

Working in partnership with members of the community, Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity builds homes, hope, and community in Hampshire and Franklin Counties.

Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity Newsletter

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SPRING 2013

LOOKING FORWARD:

- **SAVE THIS DATE!** Our **FEAST FOR HABITAT** will be on Thursday, May 2nd at Cows Building Supply in North Amherst. Food and drinks from the best area restaurants, valuable auction items, live music, and friends and festivities! More details coming soon!

PVH BOARD

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Eric Marsh
Josh Parker

Thanks MJ!

Do you know that from 1985 until 2001, Pioneer Valley Habitat (PVH) was entirely volunteer run? These dedicated volunteers built nine Habitat homes before they decided to find someone to help PVH grow – to meet the needs of working low-income families in our Valley. Under the leadership of George Goodwin and Marjorie Lieneck, the search was launched to hire an executive director. And a perfect match was found; MJ Adams.

MJ Adams-Pullan has a Master's degree in Regional Planning from UMass, but her preparation for the job goes back to her childhood. When she was young, her family lived in their home while it was re-built around them. Then, as more building went on nearby, the construction sites became her favorite playground. She loves to swing a hammer.

So when Habitat called, she was ready.

As the only staff, MJ did just about everything. But she never lost sight of empowering volunteers, even as the staff grew. Creating partnerships was important, and she feels especially proud of the work with Smith Voke and Franklin Technical High School.



MJ Adams Legacy Fund

To honor MJ's dedication to Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity, the Board of Directors has established a permanent legacy in the form that she holds most dear: a home. Our first house to be built in Easthampton will be a Women Build, meaning that 75% of the labor and supervision is done by women. One of MJ's dreams was to initiate a Women Build; now you can make that a reality for her. In fact, you could probably work alongside MJ since she has already volunteered to swing her hammer at this site! To help us fund this legacy, we ask you to remember the thirty-three homes MJ has been instrumental in building. Let's remember the additional three that are now in construction, to be completed soon. Please be generous with your gift so she may know that this Easthampton home will always be available for a low-income family that she helped build.

If you would like to contribute to MJ's Legacy Fund, please make a note on your check or on the return envelope enclosed with this newsletter. Thank you for helping us honor her work and her continued commitment to PVH.



In 2006 MJ went to India to participate in the Jimmy Carter Build. She had long admired the former president and his commitment to Habitat. This international experience was an exciting one for her.

Building thirty-three homes in the last eleven years has presented many challenges, especially in moving from affiliate condo building to single-family and zero-lot line constructions. Now, mindful of complications that go with organizational transition, she decided to move on at a time when things are going well for PVH. Volunteer leadership is strong; the staff is competent and supportive; the finances are stable; plans for more homes are in the pipeline.

There was a party for MJ following the Board meeting in December. A large group of PVH folks, family, and friends gathered to express appreciation to her for all she has done to bring us to where we are today. She is now serving as Director of Community Development for the Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority in Turners Falls.

Aaron Walker



The PVH Board of Directors named Aaron Walker as Acting Executive Director of the organization. After spending several weeks familiarizing himself with office procedures, he officially took the reins when MJ Adams-Pullan departed on January 7. Walker will serve until a permanent executive director takes office.

Walker, 43, has a wealth of experience, having served PVH in a wide variety of capacities for more than a dozen years. He began as a construction volunteer, working at the Ryan Road site in Northampton in 2001. He later joined the fund raising committee. From 2003 until 2006 he was a member of the Board. Then he joined the building committee. He is currently on a

subcommittee concerned with sustainability issues, green building, and related matters-- and he also serves as safety officer.

When asked to comment on Habitat's prospects, Walker first paid tribute to Adams's service to the organization. "It's hard to believe that MJ has actually left," he said. "We will be lucky to find someone with half of her energy and commitment." At the same time, he added, the advent of a new executive director will give us the opportunity to take stock of where we stand and to evaluate our options for the future.

Walker is looking forward to working with the new executive director. He hopes the pool can be winnowed down by early February with a new Executive Director on the job by the end of March.

Wall-Raising in Florence

In mid- November the Rivera Family helped raise the front wall of their home. The wall was constructed by Smith Vocational High School students who had also prepared the foundation and radiant heating system in preparation for this day. This is the first house fully funded, in great part, to the generosity of a challenge grant of \$30,000 by Jack Hornor and Ron Skinn. Television crews from Channel 22 and NCTV covered the event.

The Riveras

When Kim Rivera moved to the Valley from New York City fourteen years ago, she had no idea she would become a homeowner. But now Kim and her four children are getting ready to move into her Habitat house under construction on Garfield Avenue in Florence.

Kim leads a busy life. In addition to caring for her children, she holds down two jobs. She works as a tenant selector for the Northampton Housing Authority and as a part-time cashier at Wal-Mart. At the Housing Authority she arranges housing for the elderly, the disabled, and low-income folks. "Helping people in need is a satisfying experience" she says.

Kim's children are Joylene, aged 15 ½, Joshua, 13, Jianna, 6 ½, and Jonathan, 5. The three oldest children attend Northampton schools; Jonathan is in day care and will start school in the fall.

Marybeth Bridegam, Kim's Habitat mentor, says "Kim's industriousness is impressive. She began to accumulate her sweat equity even before her selection had been approved. She stops by the site every few days to monitor progress. Yet, she is willing to work on any of our construction sites."

