Habitat’s Modular Homes Garner National Attention

According to the U.S. Department of Energy, Pioneer Valley Habitat is in a select group of top builders in the nation who have certified one or more homes that meet or exceed Zero Energy Ready Home guidelines for excellence in performance and energy efficiency. The DOE selected Pioneer Valley Habitat as a 2020 Zero Energy Ready Home Housing Innovation Award Winner in its Affordable category. The award recognizes the two zero net possible modular homes on Glendale Road, completed in 2019 and now occupied by two young families.

We are grateful to the Western MA Community Foundation for its support of this project.

“Housing Innovation Award winners such as Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity are leading a major housing industry transformation to zero energy ready homes. This level of performance is the home of the future because it improves the way Americans live by substantially reducing or eliminating utility bills, ensuring engineered comfort way beyond traditional homes, protecting health with a comprehensive package of indoor air quality measures, and helping maximize the largest investment of a lifetime.”

– Sam Rashkin, Chief Architect, U.S. DOE Building Technologies Office

Looking Forward:

- 1st Wednesday of each month, 6:30 pm
  New volunteer orientation, Zoom
- 3rd Saturday of each month, 9 am
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- Tuesday, Sept 22, 6:30 pm
  PVHH Annual Meeting, Zoom
- Thursday, Oct 15, 6 pm
  Small Homes, Big Movement, author Sheri Koones and PVHH staff on small home living, Zoom
- Saturday, Dec 5th – Saturday, Dec 12
  Gingerbread Build at Home – pickup locations TBD, confectionery crafting at home

“Habitat evolved out of Koinonia Farm*, an intentional integrated community in Georgia founded in the late 1940s on the principles of racial equality and radical inclusivity. This was highly unusual for its time and place and threatening to some who sought to separate black and white, rich and poor. In 1976, Habitat for Humanity was founded by Koinonia supporters Millard and Linda Fuller, who had been a part of Koinonia’s transition to a more outwardly focused Fund for Humanity, and because they felt compelled to focus on a housing ministry. The Fullers’ vision was simple: to create a world where everyone has a decent place to live. The first Habitat homes were built alongside future homeowners who were descendants of slaves and who had not been approved for mortgages or bank loans because of racism in banking. Since those early days of seeking equity housing, the organization has worked with future homeowners and the community to build homes for more than seven million people worldwide. The Fullers’ vision still guides the organization today: Habitat for Humanity is a global leader in building opportunity through life-changing housing solutions.

Small, simple, energy-efficient homes are an important piece in larger movements for housing stability and equity. Join us to hear from keynote speaker, author Sheri Koones, and from PVHH for updates on building homes and a small home movement during a pandemic, October 15th, online event followed by audience Q&A.

*For more information on Koinonia Farm today, go to www.koinoniafarm.org.
New Homeowners on Glendale Road!

It wasn’t a typical home dedication, but it was celebratory nonetheless. On Thursday 30 July, dozens of friends, supporters, funders and faith community members came together on a Zoom screen to share in the joy of the impending homeownership of Bonnie and Miguel and their family. Two weeks later, on August 13th, they did indeed take ownership of their new home on Glendale Road, joining two other families in Habitat homes on a shared driveway under a grove of towering pines.

It must be said: we wouldn’t have been celebrating in July had it not been for the generous donation of two anonymous donors who stepped forward back in April when the pandemic threw our construction schedule into disarray. Their challenge to raise $4,000 was met to one by the equally generous Habitat community, allowing us to bring in outside contractors to do work that would ordinarily have been done by our faithful Smith Vocational School trades students, college and community groups and our dedicated regular volunteers. Please know that financial support then and now has been critical to keeping families moving toward their homeownership goals, thank you!

Congratulations to Bonnie and Miguel and their family on becoming Pioneer Valley Habitat’s 46th homeowners!

