



the

Homesteader

www.hfhplymouth.org

Habitat for Humanity of Greater Plymouth, Inc.

Spring 2020

First Home of 2020 Dedicated, Handed Over



A definite highlight of 2020 for HFHGP so far was the dedication of our tenth home, located at 20 Brentwood Road in Kingston on January 12. We were thrilled to then transfer the home to Hakeem Moore and his family on March 4. The ceremony was a wonderful celebration of our mission come to life.

Hakeem Moore worked alongside dozens of volunteers for over nine months to build his home. Site Supervisor Sean Dormady of DAM Construction oversaw the work on the house, and volunteers David Drain, Den Forbes, and Dan Kelley were additionally specifically singled out during the dedication ceremony for their tireless efforts over the final weeks in particular to ensure the Moores' home would be completed in time.

It is so gratifying to see months of incredibly hard work realized through the home dedication and passing of the papers to the Moore family. Obviously this means so much to the Moores, but even more inspiring is how much this process has meant to the dozens of volunteers who worked on constructing this home, as was evident in the tremendous turnout and expression of joy we saw at the dedication.

We look forward to continuing this momentum with the construction of our three additional homes currently underway, which will be completed later this year, and we hope to secure more land soon for new homes in the communities of Carver, Middleboro, Plympton, and Lakeville, in addition to Kingston and Plymouth.

Executive Director's Corner: Different Times, Building Hope

As we consider the essential work and joy of Habitat, we recognize the tremendous strain the new coronavirus has brought to our collective doorstep. While we as individuals, families, and communities shelter through the virus in Massachusetts—a time that brings great concern and anxiety for all of us—I have always felt that Habitat partner families and supporters share values which tie us like family. And, as with family, we care deeply about your safety, health, and wellness. I truly hope you and your loved ones are well and are heeding the urgent calls for social distancing and staying at home. Without question, the COVID-19 crisis has impacted access to our most basic necessities, and we are working closely with our partner families to ensure they have the flexibility needed to take care of themselves without undue financial pressure during this trying time.

On a brighter note, thanks to all of you, HFHGP has seen an outstanding period of building and helping! This past year has been all about “bringing people together to build Homes, Communities, and Hope!” The time of COVID-19 shows us in countless ways how essential Habitat shelter is to daily life. Having a safe, decent, and affordable home allows us at least to be settled and comfortable with adequate space to function and enjoy. It has to be a tremendous relief not having an added heavy layer of insecurity about the cost of home while you face being unemployed or sick.

Most think of Habitat as the “Builds.” That is the most public and widely engaging thing we do. There is the enjoyment of the community coming together to put their hands, hearts, and skills together—and have a fun, fulfilling time doing it. We hear the words of appreciation from our partner families as their homes take shape and they think about becoming homeowners. Owning a home is a dream and a source of pride, security and stability. It provides dignity and a sense of place.

We at Habitat get to see the look in their eyes and joy in their voices! *“Everyone at Habitat is so great. I can’t tell you how much I appreciate what they’re doing and how nice they are to us!” “This house is a chance to have a better life for my kids and not have to worry constantly about where we live and how much it’s costing us.”*

But beyond the Builds, there is much more that happens behind the scenes and under the surface. Out of the spotlight, our Brush with Kindness program helps by doing repairs, weatherization, or ramps for people facing difficulties. The ReStore helps families on a budget improve or decorate their homes while repurposing tons of product and keeping it out of landfills. Thousands of purchases each year means thousands of families living more affordably and comfortably.

Someone recently thanked me for thanking them. What a kind, thoughtful and real expression! And I thought, that’s how Habitat works so powerfully. Everyone gets a chance to say thanks for “coming together to build homes, communities, and hope.” In these times that test our spirits, we reach out together—virtually—to help each other and show gratitude, hope, and action!

