

## Two Dedication Ceremonies Take Place In Lambertville

### **Kerr Family House Dedication**

After two years and hundreds of hours of sweat equity, the Kerr Family received the keys to their new home in Lambertville on Saturday, October 15.



*Recent mishaps resulting in crutches for Cody and a sling for Jen did not dampen the family's excitement.*

"It's been a long time, but it was worth it," said Jen Kerr at the house dedication ceremony. The ceremony was attended by more than 100 people, including volunteers, local officials, and Cub Scout Den #451, which provided refreshments.

"It's been an awesome experience to help build our own home," Ms. Kerr said, adding that she was looking forward to many years of happiness in her new home. Ms. Kerr, along with her husband David and children Jessie, Brittany, and Cody, received a Bible from the Hunterdon Church Partnership, which sponsored the house. In addition, the family received a home maintenance manual and a good luck basket from RVHFH.

The Kerr house is the second to be built by RVHFH in Lambertville. Mayor



*The Kerr family home*

David DelVecchio explained that the Kerr house and the other Habitat homes under construction are the result of the city's effort to improve the hill neighborhood. "This [project] shows what happens when a city, a neighborhood group, and a group like Raritan Valley Habitat for Humanity come together," Mayor DelVecchio told the crowd. "It shows what happens when we use the redevelopment process for good purposes."

### **Site Dedication For Two Families**

The Coleman and Durborow families - nine people in all - began a new phase in their journey to home ownership on Sept. 17 as seventy people gathered to dedicate the sites for their new homes.

As Silvio Verdile, a Raritan Valley Habitat for Humanity trustee, told the



*Alan, Jennifer and Ashton Durborow*

crowd gathered to celebrate the dedication, the process began a few years ago. "Today symbolizes the beginning of the construction phase where the building committee and its volunteers construct these homes," he said. "However, the effort to build these homes started approximately three years ago when we began working with the city of Lambertville on a redevelopment proposal for this area."

For Cindy Ege, a member of the Lambertville town council, this was also a personal event in that both the Colemans and the Durborows are local families. "It means so much for us to watch them grow," she said. "Whatever we can do to help, we're here."

That sense of community was not lost on the two families.

"We get to keep our kids in Lambertville," said Curtis Coleman. "Everyone's very excited." Curtis, his wife, Bridget, their children Allison,



*The Coleman family, happy to remain in Lambertville, enjoy watching the progress on their new home.*

Toby, and Kerry, and their niece Andrea Wisniewski will live in one of the two homes.

For Alan Durborow, who, with his wife Jennifer and son Ashton, will live in the other house, the sentiment was similar. "We're happy to have an opportunity like this," he said. "We expect a lot of good years here."

- Greg Crawford

# Building On Faith



Eleven Bernardsville area congregations gathered on October 26 to discuss putting their faith into action by helping to sponsor two Habitat homes in Bernardsville.

Sponsoring congregations will sign a Letter of Intent indicating their commitment to support the house sponsorship through prayer, volunteer labor, and financial and material donations.

The next meeting will be held on January 25 at St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Basking Ridge. For further information, please contact the Habitat office at 908-704-0016.

- Betsy Kuzio

## Please join us for our 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting

February 6, 2006

7:30 pm

United Reformed Church  
100 West Main Street  
Somerville, NJ

This meeting also serves as a Volunteer Orientation for those interested in donating their time to our organization.

The evening will feature highlights and accomplishments of 2005, goals for 2006, Volunteer Recognition Awards, election of new Board members and refreshments.

## FROM THE PRESIDENT...

Home ownership allows a family to dream, plan, and achieve a brighter future. However, spiraling home costs, coupled with the loss of housing due to US and worldwide natural disasters, have left millions of hard-working people out in the cold.

Habitat for Humanity International (HFHI), along with many committed partners has stepped up to this challenge around the world. At the 25th anniversary of HFHI, a milestone of 100,000 homes was set. In 2005, a mere four years later, 200,000 homes were completed, providing shelter for over one million people.

