Habitat for Humanity of Bucks County Celebrates its 20th Anniversary!

This year we are celebrating our 20th anniversary, having gotten our official start in December, 1990. Thanks to a dedicated group of volunteers, led by a group from Doylestown Presbyterian Church, our first home was completed in 1994. Today, 77 families have become homeowners through our program with five more expected to make settlement by Spring, 2011.

Over the past 20 years we have seen many changes, growing from an organization run completely by volunteers to one that is now professionally staffed with staff and volunteers. In this issue, we will be highlighting some of the significant changes that have occurred. But for now, let’s focus on what has not changed.

Our mission, “To build affordable homes, better lives, stronger families, and safer communities through partnerships with people and organizations throughout Bucks County,” remains steadfast. Everyone - the Board of directors, staff and volunteers - focuses on that single goal every day. Why? After 20 years, we know it matters.

Our volunteers remain at the core of our success. Their dedication and skills allow us to direct more of our funding to construction and outreach and expect to see much more over the next 20 years. The faces of staff and volunteers will change in time as well. Our commitment to changing these circumstances by providing the opportunity for homeownership to working families in our community remains strong today. We have seen many changes in our delivery, construction and outreach and expect to see much more over the next 20 years. The faces of staff and volunteers will change in time as well.

But, just as time marches on, so will the commitment to our mission here in Bucks County, our home, our community.

Linda Andrews
Executive Director

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In Honor Of...

Samantha Acaster  
Mr. and Mrs. Donald Sonlin

Meg Burger  
Lynn Feldman

Ann Hadfield  
Sandra Fickes

Lauren Kelly  
Karen Burkhardt

Beth Mastro  
Mr. and Mrs. Ken Walt

Winter May Melson  
Donna Marie Bergner

Steve Moyer  
Stephen Ministry – St. Paul’s Lutheran Church

John Wright  
Mr. and Mrs. Allan Greer

Melissa O’Brien  
Joan Schumacher

Tom and Madden Read  
Christine Read

Lea Schumacher  
Joan Schumacher

Jay Schwartz  
Employees at Dr. Schwartz’s office

Dan and Betsey Soderberg  
Mr. and Mrs. Rick Gebelein

Joseph Walp  
Kathleen Walp

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Carol Easter’s sister Karen  
Mr. and Mrs. David Ives

William “Bud” Broomall  
Mr. and Mrs. Albert Turongo

Robert Creitsinger  
Integrity Mechanical

Corrine Davies  
Mr. and Mrs. Wayne Bailey

Frank Eckert  
Barbara Eckert

Nancy Hankins  
Alpem Rosenthal  
Mr. and Mrs. James Hankins

Mae Henderson  
Elnier Henderson

Geraldine Martson  
Janice O’Donnell

Beverly Miller  
Charlotte Lawson

Leroy Miller  
Anonymous

Joseph Muhuny  
The Shaw Group

William Pfeiffer  
Ruth Pfeiffer

Florence Servis  
Anonymous

Emerson Shaw  
Mr. and Mrs. George Lange

Joe Newton  
Mr. and Mrs. David Lighthep

In Memory Of...

Mr. and Mrs. David Lightkep

Lutheran Church

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in October, Rev. Christine Mottl of St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Doylestown, and joy at their new home at 2215 Liberator Street in Bristol Township. And their children in Cluster 13. On November 13, Latarsha McWhite and Amber Simione in Cluster 9 and Ardjan Pashollari and Eglantina Sema, friends and family gathered to celebrate the homeownership of three new homes dedicated this fall in opposite ends of the county.

Welcome Home!

