

spring
2021



Habitat Happenings

The Difference A Year Makes!

Last year at this time, we were feverishly pulling our spring newsletter from the printing press to delete events and reflect on how COVID-19 was beginning to affect our lives. We didn't know back then that it was truly just the start of a year that seemed to never end. Dominated by pandemic impacts on many levels, uncertainty and adaptation became the common themes of daily living.

Here at Habitat for Humanity of Greater Plymouth, we were driven by the absolute certainty that our mission of providing secure, affordable housing was more important than ever. The pandemic underscored our belief that no matter who we are or where we come from, we all deserve to have a decent place to live.

Our plate was heaping full of projects and we were committed to reach the goal line on each one as soon as it was safely possible. With the successful move of our ReStore to a new location and the completion of three homes on Long Pond Road in Plymouth now under our belt, we are thrilled to share that we did indeed reach those goals.

Seeing three families move into the homes they helped to build on Long Pond Road in Plymouth was an absolute high point for us. Completing this project – the largest in our history – is a testament to the tenacity of our volunteers and the generosity of our supporters. With their help and yours, these new Habitat homeowners can achieve the financial stability they need to build a better life for themselves and their families. Please enjoy reading more about the Long Pond Road project, including our Veterans Build, in this issue.

Visitors to the new ReStore have often let us know how much they appreciate the new look and high quality of items. Since we opened in June, sales have been strong and inventory is turning over quicker than ever. Read more about it on page 3 and look for a ReStore coupon inside.



Two More Homes Complete!

It has been a *long road* getting to this point, but we couldn't be happier that the Long Pond Rd. project in Plymouth is now complete and home to three families with bright new futures in front of them! Our two Veteran Build homes were dedicated on February 27th to Jen (USMC) and her three young children, and Tracy (USAF/USAR) and her two growing boys. They now join Allison, Taylor and their two children, who moved into their home in late 2020, to complete the neighborhood.

The pandemic caused delays in construction but our steadfast volunteers overcame restrictions and smaller crews to get the job done. Volunteers brought their hearts, hands – and masks – each weekend to put these homeowners on a new path of self-reliance. Jen and Tracy worked right alongside, rolling up their sleeves to actively build a better life for themselves. Their burden of high housing costs has been lifted and they can now focus on raising their children in the comfort and dignity of secure, stable, affordable homeownership. For one homeowner, her new mortgage payment is less than 50% of what she paid in rent for an apartment not suited to a growing family. To top it off, the beautiful wooded landscape offers plenty of space to play and grow.

Hundreds of community members stepped up throughout this multi-year process, from the early days of scoping out and acquiring the land right through to the finish stages of construction. We applaud each and every partner, sponsor, volunteer and donor for their contributions. Simply put, because of their compassion, three families have opened a brand-new door that will forever change their lives for the better.

saturday shifts

111 Saturdays were spent on the Long Pond Road site to bring all 3 houses to completion

From the Executive Director's Desk

As we reflect on the past year and celebrate our many unprecedented accomplishments and challenges, we also look enthusiastically to our future.

Never in our history have our volunteers, supporters, staff, and communities shown more dedication and inner resources than what they brought to the service of others during the year of coronavirus! It is wondrous that we produced more affordable homes, moved and reopened our ReStore, collected and sold more items, relocated our offices, added needed staff, improved our operating model, and enhanced our finances—all during the most trying moments in our country's history since World War II. Not to mention the monumental awakenings and turmoil on the domestic social, racial, and political scenes.

Looking to the future, we will not rest! We are actively looking into future projects and sources of land and funding. We are welcoming new generations into our leadership and all levels of volunteering and staffing—from the Board of Directors to ReStore staff. We are expanding and updating our communications. We are re-envisioning our outreach, events, and resource development.

I believe that the spirit of community and service to others gave each of us added focus and strength to rise above! You gain more than you give when you join others in this worthy effort. You have “come together to build homes, communities, and hope.”

Thank you & stay well,

Jim Middleton
Executive Director, HFHGP



Homeowner, Jen, and her family celebrate Home Dedication Day



Tracy speaks about building her new home at the ceremony, alongside her children

Learn more at hfhplymouth.org

Brush With Kindness



In addition to building homes from the ground up, our Brush With Kindness home preservation service offers minor home repairs to low-income households. By addressing critical repairs, tackling weatherization problems, and installing wheelchair ramps, we prevent illness and injury, increase accessibility, and enable seniors to age in place.