Letter from the Director

Friends,

The pandemic has turned all our lives upside down, for some more than others. The current crisis has laid bare stark economic and racial inequalities in our society. People of color have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic – dying and being infected at greater rates (www.cdc.gov) and facing greater financial impacts as we reach record levels of unemployment. But inequalities in health and economic outcomes existed before COVID-19 changed our lives – it’s one of the reasons we do the work we do. We know that safe, stable housing can change lives for the better and we need to take action to increase access to homeownership.

In addition to continuing our work to build homes, the past six months have been a time for charting new directions and reflecting on what. As a part of this effort our team of volunteers, interns and staff have:

- surveyed Habitat homeowners from the last 30 years about how homeownership has affected them and what we could do better
- interviewed a sample of key donors and supporters to better understand why and how Habitat can help them make a difference in the community
- gathered demographic data on our staff and leadership to compare to Habitat-identified records of the nation
- continued to focus our efforts to walk the talk, and not just talk of being inclusive

It’s one of the reasons I know that 96% of Habitat homeowners feel more financially secure because of homeownership and that Habitat donors care immensely about these first-time homeowners. I also know that Habitat homeowners are more racially diverse than Hampshire Franklin counties, but our leadership and staff are not. We have done good work and we have more work to do!

The pandemic can be “a portal to a new world” (Arundhati Roy) and I would like to think this new world is one where everyone has a decent place to call home.

In gratitude,

Megan McDonough, Executive Director

A Spring and Summer Like No Other

Anyone who knows Habitat volunteers knows that they are a hardy, dedicated, determined bunch with the ability to innovate as necessary. These past few months, when put to the test, they showed that spirit more than ever. Small crews of the regular faithful, observing strict and often cumbersome health and safety regulations, returned to the Habitat work sites to keep construction as on schedule as possible. Outside contractors partnered with us at reduced or no cost to help move things along.

One such contractor, Jason Greene, volunteered his time and expertise as a house painter at the urging of his teenage son. Jackson Greene is a very talented young painter in his own right and was determined to offer his skill as a volunteer for Habitat, but since he was not old enough to do so on his own, a parent was required accompany him. When Jackson lobbied his dad to join him to help a family finish their affordable home, Jason was moved by his son’s passion and determination to make good on his own long-held intention of volunteering for Habitat, with the added benefit of spending time with his son. Jason says that doing the work together and offering advice to those newer to painting was fun. “It’s a great lesson for a young person – to have people in their 40’s, their 50’s, their 60’s look to Jackson for instruction and encouragement... he can start to figure out ‘where do I fit in, how can I help out’ in his community. He learns he’s skilled, he’s capable!” Jackson has been a great inspiration to many already.

Small Homes in YOUR Home: Gingerbread Build 2020!

The crickets are chirping, cool breezes ruffle the leaves in the evening…fall is in the air. And once we hit autumn full on, you know the question on everyone’s mind: When will this year’s Gingerbread Build take place?? Well, maybe not everyone’s mind, and maybe the question is more where will the Gingerbread Build take place, but whatever the case, GB is coming soon!

Yes, we’re on for 2020! This year, teams will pick up their supplies at a designated location and have a week to design and build their mini masterpieces. At home. Judges will make their determinations of winners in each of dozens categories from submitted photos. Keep a sharp eye out for more information in October and November, including logistical details, award categories and some of the breathtaking prizes that will go to winners. 将和我们所有人！

As noted in the article on this page, our efforts in previous years have generated approximately $2,200 in cash donations and $10,000 in in-kind donations, although the exact amount is dependent on the conditions of the pandemic. For updates, go to www.pvhabitat.org/covid-19.

What’s happening on the build sites?

We celebrated via Zoom the raising of the first walls on the final home on PVHH's South Street project in early June, a zero net energy 2 bedroom home.

We have also begun work on a 3-bedroom home on West Pelham Road in Shutesbury. We welcomed future homeowner Chuck and his daughters at a virtual wall raising ceremony in mid-July.

For updates, go to www.pvhabitat.org.
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Thank you to ALL of our hardy construction volunteers and partner contractors who have worked under difficult conditions to keep hope alive for families building their future homes with Pioneer Valley Habitat.