On October 23, in our Emerald Hollow townhouse community in Upper Bucks, Friends and family gathered to celebrate the homeownership of Amber Simone in Cluster 9 and Arjan Pashollari and Eglantina Sema in Cluster 13. On November 13, LaRashia McWhite and Eglantina Sema were presented with the new house keys. The Liberat Street house was sponsored by Thrivent Financial for Lutherans and the members church of the Lower Bucks Chapter. Rev. Nancy Wiseman represented Emmaus Road Lutheran Church, and the provided blessings. Representatives from Lutheran Church of God’s Love and from Lutheran Church of the Resurrection presented the house keys. Gifts were presented by the Knit and Crochet group from Lutheran Church of God’s Love and by the scouts of Troop 48 Doylestown Presbyterian Church.

Three awards were presented: Sara Bostancic – Volunteer of the Year, Peter Thompson – Spirit of Habitat Award, and First Savings Bank as the Corporate Sponsor of the Year. Guests mingled and sampled delicious appetizers as they bid on an outstanding array of silent auction items donated by local businesses, Homeowners Sharron Boster and Alice Zander shared their reflections on what it has meant to partner with Habitat Bucks.

In 2009, Habitat launched its Green Building Initiative; we embarked on our first adaptive-reuse project, the conversion of a circa 1920 baseball-making factory in Perkinsville into a 6-unit condominium project. Fittingly named the Stickley, the project featured 2 fully accessible units, a construction debris recycling program (75% of demolition debris, totaling 48 tons, was recycled and kept from the local landfill), upgraded exterior wall insulation (Closed cell spray foam insulation R 24.5), Energy Star rated windows, Hybrid HVAC systems, Energy Star light fixtures, low flow plumbing fixtures and programmable thermostats. Habitat also initiated their Owner Education Program to educate homeowners how to manage their energy efficient homes. In 2010, Habitat achieved a 20% financial completion in early 2010 with the average construction cost per unit at $108,674.

Habitat for Humanity of Bucks County is:

President: Scott R. Belveal, Goldman Sachs & Co
Vice President: Heath Dunwell, Dunwell Engineering
Secretary: Nancy Buckner, First Savings Bank of Pennsylvania
Treasurer: Hal Margolit, Dumack and Belveal, LLP

Board of Directors

Habitat for Humanity of Bucks County
20 Years of Construction

In 2000, Habitat built its largest and most ground-breaking project. It commenced as a 37 unit townhouse development in Upper Bucks, named Emerlad Hollow, in Trumbauer Township. This initial phase of the project is situated on a 14 acre tract and spans two communities. Phase 1 of the project began with the purchase of another 14 acre tract which is contiguous to the Phase 1 tract. Phase 2 added 36 more townhouses.

Emerald Hollow not only introduced the need for a whole new building process (because Habitat was undertaking multiple, simultaneous constructions) but also offered new homeownership models. It featured a mixed income community profile incorporating open market homes alongside Habitat sponsored families. The opportunity for affordable housing was further expanded when two tiers of qualifying incomes were created. The concept was original and enabled Habitat to address the specific economic challenges of home ownership in Bucks County. The open market homes were sold and the proceeds were used to assist in funding the Habitat sponsored townhouses. By 2005, 25 Habitat sponsored and 12 open market townhouses were completed under Phase 1 of the project. Phase 1 townhouse construction cost averaged $108,180 per unit with production totaling 7.4 homes per year including the open market units.

In 2005, Phase 2 began with modifications to the townhouse floor plan. The building exterior facades remained the same but unit square footage size was increased. The opportunity for affordable housing was further expanded with the purchase of another 15 acre tract which is contiguous to the Phase 1 tract. Phase 2 added 36 more townhouses.

Phase 2 of the project was completed in 2010 with the average construction cost per unit at $108,180.