Here in Somerset and Hunterdon counties, where the cost of living is high and developable land is scarce, we face similar challenges. In response to the ever-increasing need for decent, affordable housing, our Board last year set a target to double production from 2-3 houses per year to 4-6. This is a significant challenge, requiring us to find land and to bring in many new partners and sponsors. Happily, we are making great progress. One home is complete, and three more are underway in Lambertville.

In 2006 we will undertake construction of four housing units in Bernardsville. This is our first opportunity to serve families in northern Somerset County. Beyond 2006 the Board is pursuing the development of a subdivision in Bridgewater (with up to nine homes) as well as partnerships with other communities which will help those communities achieve their NJ-mandated COAH affordable housing commitments.

To maintain the momentum, we need to recruit new sponsors and volunteers with skills in the area of land use planning, financial operations, family support, community relations, construction, legal, property acquisition, engineering, resource development, public relations, church relations, architecture, office operations, Board membership, etc. I enjoy sharing my enthusiasm and passion for our work with almost everyone I meet. I am asking each of you to do the same.

I wish to thank everyone who had a part in making our program successful in 2005, and I look forward to working with you as we work toward the continued success of our mission in 2006 and beyond.

Happy New Year!

- Richard Carr

*Mark Your Calendar!*

**Our next Women Build has been  
scheduled for March 4, 2006.**

If you would like to receive information, please send an email to [rvhfh@rvhabitat.org](mailto:rvhfh@rvhabitat.org) or call our office at 908-704-0016.

# Building Update



**This is an exciting time for RVHFH as we strive to increase our production to 4 to 6 homes per year.**

In order to accomplish this, we need to build our houses in clusters. The Lambertville redevelopment project - building four homes within a two block area - provides a great opportunity to work toward that goal.

We have completed the first of these four homes for the Kerr family, who moved in November. This home is the first RVHFH home to qualify as an Energy Star home, saving future utility costs for the homeowners.

As of the beginning of December, the three other homes are progressing well. The first, being built in partnership with the New Jersey Builders Association, is already enclosed. The second is completely framed with sheathing underway, and the third is halfway framed. We are in a good position to provide ample work for our volunteers over the winter months, regardless of the weather.

In addition to our Lambertville construction, we'll be preparing our Bernardsville site for a spring construction start on two duplexes.

Most of the building is done by volunteers. Some are professional builders, but most are not. Each Friday and Saturday we have a different group of volunteers from supporting businesses and congregations. Then on Wednesday and Thursday we have our regular weekday crews that represent a diverse group, including former teachers, engineers, attorneys, physicians, CPAs, and even a few professional builders.

Most are retired, some are self-employed, and others are between jobs. Many are men, but an increasing number are women. Some came to RVHFH with strong building skills, others with little but a desire to learn and contribute. In spite of these differences, they all share the excitement of productive work and the personal fulfillment of helping others.

- Ken Schurzky

*These are just a few of the organizations that have supported our building efforts by sponsoring workdays in Lambertville. Thank You!*



Johnson & Johnson



New Jersey Builders Assoc.



The College of NJ



Commerce Bank



*Also, many thanks to the individuals who worked so hard!*

**We do our best to acquire building supplies at reduced cost; however, increased building during 2006 will surely increase our need for financial support. A gift of any size will be greatly appreciated and will make a real difference in the lives of needy families in Somerset and Hunterdon Counties.**

£ Enclosed is my tax-deductible gift of: \_\_\_\_\_

£ Please charge my credit card.      £ Mastercard      £ Visa

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name on card (print) \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to: **Raritan Valley Habitat for Humanity**  
PO Box 6275  
Bridgewater, NJ 08807



# Our First Women Build!



## **Women Build. What a great idea!**

That seemed to be the overall feeling of the thirty-eight participants, three female homeowners, eight female crew chiefs, and four male supervisors who attended our first Women Build event. The Women Build took place on two Saturdays, November 5 and 12. Excitement filled the air as the women arrived, turned in pledges, received Women Build t-shirts, tattoos, and tool aprons, and put on their hard hats. The crew chiefs led a brief safety and skill demonstration, and then the crews formed to start building.