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Everyone knows Habitat volunteers know that they are a hardy, dedicated, determined bunch with the ability to innovate as necessary. These past few months, when put to the test, they showed that spirit more than ever. Small crews of the regular faithful, observing strict and often cumbersome health and safety regulations, returned to the Habitat workforce to keep construction as on schedule as possible. Outside contractors partnered with us at reduced or no cost to help move things along.

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What’s happening on the build sites?

We celebrated via Zoom the raising of the first walls on the final home on PVHH’s Glendale Road in Northampton project in late June, a zero net positive 2-bedroom home. Since then the future home of Hamid and Patiria has been framed and the roof trusses installed. On to siding, roofing, interior framing, windows and doors, plumbing and electrical.

We have also begun work on a 3-bedroom home on West Pelham Road in Shutesbury. We welcomed future homeowner Chuck and his daughters at a virtual wall raising ceremony in mid-July and have since framed the home and are now working on framing interior walls and making the house weather tight.

As noted in the article on this page, our usual community volunteer opportunities on the construction site is currently suspended due to an order from the state imposed by the conditions of the pandemic. For updates, go to www.pvhabitat.org/covid-19/

PVHH Staff
LaVae Allard, Bookkeeper
Lindsey Barry, Volunteer Coординator
Jess Flory, Big Enough Project Coordinator
Amanda Hanley, Construction Coordinator
Amy Landry, Director of Resource Development
Megan McDonough, Executive Director

Interns
Shambhavi Ajila
Monika Sharma
Jessica Zelger

Graphics Support
Beth Graham

Administrative Volunteers
Dei Bullock
Ken Carpenter
Lyn Heady
Jodi Kirschner
Lucia Sjøn

“Who are the people in your life who are not right, not fair, not just, you have to speak up. You have to say something; you have to do something.”

— John Lewis, civil rights leader, 1940-2020
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Summer Newsletter 2020

Habitat’s Roots: Racial Equality and Radical Inclusivity

Often when people hear Habitat for Humanity mentioned, the first association they have is Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter. While the former president and first lady together are certainly the most familiar face of the organization and walk the walk of building community one home at a time (still as nonagenarians!), there is a lot of history to Habitat that is less well known, foundational to Habitat’s deep ongoing commitment to social justice through affordable homeownership.

Habitat evolved out of Koinonia Farm*, an intentional integrated community in Georgia founded in the late 1940s on the principles of racial equality and radical inclusivity. This was highly unusual for its time and place and threatening to some who sought to separate black and white, rich and poor. In 1976, Habitat for Humanity was founded by Koinonia supporters Millard and Linda Fuller, who had been a part of Koinonia’s transition to a more outwardly focused Fund for Humanity, and because they felt compelled to focus on a housing ministry. The Fullers’ vision was simple: to create a world where everyone has a decent place to live. The first Habitat homes were built alongside future homeowners who were descendants of slaves and who had not been approved for mortgages or bank loans because of racism in banking. Since those early days of seeking equity housing, the organization has worked with future homeowners and the community to build homes for more than seven million people worldwide. The Fullers’ vision still guides the organization today: Habitat for Humanity is a global leader in building opportunity through life-changing housing solutions.

“Looking for an opportunity to create a world where everyone has a decent place to live? Join Habitat for Humanity, and we'll work together to make that vision a reality.”

– Clarence Jordan, Koinonia’s founder, recognizing the need to expand the Farm’s principles in 1968 into a wider reaching funding mechanism.

* For more information on Koinonia Farm today, go to www.koinoniafarm.org.

Small Homes, Big Movement

Home ownership is especially important in times of uncertainty, and small, simple, energy-efficient homes are an important piece in larger movements for housing stability and equity. Join us to hear from keynote speaker, author Sheri Koones, and from PVHH for updates on building homes and a small home movement during a pandemic, October 15th, online event followed by audience Q&A.

Get Involved!
Visit our website to sign up and volunteer!

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