Habitat for Humanity of Bucks County
3708 E. York Rd.
Souderton, PA 18964
www.habitatbucks.org

In 2010, Habitat established new opportunities back in Lower Bucks County and eagerly began two projects in Bristol Township; a single home and a 4-unit townhome cluster. The single home replaced a blighted house, but the original foundation was salvaged and reinforced, saving materials and costs. In keeping with the Green Building Initiative, our sustainable building techniques have expanded even further to include interior air sealing. Energy Star rated HVAC systems, structural insulated panels (SIPS), permeable pavement driveways and patios, underground detention basins, and valve based framing (to reduce wood use). The goal is to achieve Energy Star Certification for these current projects. The single home is scheduled for completion in October 2010 with the 4-unit cluster completion shortly thereafter in December 2010. The single home is expected to have a construction cost of $108,000 - $110,000 and the townhouse cluster is projected to have a construction cost of $95,000 to $100,000.

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Homeownership – a child’s view

Twenty years has changed Habitat. Even the households that comprise our Habitat homeowners have changed: new careers, new family members, children growing up and moving out, some even marrying and having their own children.

For our 20th anniversary, we asked children of Habitat homeowners and partner families (those families currently working on their sweat equity hours and helping to complete their homes), how life has changed, or is changing, for them.

The Carroll family of Bristol Borough purchased their single-family home in 2001. When they were accepted into the program in early 1998, Candace Carroll was 4. Her twin siblings, Faith and Isaiah, were 15 months old. Candace, who was 7 when the family purchased their home, will soon be 17. Faith and Isaiah will soon be 14. As young as they were then, they’ve each noticed changes to their family through the years.

“Me and my family grew over the years by doing more things together,” Faith said. “In the past, we would always eat dinner on our own time. Nowadays, we eat as a family.”

Isaiah and Candace commented on the stability that homeownership provides for them.

“You can do whatever you want to a house that you own,” said Isaiah. “Renting a place, you have to move every so often, and you have to worry about a lot of things.” Candace added, “Living in a rented place means you have to follow the owner’s rules, and you’re not guaranteed a place to live when you get home. When you own a house, you know you have a place to live when you come home.”

Homeownership provides more stability. The Abreu family townhouse in Emerald Hollow is home to Ronald, Angel, Jr., 14, and Rosbel, 10, as well as their parents, who purchased their home in June 2006.

“Owning a home has given us a sense of pride and happiness that we’ve never had the pleasure to enjoy,” they reported together via email. “Having your own room has given Rosbel a sense of organization and responsibility, while sharing one has brought Angel and Rangel closer than ever.”

They added, “Owning a home has brought us together on occasions such as when rearranging a room, deciding on where a certain decoration would go; or where we were going to put our Christmas tree every December. Owning a home has been a great bonding experience for us all!”

Nothing is lost during the experience of working toward a new home. Sister and brother, Ronnie Wilson and Ronald Wilson, Jr., have been watching and participating actively with their mother, LaTasha McWhirte, and their grandmother, Irene McWhirte, through the homeownership process. They have been celebrating, working and praying together in preparation for homeownership since May of this year. Ronnie, 10, and Ronald, Jr., 7, have been earning sweat equity hours by making and writing thank you notes to volunteers and working in the Habitat office.

“We feel successful that we are doing something to help build the house and get all our hours in,” Ronnie said recently. “Both siblings are excited about getting their own rooms, as they currently share one in their two-bedroom apartment. Their new, single-family home in Bristol Township boasts four bedrooms--enough to accommodate this three-generation household, who believes that “home” is a place for love and worship.

When the family was visiting their new home in mid-August, LaTasha shared, Ronald walked in the room where she and her mother were talking. “Ronald said to us, ‘I hope you guys aren’t in there just talking; I hope you’re saying a prayer. I want to go in my room to say a prayer.’ And he did,” she said.

“Grandma can’t stop telling all her friends. She says, I am so proud of my daughter,” Ronnie shared. “The first thing we’ll do in our new home—I will get my mom, my brother and my grandma all together and we’ll say a prayer.”
**Habitat Humanity’s ReStore – a New Kind of Ministry**

Habitat ReStores are retail outlets where quality used and surplus building materials and home goods donated from outside companies, organizations and individuals are sold at a fraction of normal prices. Proceeds from ReStores help local affiliates fund the construction of Habitat homes within the community. The first ReStore opened in Winnipeg, Canada in 1991. The first US store opened in Austin, Texas in 1992. Habitat for Humanity of Bucks County opened its ReStore in 2008. Our motivation was the sheer volume and financial needs of others—both spiritual and practical. We all come together to make affordable housing and better communities a reality.

