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[www.rvhabitat.org](http://www.rvhabitat.org)

# Raritan Valley Habitat for Humanity

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January 15 was a bitter, cold day, but the sun shone down on all gathered for the newest Habitat home dedication on Roosevelt Avenue in Manville. The packed audience of donors, local officials, family members, and volunteers assembled at the duplex to bless the new homes of the Dixon/Abner and Jeffrey/Hall families.

"There are three important steps in the construction of a Habitat home," said Silvio Verdile, RVHFH President. "First, obtaining the site. Second, the selection of the families whose lives will be changed. And third, the dedication of the home, which is the transfer of the home to the family. That is why we are here today." In his welcome, Verdile thanked all the individuals, groups, and professionals who volunteered their time in the construction of this home, including the house sponsors, KMC Telecom, Somerset Church Partnership,

and Somerset County HOME Funds.

Giving the invocation was Pastor Elsie Armstrong Rhodes of Trinity United Church, one of the church sponsors of this build. She asked, "God of promise and purpose, dedicate these homes to your glory. We give you thanks."

One of the speakers included Hal Kamine, President of KMC Telecom, who said that although "we sponsored this build, we got so much out of it. It was for a deserving family. We look forward to many more."

The families were introduced by their Family Support liaisons. Linda Bradway, RVHFH Family Support, described Sheila Dixon as "a woman of few words; a woman with a career, four beautiful children; and she completed all her sweat equity, going above and beyond; a hard worker."

## Home Dedication For Two Families In Manville



Sheila Dixon and her children gave thanks to the churches, building committee, volunteers, friends, and "mostly to the Heavenly Father for bringing this home to reality." She said it was "such a blessing to meet the individuals who helped us. My family will ever be grateful."

Doug Schiller, RVHFH Family Support, related how wonderful it was "to see the Jeffery children dancing in the house in joyful preparation to get the house ready." He introduced Erica Jeffery, the homeowner, who said, "I hope you understand how meaningful this is to me. It is a blessing. I am very appreciative for me, my kids, and my family. HFH has become a part of my family."

Along with the keys to their new homes, each family received a Bible, a home maintenance manual, and a good luck basket.

"Our toes and our hands may be freezing, but our hearts are warm as we celebrate this house," said Father Bruce Montgomery of St. Martin's Episcopal Church in the benediction.

- Sarah Verbeke



*The Jeffrey/Hall Family, from left: Glennisha, Eric, Erica, Glen and Alisha.*

*The Dixon/Abner family, from left: Lawrence, Aaron, Asia, John and Sheila.*



# Volunteer *Spotlight*

This month, our Volunteer Spotlight falls on another very deserving member of our RVHFH team, Mindy Shanks. Mindy has been involved with RVHFH for approximately 10 years. She has served tirelessly on several committees, is a consummate team player, and is dedicated to the mission of Habitat for Humanity.

Mindy served on the Family Selection Committee (FSC) from 1998-2000. In this role, Mindy spent many hours reviewing potential homeowner applications and credit reports in addition to conducting family visits. Along with the rest of the FSC, Mindy made a true contribution by exhibiting the right combination of good humor, compassion and practical experience. As we all know, the FSC consistently makes decisions which positively impact the lives of entire families for years to come.

In addition to the FSC, Mindy also served on the Fundraising Committee for several years. As part of the fundraising team, Mindy was responsible for obtaining items for the auction and ads for the ad journal, promoting ticket sales within the local community, and working with the auctioneer on auction nights to help ensure a coordinated effort with the Finance/Checkout Committee.

During the past four years (2001-2004), Mindy worked on the Raffle Committee where she helped promote ticket sales at events as well as during her own personal time. Last year, she was RVHFH's top volunteer in ticket sales! Mindy also served on the Winter/Spring Event Committee from 2002-2004. Most recently, Mindy has been a member of the Public Relations Committee where she has been acting as the editor of the RVHFH newsletter.

Mindy has carried her enthusiasm for RVHFH by being a Habitat spokesperson for her church, work, and community. As with so many RVHFH team members, she is a volunteer who gives from her heart. She is kind, warm, and friendly with her fellow volunteers, and supportive of their ideas and efforts. Her many hours of dedicated service have contributed to the overwhelming success of Raritan Valley Habitat for Humanity.

In recognition for her volunteer efforts, Mindy was chosen by her company (Johnson & Johnson) as a recipient of a 2004 Volunteer Recognition Grant Award. As part of this award, J&J issued a check to RVHFH for \$5,000 in Mindy's honor!

- Lisa Esposito

## FROM THE PRESIDENT...

Even with the snow still flying, Raritan Valley Habitat is thinking Spring. We are eager to get started on the construction of five homes in Lambertville. The 2005 homes to be built there will feature a new two-story, single-family design, which is cost effective, provides lots of space for the family, and is attractive and easy to heat.

