

# Summer Newsletter 2021

Volume 19, Issue 2

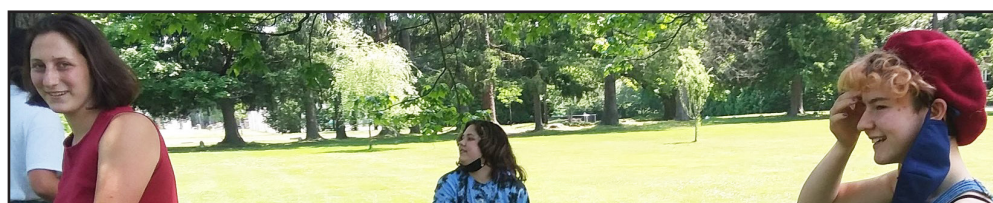
Summer 2021

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, 6:30 pm**  
New volunteer orientation, online, sign up at [www.pvhabitat.org/ways-to-volunteer](http://www.pvhabitat.org/ways-to-volunteer)
- » **Tuesday, September 28, 6:30pm**  
PVHH Annual Meeting - Zoom
- » **Wednesday, September 29, 6-7:15pm**  
Habitat Homebuyer Information Session - Zoom
- » **Saturday, October 16, 10am**  
Habitat Homebuyer Information Session - Zoom
- » **Monday, October 18, 7pm**  
Screening of *Briars in the Cotton Patch*, Christian Science Society, 46 Center St., Northampton
- » **Friday, October 29, 7pm**  
Jazz for Justice, Peace and Dignity Concert, Center Church, S. Hadley
- » **Thursday, November 4, 6pm**  
Habitat Homebuyer Information Session - Zoom
- » **Saturday, December 4-11**  
Gingerbread Build at Home - pickup locations TBD, confectionery crafting at home

## Showing Up for the Community: Circles for Jewish Living



*Nola, Rebecca and Wren, Circles for Jewish Living youth group*

Anyone hiking in the woods near Fitzgerald Lake in Florence back in the late winter of 2021 may have seen a small group of young people walking two by two, observing Covid health and safety protocols, deep in conversation. As members of a youth group within Circles for Jewish Living, they were exploring the concentric and overlapping circles of self, community, and the world. The youth had just attended a zoom presentation by PVHH's Volunteer Coordinator Lindsay Berry and were discussing in pairs how they might do something to positively impact their community. At the end of their paired hike, the group stood in their usual circle to share their conversations and it was decided that they were collectively moved to raise money to support families with low incomes who were ready to buy an affordable first home through Habitat.

And so began weeks of innovative brainstorming and creative crafting to find ways to earn revenue. The group's ideas originally revolved around a project done together – maybe dog walking? – but restrictions imposed by the pandemic made that unrealistic. Undeterred, the students who decided to go forward each came up with their own way of making money, and each showed ingenuity and determination. For 16-year-old Nola, her home baking business seemed like a good place for her to start. Nola bakes, by her account, “things like savory biscuits and scones and cute and cozy treats like cookies and muffins” and decided to turn her talent into “helping people who need a home, giving opportunities to people” through Habitat.

Other students experimented with soap making and crafting friendship bracelets and other jewelry to sell. Rozlyn was already making soap at home, something she began when she found herself bored during the pandemic. She welcomed the opportunity to sell her soaps to raise money for Habitat and said what surprised her to discover was that most of her customers already were familiar with Habitat's local presence. “In fact, many of my customers bought soaps and donated extra money because they wanted to make more of a contribution,” she says.

Through Circles for Jewish Living, these and other young people are learning about the tenets of their faith and how that faith can ripple out into the world. “So many Jewish sayings are about giving to people in need,” says Nola. “Our group is a community – we all wanted to help and do it together.”