The establishment of the ReStore expands our reach in the community by providing a service to the entire community. Whether intentional or not, everyone who donates goods to the store, and everyone who buys from the store, is donating to Habitat Bucks. It is an additional opportunity to give the gift of time as we use volunteer support to assist in its operation. The ReStore serves as a means for individuals to give.

The ReStore provides us another opportunity for outreach in the community. We promote our mission, information on homeownership and ways to get involved. There are educational materials available on how, what and why we build. The ReStore serves as a means to communicate our mission and the need in our own community.

So join us for a slightly different type of ministry. Come, shop, and save! The Habitat for Humanity ReStore is located at 31 Oak Avenue, Chalfont, PA 18934. Phone: 215.822.7208. Hours: Wednesday 9-5, Thursday & Friday 9-6, Saturday 9-5. Donations are only accepted during hours of operation.

**20 years of support**

Countless numbers of individuals, churches, businesses and organizations have contributed to Habitat Bucks over the years, so many that we fear attempting to mention them all would leave more than a few without recognition. For that reason, we gratefully acknowledge the entire collection of time, funds and in-kind donations each and every person has contributed to making many dreams come true for the Habitat families.

A few garner mentioning specifically. Thank you so much to: Doylestown Presbyterian Church, whose members have donated hundreds of dollars to Habitat over the years. The Quakertown United Methodist Church for their ongoing support through the annual 5K. This church has been providing shade for our Habitat Families for many years.

Thanks to everyone involved with Thrivent for their continued support! The Board of Directors for Habitat for Humanity Bucks County is delight-
ed to partner with Dow on our Colonial Avenue project. With a prior, ongoing relationship with Dow and Haas, we were very excited to be able to continue to work with many familiar faces now part of the support family. This unique partnership has provided a combination of volunteer labor, don-
rations of construction materials as well as financial support. Thanks to everyone at Dow!

This year, we are very excited to welcome a collaboration of Episcopal Churches in Bucks County to our first Episcopal Build. Lead by a group from the Bucks County Episcopal Deanery, these churches are providing volunteers and financial support for one of our Colonial Avenue townhomes in Bristol. Their gifts are a blessing to a Habitat Bucks partner family!

**And the list continues to grow...**

Thank you Christian Life Coach and Finance Coach, Kelley Sawyer, who shared her expertise with current partner families, homeowners and persons hopeful to be Habitat homeowners. In a two-part workshop on September 11 and 28. The full-day workshops took a holistic approach to preparing for homeownership.

As we move toward new building projects, we are especially thankful to our committees. Each committee has contributed to the success of our building projects, communities and the homeowners themselves. The Family Selection committee continues to provide innumerable hours reviewing homeowner applications, and the Family Support Committee partners with each selected family. The Family Support Committee works closely with our re-
source development director in fundraising efforts; taking full responsibility for our an-

cual event. The Women Build Process Steering Committee continues to provide strong support through organizing events and programs to support their fundraising and volunteer efforts. Women Build helps to fund a house every year.

**Habitat for Humanity of Bucks County**

Habitat for Humanity of Bucks County is a truly dedicated group. Their diverse skills help to provide needed expertise in faith guidance, management, financial, legal, fundraising, engineering, architecture and more. They freely share their gifts to help us in our mission. They also make a personal commitment to support the organization financially. In our 2009/2010 fiscal year, the board of directors raised $62,900. This included personal and corporate donations, as well as fundraising, which the board of directors has raised on our behalf. Thanks to our board of directors for all you do!

And some very delightful farewell...!