The Rivera house will be one of the largest to be built by PVH: it is a single-family home with four bedrooms and two baths. Each of the girls will have her own room while the two boys will share a room. The construction is progressing; Smith Voke students have been doing a lot of the work so the house was completed around Christmas time.



Gingerbread Build

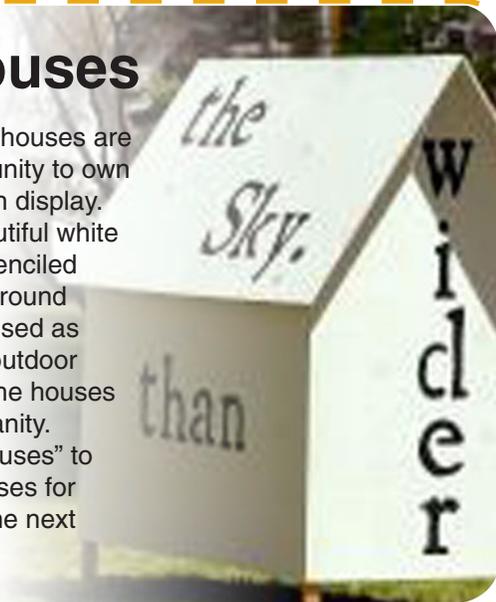
During the first weekend in December twenty-seven volunteers gathered lots of people of all ages for this fun event at the Eastworks Building in Easthampton. This was our splash introduction to Easthampton--letting them know that this spring we are starting to build there. Thirty-four teams accomplished this by raising awareness--and at least \$100 each for the opportunity to build gingerbread houses. A great big 'thanks' goes to River Valley Market for their generosity in providing pre-baked sides of the gingerbread house, with icing! Other sponsors who made this even



possible were Eastworks, Atalsoft, Maple Street Architects, Integrity Development & Construction, Nicky D's, Freedom Credit Union, Bova Harrington, and Dietz & Co. Architects. Food was provided by Apollo Grill and Riff's Joint, the sound system by Norseman Audio-Video Systems and the printing of programs by Puffer Printing. All in all we raised enough money for all the windows for our Belchertown Rd. house.

Little White Houses

Three of these adorable utilitarian houses are still available. Here is your opportunity to own your own beautiful Emily Dickinson display. Peter Kraszneczewicz created beautiful white cottages with Dickenson poetry stenciled on the sides and seen displayed around the Valley this year. They can be used as decoration or sheds or any other outdoor ideas you have. He has donated the houses to Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity. We are selling the "Little White Houses" to interested individuals and businesses for \$250 in order to raise money for the next Habitat home built in our Valley.



People We Will Miss

Every now and then, extraordinary people cross our paths. Patricia Weed was one of these. She devoted herself to our building efforts here in the Valley, and always with a great big smile. She was a good writer, and many of the stories you have read in this newsletter came from her hand. Richard Carotenuto will also be remembered fondly. We benefited greatly from his is passion for construction and from his willingness to share his craft with home improvements.

We are grateful to the family and friends of Richard Carotenuto who donated a total of \$1,500 in his memory

Volunteer Opportunities

- **Builders at Construction sites.** Visit <http://pioneervalleyhabitat.org/support> and sign up through Volunteer Up. It's easy!



- **FEAST FOR HABITAT.** Volunteers can join us now as we prepare for this terrific fundraiser. Contact jean@pvhabitat.org
- **Social Media Volunteers.** Contact us if you would like to blog, Twitter, or Facebook for us.
- **Video Maker.** If you are interested in updating our DVDs that tell our story, or in making short videos of our events, we need you! Contact jean@pvhabitat.org
- **Team Builds.** Companies, schools, colleges, churches and teams of individuals can reserve your own days for construction on our build sites. Reserve your Saturdays now: admin@pvhabitat.org
- **House Sponsorships.** This program invites individuals, companies, and schools to adopt a house! Contact resource@pioneervalleyhabitat.org
- **Leadership.** We need a volunteer who is interested in being the Build Team Co-Leader for a new home under construction on Garfield Avenue in Florence - in collaboration with the Smith Vocational High School. Contact aaron@pvhabitat.org
- **Office Volunteers.** Call if you are interested in helping with database work, mailer preparation, or similar work: 586.5430.



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Build Updates

Amherst, Belchertown Road.

It's moving along quickly, the drywall is being installed. Team Builds dates are available.

Easthampton, Everett Street.

One of four on this street, the first will be a rehab to start in the spring.

Easthampton, East Street.

One of two, this first one will be a Women Build that will start in the early summer. Join the steering committee by signing up now: jean@pvhabitat.org

Turners Falls, Warner Street.

The foundation will be laid in early spring.

Valley Gives

On 12/12/12, PVH supporters raised almost \$12,000 for affordable home building from donors across Western Massachusetts: thanks to a new fundraising campaign called Valley Gives. The Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts coordinated this one-day giving campaign that raised more than \$1 million and educated us all on the variety of amazing work being done in our communities. PV Habitat took 9th place among large non-profits out of 125 organizations.

For all of you who participated, we thank you!

Social Media

- **Facebook.** Help us build our network and spread the word to your friends at www.facebook.com/PioneerValleyHabitatForHumanity
- **Email.** To save postage we prefer to send our correspondence via email. Tell us if you are willing to receive this newsletter via email only: admin@pvhabitat.org

Errata - We regret that through a clerical error, Gary Snyder was included on the donor list



WHAT WILL YOU BUILD?