

Winter Newsletter 2020

Volume 18, Issue 1

Winter 2020

Working with our many partners, Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity builds strength, stability and self-reliance through affordable homeownership in Hampshire and Franklin Counties. We are an affiliate of Habitat for Humanity International, an ecumenical organization that envisions a world where everyone has a decent place to live.

Looking Forward:

- » **1st Wednesday of each month, 6:30pm**
New volunteer orientation, Habitat office, Florence
- » **3rd Saturday of each month, 9am**
New volunteer orientation, Habitat office, Florence
- » **Friday, March 20, 4pm**
Wallraising, 115 Glendale Rd., Northampton
- » **Friday, March 27, 8:30am-12pm**
Small Home Forum, Greenfield Community College
- » **Friday, April 3rd, 6:30 pm**
Kickoff dinner and band for Shutesbury Build, Shutesbury Athletic Club
- » **Wednesday, May 6**
FEAST for Habitat, Ark MILES, Hatfield
- » **TBD**
Small Home Hero Award Ceremony & Party – May/June 2020
- » **TBD**
Dedication, 125 Glendale Rd., May/June 2020

Anthony Hill: He's in His Element



Well, he was...until he decided to make a gift of it to raise money for Pioneer Valley Habitat. Through Habitat for Humanity International's Cars for Homes program, Anthony donated his 2004 Honda Element to be sold, a generous portion of the proceeds then coming to this local Habitat affiliate as unrestricted revenue.

Anthony is also in his element on the Habitat construction site. But that's another story.

It begins when he came to this country as a 7-year old émigré from England with his parents, and even at that young age he felt the improvement in his life due to his change of circumstances. That understanding of what a new life can offer someone, his desire to do something to give back to his community after the 2016 election, and a little encouragement from his (and Habitat's) friend Walt Kohler, brought him to Pioneer Valley Habitat's build in North Amherst in 2017.

A likely retirement activity for a former medical microbiologist? Sure! Anthony had two summers' experience as a carpenter's assistant as a teenager and his more recent work helping Valley Light Opera's set design team under his (work)belt. Equally compelling, he draws inspiration from Jimmy Carter who, like Anthony, served in the Navy

and who spends his retirement doing what Anthony describes as "meaningful volunteer work with a concrete outcome."

When thanked for all he has done for Habitat, Anthony says, "I have to argue with you about that. Habitat has given to ME. I have made good friendships with people from all walks of life, we're all there because we enjoy the hands-on stuff and giving back together." And, he adds, "I can put my hand on something and say, I did that."



Donate your car.



(877) 277-4344
carsforhomes.org

Spring cleaning? When you get to the driveway, what will you do with your old car? Turn your old car into kitchen cabinets for a family in need of a home! Or maybe a window or two to bring the spring sunlight into the new home of a first-time home owning family!

Go to pvhabitat.org/donate/cars-for-homes to learn more, as Anthony did.



Modular home and shed



New homeowners, Ruth, with her mentor, Sheila

Board

Stacy Metzger, President
Benjamin Barnes, Vice President
Christine Speek, Treasurer
Jane Andresen, Clerk
Christine Aubrey
Anna Cook
Sara Custodio
Steve Harrington
Jeff Hutchins
Tom Jones
Clara Lopez
Rob Steinberg
Keith Woodruff

Staff

LaVae Allard, Bookkeeper
Lindsay Berry, Volunteer Coordinator
Jess Flohr, Big Enough Project Coordinator
Amanda Hanley, Construction Coordinator
Amy Landry, Director of Resource Development
Megan McDonough, Executive Director

Intern

Abigail Moore

Graphics Support

Beth Graham

Office volunteers

Del Blank
Ken Carpenter
Sara Custodio
Lyn Hedy
Jodi Kirschner
Lucia Spiro

Modular Homes Dedicated and Sold, Faith Community's Support

On a warm afternoon last fall, a crowd of more than 40 well-wishers gathered to dedicate two modular homes to their soon-to-be first-time homeowners. Speakers at the ceremony – among them Northampton's mayor David Narkewicz, Alison Donovan of VEIC (the coordinator for the high performance modular program that helped fund these homes), Build Team member David Dunn and Jim Ayres of the Community Foundation of Western Mass – shared what made this project experimental, innovative and a learning experience. The two homes represent Pioneer Valley Habitat's first foray into modular construction and a few weeks after the dedication were financed using creative mortgage packages provided by two local banks to the homebuyers.

Minister Michael McSherry of Edwards Church and Pastor Todd Weir of First Churches also spoke about the efforts of the interfaith community to bring these homes to completion. Congregations raised funds totaling \$30,000 and contributed 1,000 volunteer hours on the construction site, at special events, as meal providers and in a number of other supportive roles. Congratulations to new homeowners Ruth, Orlando and Fenessa!