The need for affordable housing in Somerset and Hunterdon counties keeps growing. As land and housing prices skyrocket, the income of the bottom 25% of the families in our area continues to fall. To meet the growing need for affordable housing, the board recently committed to grow our capacity over the next three years from 2-3 housing units per year to 4-6 units. A major key to that growth will be to strengthen our relationships with the churches, communities, and corporate sponsors within our serving area. Our partnership in the Lambertville redevelopment process has given us the opportunity to continue to build in that community, and we look forward to similar community-affiliate relationships in the future.

We are so very grateful for the support of the communities, volunteers, contractors, churches, corporate sponsors, and individual sponsors which make our mission possible. The 3000 hours of labor needed to build a home for a family is a labor of love, not a job or burden. We live in two of the most affluent counties in the United States. Our lives are filled with uncountable blessings. In my experience, serving others who are not as fortunate gives me a sense of joy and fulfillment that is a major focus of my life. I invite you to join me in the drive to eliminate substandard housing in Hunterdon and Somerset counties by contributing your time, talent, and treasure in 2005. I invite you to become part of this exciting time in the life of our chapter.

Dick Carr



**Mindy Shanks shows her enthusiasm for the Habitat mission by selling raffle tickets at the Festival of Ballooning last summer.**

## *In Memoriam...*



*The Reverend Joseph C. Holbrook, founding member of RVHFH, passed in 2004.*

### Golden Heart & Hammer \$10,000 +

Amboy National Bank  
Episcopal Diocese of New Jersey  
KMC Telecom Holdings, Inc.

### Golden House \$5000 - \$9,999

Bank of America  
Beer & Coleman  
Clinton United Methodist Church  
Fleet National Bank  
Johnson & Johnson  
Joseph J. Palka, Jr., P.E.P.P.  
Liberty Corner Presbyterian Church  
Minno & Wasko  
Phillips Electronics North America Corporation  
Raymond R. and David W. Trombadore  
St. Luke's Church, Gladstone  
The Hackett Foundation  
United Reformed Church, Somerville  
United Way of Somerset County

### Golden Hammer \$1000-\$4,999

Addisville Reformed Church  
Kenneth & Andrea Alstrup  
American Concrete and Masonry  
Anonymous  
Arnold A. Schwartz Foundation  
Bedford HVAC  
Bill Buzby, B2A/SURVSAT  
Brian Jannone, Prudential NJ Properties  
Bridgewater Wholesalers, Inc.  
Calvary Episcopal Church, Flemington  
Richard & Barbara Carr  
Church of St. John on the Mountain  
Clover Hill Reformed Church  
Michael & Gwendolyn Connolley  
Dameo Trucking, Inc.  
Nicholas & Janice Detura  
Elizabeth Ann Seton RC Church  
Ellen Gillespie, Esq.,  
Mauro, Savo, Camerino & Grant  
Exxon Mobil Foundation  
First United Methodist Church, Somerville  
Flemington Presbyterian Church  
Wally & Dot French  
Greenman-Pedersen  
Richard & Karen Guinness  
Hi Tech Data Floors, Inc.  
Hunterdon/Somerset Association of Realtors  
Johnson & Johnson Consumer &  
Personal Products  
Lamington Presbyterian Church  
Paul & Ann Lawrence  
Lower Valley Presbyterian Church  
Middlebush Reformed Church  
Cathleen Mallaney  
Mullin & Lonergan Associates, Inc.  
New York Chapter Efun Society  
North Branch Reformed Church  
P&S Building Contractors  
Peapack Reformed Church  
William Pelley  
Phillips-Van Heusen Foundation, Inc.  
Pluckemin Presbyterian Church  
Richard & Lois Rawson  
Marie Rielly  
Silver Line  
Somerset Savings Bank  
St. John's Episcopal Church, Somerville  
St. Martin's Episcopal Church, Bridgewater  
Donald & Ethel Terhune  
Kevin & Kathleen Weidling  
Whirlpool  
William Savo, Esq.,  
Mauro, Savo, Camerino & Grant

### Golden Saw \$500 - \$999

The Allstate Foundation  
Adam & Judith Ambielli  
Bethlehem Presbyterian Church  
Chubb Federal Insurance Co.  
C K J Associates  
Wilma Davis Nurse  
Frank Eustace  
Griggstown Reformed Church

Willie & Elizabeth Liu  
Lipoczky Brothers  
Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Whitehouse Station  
Pinnacle Materials, Inc.  
Richard & Charlotte Smedley  
Stowaway Self Storage  
Valley National Bank  
Valspar Corporation  
Silvio & Barbara Verdile  
Verizon Foundation