No surprise -- COVID-19 forced us to table the program for much of 2020, but we're glad to be opening that door once again. To that end, **we're now seeking Brush With Kindness volunteers** to work on projects! Some projects will be designated for weekday work, while others may be accomplished on Saturdays. To learn more about volunteering or applying to receive BWK repair support, contact Donna at volunteer@hfhplymouth.org or 508.866.4188. To sign up today, visit hfhplymouth.org.



Hat's Off to Allen Hanford!

After more than a decade of dedicated volunteerism, Allen retired from his role as our BWK Supervisor in 2020. He will be greatly missed but we are so

thankful his work, making positive impacts on so many families in our region. If you, or someone you know, is experienced in handyman work or construction and want to get involved in a volunteer leadership role, please get in touch.

volunteer hours

4,021 volunteer hours logged in 2020

No doubt about it, COVID-19 made for a challenging year, but volunteers donned their PPE, rolled up their sleeves and got to work!



We opened the doors on our new ReStore location at 160 North Main Street in Carver in June – just a few miles down the road from our prior location. With a more spacious floorplan, better parking and a great variety of high-quality donations coming in daily, it's already proven to be a great move for us and the community.

If you're looking for great deals on gently used and overstock items for your home, be sure to check us out and shop the store that builds homes! Inventory changes often ... you never know what perfect match or one-of-a-kind treasure you'll find here.

- ✓ Furniture
- ✓ Doors & Windows
- ✓ Rugs & Flooring
- ✓ Appliances
- ✓ Vanities
- ✓ Hardware
- ✓ Lighting
- ✓ Cabinets
- ✓ Building Supplies

FREE PICK-UPS FOR LARGER ITEMS!



Looking for a great way to donate your household items? Whether you're remodeling, updating, downsizing or just spring cleaning, consider donating your furniture and household goods to the ReStore.

If your items have good life left in them, your satisfaction rewards from donating will triple!

- ✓ Help local families by supporting affordable home construction
- ✓ Help the environment by keeping perfectly good items from ending up in the landfill
- ✓ All donations are tax-deductible

To arrange your donation, call us at 508.866.4199. Free pick-ups available for larger items.

Visit www.hfhplymouth.org/restore to learn more



Finding New Purpose after Her Profession Volunteer Profile: Pat Mustacaros

by Melissa Guimond

Retiring after teaching elementary school for over 35 years, most

people would assume to take a much-needed break and relax as much as possible with their newfound freedom. This was not the case for Pat Mustacaros. She wanted to spend her time helping people and took advice from her friend and one of the founding members of Habitat for Humanity of Greater Plymouth, Lenore Swanson, and filled out a volunteer application. She was genuinely interested in the progress of Habitat for Humanity and the dedication and determination the families had to receive a home through Habitat.

Twenty years later, Pat has been one of a handful of office volunteers for the organization and has assisted many new hires through the years, learning the organization's ropes. When speaking with Donna Martin, Affiliate Administrator, Donna expressed that Pat's most significant impact on the organization "is her willingness and desire to do whatever we put on her plate, regardless of how mundane or repetitive the task. She is 100% reliable and refuses

to leave until she knows I have nothing more for her on a given day, and if her schedule requires her to leave before done, she will bring the work home with her and complete it there."

While asking Pat about her time so far with Habitat, she told me about an old building the office used to be in; this building also included a dog boarding/grooming business and a music studio. Pat mentioned how even though you'd usually hear dogs howling along with the drums, it kept smiles on everyone's faces.

She has said no matter where they might be (home now during COVID), or at the office, everyone works so well together it feels like one big family! Pat's motivation comes from other Habitat volunteers and the homeowners; their dedication and positive attitudes make volunteering even more enjoyable!

Pat has been such a critical piece to Habitat for Humanity of Greater Plymouth, and we look forward to more years of her volunteering with us!

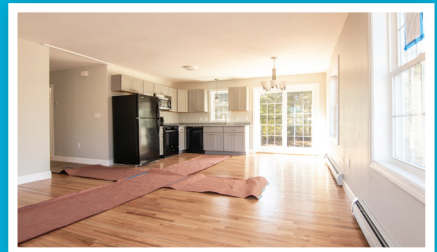
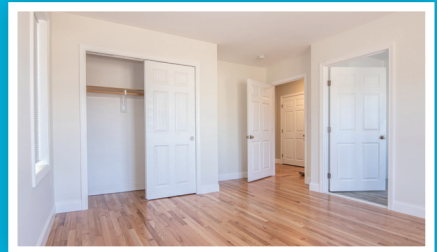
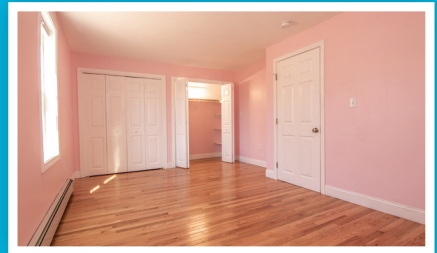
Habitat's Roots in Racial and Economic Inclusion

With important public attention being cast on the issue of racial inequality in this country, we felt it would be timely and helpful to share some facts about the history of Habitat for Humanity's founding. The roots of Habitat are deeply planted in the principle of racial equality which continues to influence the organization's mission work today.