Bethany Casoni Mortgage Payoff

In January, as we kicked off 2020, we were thrilled to receive the final mortgage payment from Bethany Casoni, making her our first partner homeowner to now own her home outright! In 2000, Bethany moved into HFHGP’s first completed home. Her two daughters were 8 and 10 years old when they received the house, and they are all still enjoying the comfort, safety and security of the Halifax home where they’ve made so many family memories. Congratulations Bethany -- you are an inspiration to all of us and we are so happy for your accomplishment!



Meet Our New Kingston Homeowner: Hakeem Moore

Miracles do happen. That is what Hakeem Moore thought when he got the news that he had been approved for a Habitat for Humanity of Greater Plymouth home in Kingston, Massachusetts. He was at work when he heard.

“My son’s mother and her family showed up and asked me to sit down,” Moore recalls. “Then they handed me the letter that said that I got the house. I was speechless.”

Moore had applied for the Habitat home at the encouragement of a friend, but says that he never expected it to happen. He had been down on his luck; a few months earlier, an affordable housing apartment fell through just a week before he and his eight-year-old son were scheduled to move in.

“I’m the type of person who gets excited really fast and I didn’t want to get my hopes up only to be let down if it didn’t actually happen,” he says of hearing the good news about the Habitat home. “But then I cried. I was over the moon.”

That day, Moore’s life changed. After nearly two years of being homeless — frequently moving his son for temporary stays with family and friends — he would finally have a place to call home.

“A big reason I needed to find a place is that my son Quincie has autism and it’s really hard for him to adjust with all the moving back and forth,” Moore explains. “It was affecting him.”

The stability — being able to have a space to lay out clothes and do homework, creating a routine for brushing teeth, having food in their own refrigerator — will be a positive game changer for Quincie, as well as his brother Darien.

“Darien is very happy that I have a home for him to live in and do creative things like build Legos, play in the backyard, and have family dinners,” Moore says.

Having a place to reunite is important to the entire family. “When I became homeless, so did my mom because we had been living together,” Moore says of his mother Patricia, who will also live at the new home. “We had to separate in order to find places to stay. So when I told my her I got the house, she may have been happier than me because we would finally be able to come back together.”

Moore, who helped build the home alongside Habitat volunteers from the community, moved into the home in mid-March. But he is still amazed at the opportunity that has been given to him and his family.

“I can’t believe I was chosen, and I am grateful because I know there are so many other people who also need a home. But I am proof that miracles really do happen.”

To learn more about Habitat for Humanity of Greater Plymouth, please visit www.hfhplymouth.org.



Construction Progress at Long Pond Road

Since breaking ground at the Long Pond Road site in Plymouth in May of 2019, great progress has been made on the three houses that will soon be home to three wonderful families. Hundreds of volunteers, including a core group of our most steadfast crew, have brought their energy, great spirit, and varied skills to the site each and every Saturday. The partner families (two of which are military veteran households) can regularly be found working alongside our volunteers as they fulfill their “sweat equity” hours. As of early April, exterior work was completed on all three homes, including vinyl siding on the third house. Interior partitions and rough wiring and plumbing were also finished in all three.

While the COVID-19 pandemic has forced us to suspend work with volunteer construction crews for the time being, we are hopeful that we can get back on track later this spring, following the guidance of public health officials. Our steadfast crew is eager to get back to work, and to make up for lost time, we will need many more volunteers to help so that these families can move into their homes as soon as possible. Set back from the main road, on a beautiful, quiet, wooded lot, we eagerly look forward to the day when the sounds of happy kids at play take over from the sounds of busy construction tools at work.

Remember, this is the first time we’ve built more than one home simultaneously, so you can trust that between sheet-rocking, flooring, finish work, painting and landscaping, we can find a job for you! Sign up at www.hfhplymouth.org.

It is always so inspiring and heartwarming to see so many people coming together to help community members in need and we encourage any of our supporters to stop by on a Saturday to check out the progress and see what keeps us going every day! Use 863 Long Pond Road on your GPS and look for the big roadside Habitat sign.