### Golden Paint Brush \$250-499

BD Matching Gift Program  
Bradley Gardens Reformed Church  
Central Jersey Nurseries  
George & Denise Crombie  
Dorothy Crosby  
Tom & Pam Ely  
Jon & Marilyn Fineman  
Gannett Foundation  
Garwood Presbyterian Church  
J.G. Helpinstill  
Innovative Manufacturing, Inc.  
Mr. John  
John & Diana Pecina  
Pottersville PALS  
Whitney Quesenberg  
Scotty & Ann Riemer  
James Richart  
Rockaway Reformed Church  
John Schmidt & Rita Watson  
Bruce & Sara Schundler  
Ronald Simpson  
Roy Wagoner  
James & Clare Wisor, Jr.  
Woodsmiths Designing & Mfg.  
Yale Residential Security Products

### Golden Spade \$100-\$249

George & Beryl Blake  
Michael Borsari & Theresa Murray  
Linda Bradway  
Elizabeth Breedlove  
Mary Butler  
Thomas Capizzi  
John Cassidy  
S.V. & M.H. Chandler  
Charles Chapin  
Charles Kerr Foundation  
Timothy & Nandini Tammana Checko  
Josephine Chisom  
Christ Presbyterian Church, Martinsville  
Patricia Dedert & Michael Ultee  
Dorothy Dey  
David & Mair Digges LaTouche  
John Egan & Marion McGlynn  
Daniel & Eileen Esposito  
Seth Esterkin  
Stephen & Karen Fromme

Kenneth Gattoni  
Thomas & Annette Griffoul  
Werner & Lotte Hack  
Daniel & Kay Herr  
Albert & Catherine Heuschkel  
Holland Presbyterian Church  
Ronald & Sharon Huard  
Jane Huck  
Mary Jenkins  
Craig & Debra Johnson  
Christopher & Theresa Joyce  
Edwin & Mildred Kunkel  
Jennifer Kushinka  
Elizabeth Kuzio  
Arthur Locke, Jr.  
Harry & Ruth Mazujian  
Peter & Debra McDougall  
Parul Mehta  
Thomas & Laura Moskaluk  
National Seed  
Joseph & Della Nemes  
Wayne Paglieri & Elizabeth Clarke  
Frank Painter  
Tom & Amber Peck  
Jon Perlman  
Readington Reformed Church  
L. Keith Reed  
Reformed Church at Findeme  
Steve & Marge Richards  
Shirley Richardson  
Diane Rindgen  
Arlyn & Claire Rus  
Robert & Maria Santye  
Charles & Virginia Shedd  
Lincoln Shimomura  
Edward Shubert & Georgia Holman  
Wilbur & Inovelvia Sowder  
John Stephenson  
Joseph & Nancy Swain  
Cynthia & Arthur Truska  
Sarah Verbeke  
Karen Williams  
Shiela Wilson  
Judith Woike  
George & JoAnn Yanizeski  
Barbara Yanni  
Matthew & Debra Zavatsky  
Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church

*Raritan Valley Habitat for  
Humanity is grateful for the  
generosity of our supporters.  
Acknowledgments shown are for  
support July – December 2004.*

# Thank You!

**Volunteer Orientations  
have been scheduled for these dates:**

April 26<sup>th</sup> – United Reformed Church  
100 W. Main St., Somerville, 7:30 pm

July 26<sup>th</sup> – Location in Hunterdon County to be determined.  
Check our website for updated information.

# Building Update



## Building Trade Suppliers & Professionals:

### *RVHFH's Secret Weapon*

A February crew prepared our first lot in Lambertville, Hunterdon County, kicking off our 2005 building program. The 21 Allen Street home will be a two-story, single-family home using a new, attractive home design. The new design, which fits into the architectural plans of the town of Lambertville, will produce a home that is cost effective and easy to heat.

In all, the building committee plans to start five single-family homes in Lambertville this year using this new design. All the homes are within a block of each other, allowing us to phase the construction, move skilled people between projects, and efficiently order and deliver materials. One of the keys to increased house production for RVHFH will be to discover additional opportunities for such "cluster builds."

Our construction leadership continues to focus on cost effectiveness, safety, and volunteer experience. Through our analysis of the completed Manville build in Somerset County, we will find opportunities for cost savings and improvements in scheduling. We will continue to emphasize safety training and monitor the job site to prevent unsafe practices. Our goal is to improve our building performance on every house.

Finally, it's the volunteers and staff who hold the construction program together. We always need additional experienced site supervisors - people who have construction experience and the ability to lead volunteer teams. Also critical are the Wednesday/Thursday volunteers and the contractors and trades people who contribute their special skills to our homes.

- Don Schneider & Ken Schurzky

Did you realize that almost forty local building trade suppliers and professionals helped reduce material costs and added speed and quality to our construction efforts at the Roosevelt Avenue duplex in Manville? Check our website - [www.rvhabitat.org](http://www.rvhabitat.org) to see the complete list.