On November 5, thirty-one women split into three crews. With the help of supervisors and crew chiefs, the women in two crews learned when to use 8-, 10- and 16- penny nails to build walls. By 11:00 a.m. these two crews were ready to raise their first walls and begin toenailing the studs in place. The third group was bravely climbing to the third level of scaffolding to staple the Tyvek wrap onto the third house.



On the second Saturday, November 12, twenty-two women nailed sheathing onto two houses, and glued and nailed down the floor on one house. The women learned how to use the chop saw and circular saw and how to space the sheathing.

Ranging in age from 20 to 65 and in ability from novice to skilled, the women included mother-daughter teams, coworkers, friends, and Habitat volunteers who had never been involved in the actual construction of a home. The camaraderie was apparent as the women helped



each other with their newfound skills. It was obvious the women loved the work when they would not stop for lunch and when, at 3:30, they would not quit until the last window frame was finished.

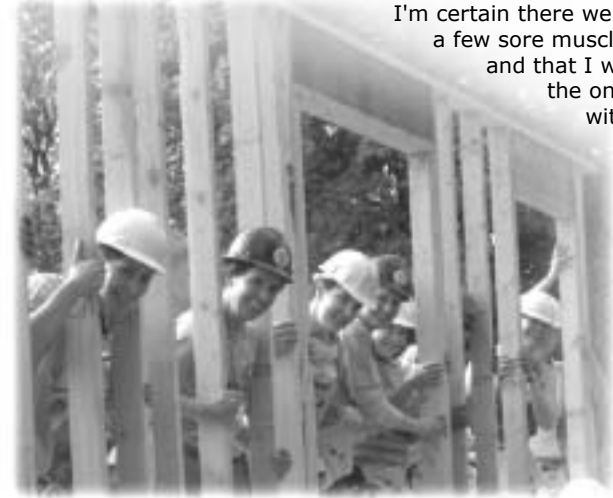
"I feel so empowered!" "Can you believe we built all the walls in one day?" "This is so much fun!" "I've been looking for a place to learn construction techniques." These were comments heard among the women, along with the question heard most often: "When is the next Women Build?"



I'm certain there were a few sore muscles, and that I wasn't the only woman asleep by 9:00 pm with dreams of a fulfilling day.

The first Women Build was an overwhelming success and exceeded my every expectation. An added bonus is that the women raised over \$7,000 in pledges!

So, when is the next Women Build? Keep checking our website!  
-Kathy Tanaka



# SCOUTING OUT NEW PROJECTS

**Hunterdon Central sophomore earns Girl Scout award by helping build homes.**

**By Christa Segalini  
Staff Writer for the Courier News**

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*Kelsey Newborn at the Lambertville work site.*



LAMBERTVILLE – Flemington resident Kelsey Newborn does not fit the stereotypical description of the brawny construction worker, but she and her fellow Girl Scouts this week proved you don't need bulging biceps to build a home.

Newborn said she chose to volunteer with the organization for her Gold Award project after researching some of the area's problems. "Part of the prerequisite for earning the Gold Award is researching problems in the area, and housing is one of those problems," she said.

Newborn, a 15-year-old Hunterdon Central High School sophomore and Girl Scout with Troop 833, worked Thursday toward her Gold Award by helping Raritan Valley Habitat for Humanity build a cluster of houses on Hancock Street. When the project is completed – around spring 2006 – four families will have new homes they can call their own.



To earn the Girl Scout Gold Award – the highest honor a Girl Scout can receive – Newborn said she had to complete numerous prerequisite projects on top of 30 hours of community service and 40 hours of paid work experience.

Her work on the Raritan Valley Habitat for Humanity project – made possible by a \$2,000 grant she received from the Somerset County United Way's Women's Initiative – is the last requirement Newborn must fulfill to receive the award. "This is a really good project to do because a big part of the Girl Scouts is women empowering women," said Newborn, who has been with the same Girl Scout troop for 11 years. "It's a group of women getting together to build a house for a woman in the community who needs it."

The houses, said Raritan Valley Habitat for Humanity construction coordinator Dick Kline, are part of the city's redevelopment initiative. "Getting land is the biggest challenge we face," Kline said. "This project is a partnership with Lambertville for its redevelopment zone."