Allison and Taylor



Tracy, US Air Force and Army Reserve veteran



Jenny, US Marine Corps veteran

How You Can Help

Stay tuned to our webpage, www.hfhplymouth.org, for updates on when it will be safe for volunteer construction crews to be active again on site. We will need an influx of help to make up for the time lost due to the coronavirus stay-at-home order.

Do you have a group of friends, neighbors or co-workers who want to tackle the site together on a Saturday? We strongly encourage groups to dive in! Contact Donna Martin, our Volunteer Coordinator, at 508-866-4188 or volunteer@hfhplymouth.org to make arrangements. We’re also always in need of lunch assistance, so if construction labor isn’t your speed, let us know if you can provide a day’s lunch.

ReStore Moves to 160 North Main Street, Carver

We are so excited to announce that we are moving the ReStore! We signed a lease on a new location for the ReStore and HFHGP offices. The lease for 160 North Main Street in Carver (formerly occupied by Carver Appliance) began in December 2019.

When concerns surrounding the coronavirus heightened in mid-March, we closed the ReStore to the public and have been using this time to finish preparations in the new space and to move the ReStore and offices to our new location.

The decision to move was based on the need for greater visibility of the ReStore storefront, as well as additional space. At about 7,500 square feet, the new location provides 50% more space than currently offered, as well as better layout opportunities for the various products offered throughout the store, which range from cabinets, doors, and paint to dining room sets, couches, and chairs, as well as other furniture pieces and construction supplies.

The Habitat ReStore in Carver supports the mission of the HFHGP by selling new and used furniture, appliances, and building materials to the public at discount prices. All proceeds from the Habitat ReStore contribute to the construction of new Habitat homes and repair of existing homes for low- to moderate-income families. The Habitat ReStore also diverts usable materials from the local landfill. Working in partnership with HFHGP, this retail operation provides a valuable source of cash flow through the sale of donated items.

Before the ReStore opens in its new location, the space will be built out to best fit the needs of the store as well as HFHGP staff and volunteers. We are so excited by the possibilities offered by this new location for the ReStore, and we look forward to welcoming you soon!

Volunteer Appreciation

We are so grateful to each and every volunteer who helps us build, provide lunch, assist in the office, and plan events throughout the year. Without all of them, we simply couldn't deliver on our important mission. It is a beloved tradition at our Annual Meeting to recognize outstanding volunteers for their contributions over the year; however due to the pandemic, we weren't able to hold our Annual Meeting as planned this year.

Instead, we hand-delivered or mailed special Certificates of Appreciation to the following people for their tremendous efforts: Ed Bent, David Berry, Frank Edwards, Ward Jaros, Bob Kostka, Alanna Long, Leanne McGuinness, Charlotte McKenna, Doug MacLeod, Mayflower Church, Roxanne Puhl, and Kylin Valentine.

We also recognized three Extraordinary Volunteers for their countless hours and dedication: Stacy Connor, Taylor LeClair and Teri Smith; as well as our Rookies of the Year: David Celli, Kenny Drew, Jon LeClair and Peter Neville.

Thank you all for all that you do!



2019 Gala Recap

On October 18, 2019, nearly 250 supporters of HFHGP filled the ballroom at Hotel 1620 to raise important funds for our current home building projects. With support from sponsors and attendees of the sold-out event, the Hearts & Hammers Gala raised over \$82,000, a record-breaking total for this annual tradition. Attendees enjoyed fantastic live music by Four In A Row, silent and live auctions, video highlights and Surf & Turf dinner. The featured speaking program included words from HFHGP leadership, compelling remarks from a partner homeowner, and a presentation to our two honorees: Glynn Electric and The Pinehills Affordable Housing Charitable Trust. It was a truly remarkable evening and we look forward to this year's event!