New homeowners, Orlando and Fenessa with their mentor, MaryAnne



Interfaith volunteers make lunch for the crew

Letter from the Director

Dear Habitat Community,

It was September of 2016 when the Community Foundation of Western Mass put out the call for "innovative" grant requests under the headline *Be Bold and Create Change*, and we began the journey of asking "What's big enough to house the dream of homeownership?" Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity has spent 30 years building simple, energy efficient homes to bring strength and stability to the lives of people with low incomes – but how can we be a model in the region? Can we demonstrate innovative ways to bring small simple homes to the community?

Short answer – yes! We have finished our first few "Big Enough" pilot homes and are ready to share our lessons learned with the community. We hope you will hop online to watch the Foundation to Finish video highlighting our 2019 pilot projects, download our initial pilot report for some light reading, share your small home stories in our Facebook group and then show up in person on Friday March 27th for our 2020 small home forum. See the back page of this newsletter for more information about the forum. RSVP required: www.pvhabitat.org/events/small-home-forum-2020

As expected, we didn't find any magic solutions to bringing small affordable homes to the masses. The challenges and solutions are intertwined in our four areas of study: design/construction, zoning/regulations, financing/ownership and social/cultural expectations (come to the forum to learn more about this!). But I think there is an important conversation happening around how we can learn from one another to make that dream of homeownership a reality in our corner of the world in the upper Pioneer Valley.

Dream big, live small,

Megan McDonough,
Executive Director

**"Do what you can, with what
you have, where you are."**

- Theodore Roosevelt



Learn to Build: National Women Build Week



Would you like to feel more proficient in handling tools and materials? Do you wish you had more confidence to do small home repairs and improvement projects yourself? During National Women Build Week in early March, we encourage women who want to build skills and women who have skills to share to come together on our Glendale Road build site in a week of construction camaraderie. **WE NEED YOU.** You can be a part of the final push to get a family into their new home as well as part of a weeklong nationwide effort to bring more women onto Habitat construction sites. Pioneer Valley Habitat Women Build days are Thursday the 5th, Saturday the 7th and Sunday the 8th of March.



As a partner with us for National Women Build Week, Lowe's of Hadley will host a how-to workshop on framing to prepare you for the worksite on Saturday, February 29th, from 10am to noon. This is a free workshop, open to anyone, and space is limited. To register for this or a volunteer orientation (required before going on a build site), go to the volunteer page on our website to link to VolunteerUp! to check dates and times.



What's happening on the build sites?



On Glendale Road in Northampton, we are finishing the framed-on-site home that looks like its two modular neighbors. **We need you!** Come help us get to the finish line for a spring closing.



Next up: the fourth and final home in the Glendale Road development (a small 2BR home, solar powered, very different from its neighbors) and a 3BR home on West Pelham Road in Shutesbury, both sites starting up this spring.

Celebrate Spring at FEAST for Habitat 2020

Whether you've been to a past FEAST or this is your first, there is always something new at everyone's favorite annual spring afterwork party. Come hang with other members of the Habitat family in the fun and friendly construction chic surroundings that is rk MILES' warehouse décor. This year we welcome some new brewers, cidermakers and creators of fabulous food items as well as many of our old favorite purveyors. You may find yourself in a bidding war, attempting to be the lucky person to go home with one (or more) of the eclectic auction items laid out on pallets of lumber including jewelry, sports memorabilia, tools for home and garden, and gift certificates for eating and entertainment among other items. Or maybe you will be angling for one of the creations designed by local artists and craftspeople for sale on the specialty auction table. All while you chat with other guests, hear about latest Habitat happenings, enjoy the mellow groove of FEAST favorites Coop Jazz ensemble.



You don't want to miss the 8th annual FEAST for Habitat on Wednesday May 6, 6:30-9 pm!

For tickets, go to pvhabitat.org/events/feast-2020





P.O. Box 60642
Florence, MA 01062
413-586-5430
www.pioneervalleyhabitat.org

Non Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 15
Northampton, MA

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

2020 SMALL HOME FORUM

Implementing "Big Enough" solutions for
affordable home ownership in the Pioneer Valley

MAR. 27, 2020 | 8:30 AM TO 12:30 PM
GREENFIELD COMMUNITY COLLEGE
DINING COMMONS

- Hear from local professionals
- Celebrate community small home heroes
- Discuss how you can make a change in your town
- **Doors open at 8:30, breakfast provided!**
- Program begins at 9am, networking time included

FREE, OPEN TO THE PUBLIC | RSVP REQUIRED
LEARN MORE AT PVHABITAT.ORG/SMALL-HOME-FORUM-2020

Sponsored by the Community Foundation of Western Mass,
with community co-sponsors Community Action Pioneer
Valley, AIA Western Mass, and Greening Greenfield

FEATURING LOCAL EXPERTS
WITH KEYNOTE BY BESTSELLING
AUTHOR

SHERI KOONES



Learn how building small can be
comfortable, practical, energy-
efficient, and beautiful from
bestselling author and keynote
speaker Sheri Koones!



Get Involved!

Visit our website to
sign up and volunteer!



140 Pine St. Rooms 3 & 4, Florence, MA | (413) 586-5430 | www.pvhabitat.org