*Rozlyn holds one of her hand crafted soaps*

*I am only one; but still I am one.  
 I cannot do everything, but still  
 I can do something.  
 I will not refuse to do the  
 something I can do.*

— Helen Keller

*Maybe you have an idea for hosting a fundraising campaign to support a family's dream of owning an affordable home. Check out PVHH's new GiveLively platform for fundraising made easy. Go to <https://secure.givelively.org/donate/pioneer-valley-habitat-for-humanity-inc>.*

## PVHH Board

Christine Aubrey, President  
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Lydia Goldthwaite  
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Construction Coordinator  
Amy Landry,  
Director of Resource  
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Megan McDonough,  
Executive Director

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Keith Lyman

## Graphics Support

Beth Graham

## Administrative Volunteers

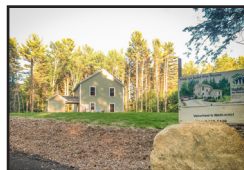
Del Blank  
Lyn Heady  
Jodi Kirschner  
Lucia Spiro

*When we identify where  
our privilege intersects  
with somebody else's  
oppression, we'll find our  
opportunities to make  
real change.*

— Ijeoma Oluo,  
*So You Want to  
Talk About Race*

# Two Families Become Homeowners!

Well-wishers gathered virtually for a dedication ceremony held via Zoom on Wednesday the 16th of June for future homeowners Hamid and Fatima and their son Anir. During the ceremony,



Hamid said, "It was pleasure working with everyone...I am looking forward to building more houses with Habitat as a volunteer." Congratulations to Hamid and Fatima, who took ownership of their new home in June.

Future Shutesbury homeowner Chuck told attendees of his virtual dedication ceremony in June, "I learned a lot of carpentry! It was a great learning experience." Chuck and his daughters Evelyn and Abbey will move into their new home in Shutesbury in the coming weeks.



*Fatima and Hamid get keys from Megan*



*Chuck and his daughters in front of their future home*

## ...But it Doesn't Stop There

Even before the dedications of the Florence and Shutesbury homes took place, the Build Team and regular volunteers were back at it, starting two new homes in Pelham. Already walls are up and construction is moving apace on two 3-bedroom homes. Speakers at the virtual wall raising ceremony in August included David Shanabrook and Tilman Lukas on behalf of the town of Pelham and Monica Curhan of Florence Bank, main financial sponsors of the project. Christine Aubrey spoke on behalf of the PVHH board of directors, Walt Kohler introduced the project as chair of the Build Team, and family mentor Carol Wood introduced future homeowners Hassan and Hajar and Tiffani.



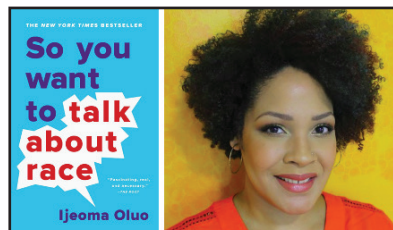
## Letter from the Director

Dear Friends,

I have been impressed with the resiliency of Habitat volunteers – from future homeowners who are just entering the Habitat community to those long-timers who have been carrying the workload for years...and everyone in between. It's hard to know what the future holds these days, but that hasn't stopped us from pursuing the dream of everyone having a decent place to live. One hammer, one house at a time, we are making a difference.

And it's not just the dedicated construction volunteers on the build site, it's also those volunteering on committees, out in the community and in the office who are doing the work of the organization. Please reach out to me if you think you might have time to give. We need a variety of skills – from mortgage underwriters to carpenters to social media mavens. Check out <https://www.pvhabitat.org/ways-to-volunteer/> for details.

One of our newer committees is the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) committee that seeks to promote and maintain a culture of equity, inclusiveness, and proactive anti-racism in our organization and community. The DEI committee read the book "*So You Want to Talk About Race*" by Ijeoma Oluo and has been encouraging the Habitat community to take the time to read it as well. Please join us in reading this book and mark your calendars for the film screening of *Briars in the Cotton Patch* (see article, p.3). This movie tells the story of the civil rights movement against the backdrop of Koinonia Farm's history from the 1940s through present, including the founding of Habitat for Humanity.



In community,  
  
Megan McDonough,  
Executive Director





## Screening of Award-Winning Film *Briars in the Cotton Patch*

Broadcast on PBS stations across the country from 2005-2010, *Briars in the Cotton Patch* tells the story of the early days of Koinonia Farm, the community that spawned Habitat for Humanity. It is a story of the daring social experiment that was Koinonia, an intentionally integrated community in the middle of a racially divided South in the 1940s. In spite of being the target of attacks and intimidation, the community persisted in its peaceful pursuit of living harmoniously and equitably, "seeking to be a demonstration plot for the Kingdom of God." Join us for a screening of this one-hour moving film with footage of the civil rights era followed by a discussion.