Much of the modern housing and wealth disparity between white and minority families stems from federal housing policies in the post-Depression 1930's, and further advanced by the urgent need to house returning soldiers and their families after WWII. Overly simplified, white families received subsidies to own homes via mortgage and real estate tax deductions while minority families were blocked from holding mortgages and were pushed into living in subsidized rental communities (public housing). This lack of access to building equity and climbing the socioeconomic ladder became a multi-generational cycle.

Habitat traces its roots back to 1942 in Georgia where two families started Koinonia Farm to form an interracial community in which all people are treated equally. Resources were shared and there was an emphasis on being wise stewards of the land. Because of Koinonia residents' views on racial equality, they were ex-communicated from their local church. The church's sanctions gave way to a boycott of Koinonia Farm products by the local community. Gunshots rang regularly, prompting Martin Luther King, Jr. to write a letter of encouragement.

In the 1960's, in the midst of racial, political and war protests, Habitat founders Millard and Linda Fuller arrived at Koinonia as a young couple in search for a new purpose. The Fullers transformed owning affordable homes into a powerful tool to combat racial and economic inclusion. Thus, out of humble beginnings, Habitat for Humanity emerged in 1977 with a belief that all people have a right to safe, decent housing. Our view is that inequality – whether racial or economic – can not be addressed without affordable housing that enables families to stabilize, grow roots and wealth, and pursue self-improvement.



A peek inside our Veteran Builds



That's a Wrap!

Soon after COVID-19 shuttered businesses and news of job losses and furloughs flooded the airwaves, HFHGP realized we needed to look beyond our everyday scope to assist the community during this extraordinary time. We quickly created "**Habitat Here & Now**", our first-ever **Rent Relief** program, and secured a grant from the Community Foundation of Southeastern MA to support renters directly impacted by COVID-19. This relief made a real difference for so many who were struggling to meet their basic needs during a time of great uncertainty. Our last wave of pandemic rent relief checks was issued to landlords in February 2021.



Total distributed:

\$55,000



Local households assisted:

48



Housing relief delivered to:

68 adults + **46** children

“ I was not expecting Covid to affect my job, but unfortunately it did, so I am grateful for you stepping in to help me and others in this situation. This help will certainly get...me back on track and will make it possible for me to stay in my apartment. Before receiving your help, I was thinking I may have to look at the possibility of moving out and living in my vehicle, so it was welcome news to get your call.” ~ Katie

Reflections from a Habitat Homeowner

15 years after moving into a Habitat home with her six children, Karen looks back at her experience working with HFHGP and considers the difference it made for her family's future.



Hakeem's children enjoying their first Christmas season in their new home, 2020

Do you remember when you first heard that you were chosen for the Kingston Habitat home?

Yes, I remember the night. I had just gotten my young kids out of the shower, they were making silly faces, and I got the call that the house was mine. It was a blessing and the beginning of the most miraculous story of my life because I was in such a discouraging place at the time.

The day before I got that call, I had dissolved my 10-year marriage and filed for divorce. I was a single mother of six children living in a 500-square-foot public housing apartment, and I lived in a homeless shelter for a while before that. The Habitat home marked hope for the future.

Your children were very young when you moved into the home in 2006. What was it like for them?

We were very active members in the church, and I told them that during my worst time, God answered my prayer to allow me to provide for my family. I truly believe that.

Were there any memorable moments of home build?

I remember putting up the siding (the weather was freezing!) and having to take it down if it was crooked or the corners didn't match up. We would redo it until it was right. Just being around contractors taught me so much.

To this day my husband (I've been remarried for 14 years) and I do a lot of renovations. We put up a fence, I do all of the landscaping. I do flooring and plumbing. I change out electrical units. I know what I'm doing.

The Habitat house literally changed the course of your life.

Habitat opened the door for me to provide a home and security for my six kids. My children are grown now (my youngest is turning 18 and graduating high school); two sons are serving in the Air Force. And I became a Nana for the first time.

Habitat gave me hope during a time that I absolutely needed it the most. Now I hope that my story can do the same for somebody else.

Contributed by Kristen Walsh

website upgrade

Stay tuned to hfhplymouth.org for our new & improved online presence. We look forward to unveiling it later this spring!