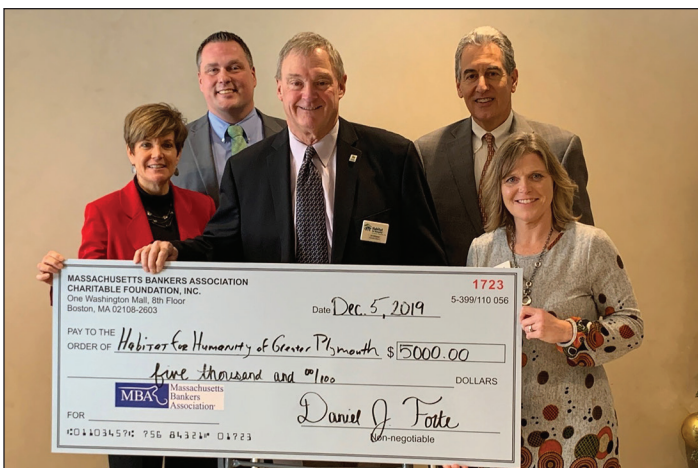


Save the Date!

2020 Hearts & Hammers Gala
Friday, October 2, 2020
6 - 10 PM
Hotel 1620, Plymouth MA

Habitat for Humanity Grant Recap for 2019

With four builds taking place concurrently throughout much of 2019, the need for cash on hand was greater than ever. We are so grateful to the organizations that offered substantial grants to help us build toward our mission! Thanks to the town of Plymouth's Community Preservation Committee for their generous grant of \$170,000, and The Pinehills Affordable Housing Charitable Trust's grant of \$150,000 to support our Long Pond Road three-home site. We also appreciate our corporate grants over the year, which include \$5,000 from the Massachusetts Bankers Association Charitable Foundation; \$5,000 from HarborOne Foundation; \$2,500 from Cape Cod 5 Foundation; and \$2,500 from Eastern Bank Charitable Foundation. We also want to thank the many local churches and civic groups who made generous donations in 2019 – all of this support adds up and makes a difference!



L to R: Jennifer White, HarborOne; Rich Spencer, North Easton Savings Bank; Jim Middleton, HFHGP; Daniel J. Forte, President, MA Bankers Assoc.; Amy Belmore, HFHGP



Bob Waterman, President, First Unitarian Universalist Society of Middleboro, and Jim Middleton, HFHGP

COVID-19 Crisis: The Reality Hits Home

Without question, life today has a very different feel for all of us. We hope you and your loved ones are taking good care of yourselves and managing these uncharted waters safely.

For many of us, there are days when all of this feels like a movie -- an unbelievable set of circumstances that can't be real for modern-day America. But, of course, we know it is very real.

It is real for so many of our low-income neighbors who have lost jobs or seen wages drop significantly, and who are now worried that they won't be able to pay essential bills.

It is real for Moms and Dads who were already struggling to keep a roof over their family's heads and are now anxious about getting behind in rent payments.

It is real for our seniors who need to be more restricted than ever to protect their health and who may be feeling isolated as a result.

It is real for the small business owners in our community who are dealing with economic losses every day and who are worried that their businesses may not survive this.

And **it is very real** for our first responders and healthcare workers who are on the front lines of this pandemic, risking their personal health in order to care for us collectively.

At Habitat for Humanity of Greater Plymouth, we are more concerned than ever for the well-being of those we partner with and are committed to serve:

- Parents with children living in unsafe or overcrowded conditions.
- Hardworking residents who were already struggling to pay for decent housing in our overpriced market, and now face tremendous new challenges.
- Our long-term business partners who will need to pull back on their typical discounts that make our projects viable.
- And our retiree volunteers who would love nothing more than to get back to building houses as a way to connect and give back to society.

Like you, the team at HFHGP is learning to navigate this unfamiliar territory; you can find some of our key operational changes on our website. We hope the words of Hakeem, our newest homeowner (see page 3), will inspire you to stay with us and invest in the essential work of Habitat for Humanity, which is now more important than ever.

Donations to HFHGP are most appreciated and can be sent to us in the enclosed envelope; or to make a secure online donation, please visit www.hfhplymouth.org. No donation is too small.

We have always been grateful for you, and we wish you and your family peace and good health during this trying time. Stay well.





PO Box 346
Carver, MA 02330