Newborn said her church, Three Bridges Reformed Church in Readington, had sponsored a house by Habitat for Humanity in the past and that the opportunity to help provide a home for someone in need was too important to pass up.

Hammering the beams that will one day become the home of Middlesex County resident Taneesa Peters and her three children, Newborn and six other Girl Scouts are putting in two days of work on the project.



"Living in Hunterdon County, which is such an affluent area, we don't know what it's like, we can't even fathom what it would be like, not to have a home," Newborn said. "It's just not something you ever really even think about. But then getting involved in this showed that this can happen to anyone."

Families who benefit from Habitat for Humanity's homes are required to put in from 250 to 500 hours of sweat equity – time spent working on their house while it's being built. Kline said once the family is able to move in, Habitat for Humanity holds their mortgage and the family pays a modest mortgage payment to Habitat. Kline said that including the price of property and materials, each house being built on Hancock Street costs about \$150,000. Funding for the construction, Kline said, is usually sponsored by a company or charitable organization or is raised through Habitat's many fundraising endeavors.

The Hancock Street homes are being funded, in part, by the Hunterdon Interfaith Housing Opportunity, SES Americom and the Reformed Church Partnership.

## Special Events Raise Good Will And Funds For Habitat

### Several organizations held successful fundraisers for Habitat during the fall of 2005. Some highlights:

# A silent auction was held at Beaver Brook Country Club on September 25, sponsored by the Clinton office of Coldwell Banker. Over 150 attendees listened to a live jazz ensemble and sampled delicious appetizers while reviewing auction items. The evening raised over \$17,000 for the Coldwell Banker house to be built in Bernardsville in 2006. Thanks to Barbara Lee and her colleagues at Coldwell Banker for organizing an entertaining and productive event!

# A fish covered with a photo montage designed by Ella Rue was auctioned on October 2 as part of the Hooked on Califon event. The fish was purchased for \$500 by Califon United Methodist Church, which donated the funds to RVHFH as part of the Hunterdon Interfaith Housing Opportunity house partnership.

# A rummage sale was held on October 15, sponsored by the Whitehouse office of Coldwell Banker. This event raised over \$3000 toward the Coldwell Banker house in Bernardsville.

# A second Beaver Brook event was held on October 21st, sponsored by the Hunterdon House Partnership. Their annual fundraiser featured a lovely sit-down dinner, a silent auction, and a live auction, once again featuring Harrie Copeland III as auctioneer. A very enjoyable evening raised \$19,000 for the next house to be sponsored by this church partnership.

Thanks to Maggie D'Aversa and Lydia Lehmueller and their committee for orchestrating another memorable and successful event.

# The Grappa Ristorante at the Somerset Hills Hotel held a Wine Tasting Dinner to benefit RVHFH on November 17. The evening featured the wines of the Penfolds Winery. The event, organized by Jason Ledder, raised several thousand dollars for the Bernardsville Habitat homes. Thanks Jason!



# The Hunterdon Interfaith Housing Opportunity (HIHO) sponsored two pasta dinners at the Flemington Presbyterian Church in June and November, raising almost \$1000 for the HIHO house currently under construction in Lambertville. Reid Kuder, HIHO coordinator, noted that "The food was so delicious at our first spaghetti dinner, a lot of people returned for more!"

**Thanks to everyone who contributed their time, talent, & treasure to make these events a success!**

## Swing With Habitat

Friday, March 31, 2006

6:30 – 11:00 pm

Liberty Corner Presbyterian Church

Put on your dance shoes for a night of fun and dancing to support RVHFH's building efforts!



Hosted by Nash Dance Center of Randolph, NJ, the evening will include dinner, dance lesson, showcase dancing and open dancing.

Each ticket also includes a chance to win a two-hour sailboat cruise with Sea Fever Excursions at Liberty Landing Marina in Jersey City and dinner for six at Liberty House Restaurant also located at Liberty Landing.

Tickets are \$50 each.

We are looking for people to serve on the committee for this event. Please call the Habitat office for more information: 908-704-0016.