Every child deserves a stable start in a safe and secure home.

People in our community and all over the world partner with Habitat for Humanity to build, or improve, a place they can call home. Our homeowners help to build their own homes alongside dedicated volunteers, and they pay an affordable mortgage. A Habitat home is a strong foundation for a family -- an opportunity on which they can build a better life.

With your help, we can continue making a difference together. Your support, in any amount you can afford, helps a mother like Karen build a decent place to call home. Please give today!



Join the On-Center Circle

Become a member of a loyal group of recurring donors who play a vital role in ensuring that we're ready to build strength, stability and self-reliance for families in need. Whether it's \$ 5 or \$10 a month, or something more, your hand up will build better futures. Please give online at hfhplymouth.org/donate or use the envelope enclosed.



SAVE THE DATE

Annual Meeting

Sunday, June 13

Afternoon (time tbd)

Stay tuned for more details, pending pandemic restrictions. If guidance allows, we will gather in person, outside, in Plymouth. As we get closer, more info will be sent via email and posted on hfhplymouth.org. Whether virtual on Zoom or in-person, all are welcome to attend!



Off Wadsworth Place, Plymouth

Friday, July 16, 2021

Meet & Mingle: 5:30 – 8:30 pm

Movie Screening: 8:30 pm

Join us at Plymouth's cool new outdoor venue for socializing and big-screen movie watching! Finally! A chance to come together to reconnect, grab a bite, catch a movie – Drive-In style or via Foot Pass. Most of all, we can't wait to see you for a night of fun in the great company of fellow Habitat supporters!

Stay tuned to hfhplymouth.org for ticket sales, pricing, movie title, and more.

**subject to pandemic conditions and gathering rules*

SAVE THE DATE



Habitat for Humanity of Greater Plymouth helps individuals and families achieve **strength, stability and self-reliance** through **shelter**.

As active participants in building a better future for themselves and their families, **qualified Habitat homebuyers are...**

in need of better housing

Potential homebuyers might be dealing with poorly made, unhealthy or inadequate housing; unaffordable rent; homes inaccessible for their disabilities or damaged by natural disasters; or have other shelter needs.



willing to partner with Habitat

Habitat homebuyers put in hundreds of hours of "sweat equity" helping build their own home and the homes of others in the program. This might also include classes in personal finances, home maintenance and other homeownership topics.

able to pay an affordable mortgage

Habitat offers homebuyers an affordable mortgage. Their mortgage payments cycle back into the community to help build more affordable houses.



Learn how you can help at hfhplymouth.org



Life Changers' Day

On March 5th, we welcomed dozens of special supporters at the Long Pond Road site to see the finished products before the families moved in. Their contributions made a significant difference in our ability to complete these three homes. Whether through financial giving or by assisting us in navigating the acquisition of the land, these friends of Habitat were critical to our success and we were pleased to offer mini-group tours throughout the day.



Leadership from The Pinehills management team join Jim Middleton for Life Changers' Day. Left to right: John Judge, Jim Middleton, Deb Sedares, Tony Green.



recycle your idle vehicle

Donate your vehicle to help a family build a home and attain strength, stability and self-reliance for the future.



(877) 277-4344
habitat.org/carsforhomes

2020 Grant Makers

Thank you to all those who invested in our work last year through grant awards. We know that many nonprofits are doing strong work in the community right alongside us, and we sincerely appreciate being selected for this support:

- **The Pinehills Affordable Housing Charitable Trust:** \$70,000
- **Community Foundation of Southeastern MA:** \$55,000
- **MountainOne:** \$12,500
- **HarborOne Foundation:** \$10,000
- **Monogram Loves Kids Foundation:** \$10,000
- **SouthCoast Emergency Response Fund:** \$5,000
- **Cape Cod 5:** \$2,500
- **Eastern Bank Charitable Foundation:** \$2,500

Faith Partners

We also extend our thanks to our faith partners who offer ongoing support through financial donations, volunteerism, and (pre-pandemic) homemade lunches:

- **First Parish Duxbury**
- **Chiltonville Congregational Church**
- **Church of the Pilgrimage**

2021 Board of Directors

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Craig Vogel
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Jonathan Wells
Cape Cod 5

thank you

We also extend our heartfelt thanks to Den Forbes and Doreen Bent who stepped off the Board of Directors this February, having reached the end of their terms. Their contributions and service through the years have been extraordinary and we are grateful to know that they will continue to stay close to HFHGP.



\$10 off

for building the story of home

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Habitat Happenings

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Help build the story of home.

Shop. Donate.