Monday, October 18, 7 pm, Christian Science Society auditorium, 46 Center St., Northampton

*FREE. Please be advised that this film contains words, images and content about racism that may be disturbing and is intended for mature audiences.*

## Jazz for Justice, Peace & Dignity at Center Church in South Hadley

### The Benny Benack Band

*Benny Benack III (t, v), Addison Frei (p), Russell Hall (b), Kyle Poole (d)*

Friday, October 29, 2021

Doors 6:30 pm

Opening Set: 7:00 pm

Featured Set: 7:30 pm



*with special guest Tahira Clayton (v)*

In the wake of a year filled with concerns over health, food insecurity, and issues of justice, this live concert featuring NYC-based jazz trumpeter and vocalist Benny Benack and his band with special guest Tahira Clayton will seek to bring people together for a great night of music and to benefit the important issues in our town, region, and country. Hosted by the Center Church, partial proceeds will benefit Pioneer Valley Habitat.

For tickets (\$25 in advance/\$15 for students; \$30 at the door) go to [www.eventbrite.com](http://www.eventbrite.com).

## Build a House at Your House! (or Office or Place of Worship or...) Gingerbread Build 2021, December 4-11



Back by popular demand, Gingerbread Build at Home is coming around to a location near you (in fact, of your own choosing), this year December 4th to 11th. Teams will pick up their supplies at a designated location and have a week to design and build their mini masterpieces. At home with family. At the office with co-workers. In an afterschool program or religious education classroom. Anywhere that works for your 4-person team!

Judges will consider entries in each of a dozen categories from submitted photos and winners will be announced at a celebration on Saturday, December 11th. More information coming in October and November, including logistical details, award categories and some of the fabulous prizes that will go to winning entries and all youth participants. If last year's Build at Home was any indication, competition will be stiff, so waste no time beginning to draw up the blueprints for your winning entry!

*Future homeowner information sessions online for three small homes (1BR, 2 BR, 3 BR) on Burts Pit Road in Northampton!*

*Construction to begin Spring 2022.*

*Sep 29, 2021 06:00 PM*

*Oct 16, 2021 10:00 AM*

*Nov 4, 2021 06:00 PM*

*For more information go to [www.pvhabitat.org/](http://www.pvhabitat.org/) apply or call 413-517-8326*



*Do you have an aging vehicle that's ready for trash or trade?*

*Turn your old car into kitchen cabinets for a family in need of a home! Or maybe a window or two to bring sunlight into the new home of a first-time homeowners family!*

*Go to [pvhabitat.org/donate/cars-for-homes](http://pvhabitat.org/donate/cars-for-homes) to learn more.*

**Donate your car.**



**(877) 277-4344**  
**[carsforhomes.org](http://carsforhomes.org)**



P.O. Box 60642  
Florence, MA 01062  
413-586-5430  
[www.pioneervalleyhabitat.org](http://www.pioneervalleyhabitat.org)

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## Have a Heart for Habitruck

After years of faithful service, the beloved and beleaguered Habitruck has gone on to greener pastures and our intrepid construction volunteers need a new vehicle to move supplies and make runs to the transfer station. If you would like to contribute to the truck campaign, go to [secure.givelively.org/donate/pioneer-valley-habitat-for-humanity-inc/habitruck-2-0](http://secure.givelively.org/donate/pioneer-valley-habitat-for-humanity-inc/habitruck-2-0).



Or maybe you have a used truck that will pass inspection and is ready to haul trash and building materials around the Pioneer Valley? Please contact us about making a donation or bargain sale of your vehicle! Email [truck@pvhabitat.org](mailto:truck@pvhabitat.org) if you have a truck for us (and if you have any other vehicle that needs to go, you can donate to [www.carsforhomes.org](http://www.carsforhomes.org)). Thank you!!!



## Get Involved!

Visit our website to  
sign up and volunteer!



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