \$150.*
- ✓ Donate an item for our silent or live auction. *Wide variety of items welcome*
- ✓ Ask friends to buy tickets to join you on Oct. 7th!



## Gratitude for Long-time Support

Many thanks go to First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church in Duxbury for their continued support of our affordable housing work in the community. In March, Executive Director Jim Middleton (center) had a chance to extend our gratitude to Jim Hamilton, President of the Governing Board and Karl Sweitzer, Chair of their Social Justice Committee, for another recent donation. Their financial support over the past several years speaks to their dedication for improving lives through social action.

## Crafting for a Cause!

On April 13th, a group of crafty HFHGP supporters shared a fun evening together at Pinz while making a variety of wooden home décor signs. A good time was had by all and proceeds benefited HFHGP!

If you're interested in spearheading a DIY fundraiser for us, please reach out to [amy@hfhplymouth.org](mailto:amy@hfhplymouth.org).



## 2022 Board of Directors

**Nicole Joy Hales, President**  
PR First

**Brenda Sutherland, Vice President**  
RE/MAX Real Estate Center

**Dennis Crimmins, Treasurer**  
Attorney

**Dottie Kelley, Secretary**

**Jill Amato**  
MountainOne

**Laura Buckley**  
MassHire South Shore Workforce Board

**Beth Davis**  
Keller Williams

**Barbara Graveline**  
North Easton Savings Bank

**Rev. Greta MacRae**

**Genevieve Medeiros**  
Gordian

**Jonathan Wells**  
Cape Cod 5

## thank you

We are extremely grateful to Donna Fernandes and David Drain who stepped off the Board of Directors this year, having reached the end of their terms. Their contributions over many years have been invaluable. We know how lucky we are to have them just a phone call away, as they continue to support HFHGP in other capacities.



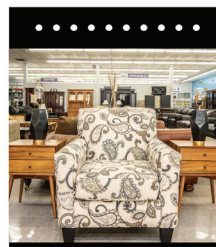
## REWARDS

**\$10**

Receive \$10 in ReStore Rewards for every \$100 you spend in one transaction.

**SHOP • SUPPORT • SAVE**

Valid Only at: 160 N. Main Street, Carver, MA  
508.866.4199 | [www.hfhplymouth.org/restore](http://www.hfhplymouth.org/restore)



REWARDS EXPIRE:

**AUG. 15, 2022**



TRANSFERRABLE.  
SHARE WITH FRIENDS!

Rewards slip must be surrendered. Copies not accepted. Discount does not apply to sales tax. Rewards can be stacked in one transaction. Rewards are valid for 60 days and expire on date stamped above.

## 2021 Grant Makers & Major Corporate Sponsors:

Thank you to all who invested in our work last year through corporate, foundation, and faith institution grant awards. We are deeply honored to have been chosen for this generous support:

■ <b>Allways Health Partners:</b>	\$10,000
■ <b>E. Joseph Evans Charitable Trust:</b>	\$10,000
■ <b>HarborOne Bank:</b>	\$10,000
■ <b>North Easton Savings Bank:</b>	\$10,000
■ <b>Dennison Lubricants, Inc:</b>	\$5,000
■ <b>First Home Mortgage:</b>	\$5,000
■ <b>SouthCoast Community Foundation:</b>	\$5,000
■ <b>Cape Cod Five:</b>	\$3,500
■ <b>Church of the Pilgrimage:</b>	\$2,000
■ <b>Dennis Crimmins, P.C.</b>	\$2,500
■ <b>Empire Wine &amp; Spirits:</b>	\$2,500
■ <b>MountainOne:</b>	\$2,500
■ <b>St. Anne's Credit Union:</b>	\$2,500
■ <b>Tech Etch:</b>	\$2,500
■ <b>Vermont Mutual Insurance Group Giving Fund:</b>	\$2,500
■ <b>Pinehills Veterans Group:</b>	\$1,500
■ <b>Walmart Foundation:</b>	\$1,349
■ <b>First Parish Unitarian Universalist, Duxbury:</b>	\$1,250
■ <b>Homebridge Financial</b>	\$1,000
■ <b>Tiny &amp; Sons Auto Glass:</b>	\$1,000



## every day is earth day

When you recycle your car, you help Habitat for Humanity build more homes.

To anyone else, it looks like just another old car. But you remember all the adventures, the good times, the important moments you shared. Let that old car make some new memories!

Recycle it now and help a family build strength, stability and self-reliance through homeownership. Your donated car can help a family build a decent, affordable home where kids can finally have their own room to play, study and learn.

**Make new memories! Donate your car now to help Habitat for Humanity.**



**(877) 277-4344** [habitat.org/carsforhomes](http://habitat.org/carsforhomes)



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for Humanity®  
of Greater Plymouth, Inc.

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**Carver, MA 02330**

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spring 2022

## inside this issue

- Plymouth Renovation Underway
- Reflections from Co-Founders
- Volunteer Spotlight
- New ReStore Rewards Program
- Hearts & Hammers Gala Returns
- In the Pipeline

**Help build the story of home.**

**Shop. Donate.**