Our volunteers' business, personal, and church contacts have always been important in establishing partnerships with companies like Bridgewater Wholesalers (millwork), General Conditioning (heating systems), Hunterdon County Polytech (sheds & porch railing fabrication), Lipoczky Brothers (sheet rock finishing), Hunterdon County Electricians Association (labor and materials), and High Tech Data Floors (floor covering).

Long-time suppliers like H.K. Buzby & Sons (masonry supplies), Beer & Coleman Architects, Jack Dolan & Sons (plumbing), and Expo Design Center/Home Depot have told their suppliers about our housing ministry. This recently resulted in support from American Concrete & Masonry, Adamsville Maintenance (excavation), P & S Building Contractors (framing), and Silver Line (windows).

As an affiliate of Habitat for Humanity International (HFHI), Raritan Valley HFH tithes 10% of our undesignated cash donations to support HFHI's programs in the USA and throughout the world. In turn, HFHI's nationwide partnerships with Whirlpool Appliances, Valspar (paints), Square D (breakers and breaker boxes), and Yale Residential Security Products (locks) have resulted in generous product contributions for every house we build.

YOU can play an important role in identifying additional trade partners for our rapidly growing 2005 construction program in Lambertville, Hunterdon County. There are fewer than "six degrees of separation" between you and a new trade partner. Really!

If you know building trade suppliers or professionals who would like to support our 2005 building program with donations or significant discounts, please call our office at 908-704-0016 or e-mail us at [rvfhf@rvhabitat.org](mailto:rvfhf@rvhabitat.org) with the information. We will call them right away.

- Dick Kline

***Our core weekday crew provides expertise and supervision to worksite volunteers and keeps things running smoothly. Below, from left: Dick Carr, Howard Guenther, Silvio Verdile, Ken Schurzky, and Dennis Smyth.***



***Above: Priscilla Gaver is one of a growing number of women joining the weekday crew.***

***At left: Howard Guenther, Sr. Site Supervisor; John Allen, President, American Concrete & Masonry; and Gabe Sasso, member, Building Committee.***

# 2005 Annual Meeting

As many of you know, RVHFH held its annual meeting on Monday, February 7. The program included the review of the organization's 2004 accomplishments and its goals for 2005. The program also included an overview of each of the Board positions as a source of information for potential new volunteers.

Newly elected to the Board are Ken Schurzky (Building Committee Co-Chair), Joe Schaffer (Site Selection Co-Chair), and Lisa Esposito (Public Relations Co-Chair).

## The 2005 Board of Trustees was installed with these new officers:

President: Richard Carr  
Treasurer: Gordon Neeld

Recording Secretary: Denise Chang  
Financial Secretary: Della Nemes

It is no secret that volunteers are the backbone of RVHFH and the key ingredient of its success, so it is not surprising that one of the highlights of the evening was the presentation of the

## 2004 Outstanding Volunteer Awards.

Here are the deserving recipients:



**Denise Chang**  
Human Relations



**Pat Colarusso – CUMAnet**  
Family Support



**Sylvia Heidbreder**  
Fundraising



**Diana Pecina**  
Fundraising



**Marge Richards**  
Fundraising



**Scotty Riemer**  
Construction Volunteers



**John Rupprecht**  
Building Trades Professional



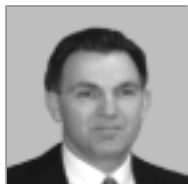
**Ken Schurzky**  
Construction Volunteers

## The Landmark Five Award

went to two important supporters who have donated to five or more RVHFH projects:



**John Allen**  
**American Concrete and Masonry**  
*for their donation of professional masonry crews to complete the foundations of the duplex homes in Somerset and Manville.*



**Jack Cortese**  
**Bridgewater Wholesalers, Inc.**  
*for their donation of all 70 doors needed for the ranch and duplex homes built in Manville.*

"We receive many requests for donations, but our 450 employees have made it clear that they strongly believe in Habitat for Humanity's mission; hence, we fully expect to continue our support."

- Jack Cortese

## Board Votes To Implement New Strategic Plan To Increase Building In Raritan Valley

As that deep thinker, Yogi Berra, once said, "If you don't know where you are going, you might wind up someplace else." This sounds self-evident, but many organizations - non-profits included - fail to plan for their future and so do not reach their potential.

Early last year, RVVHFH decided to embark upon a Strategic Planning Process. At a retreat in March, the full Board spent a quiet Saturday morning discussing a single proposition: Should RVVHFH commit to increasing its building capacity from Habitat for Humanity International's "Home Builder" category of 2-4 homes per year to the more ambitious "Block Builder" category of 5-9 homes per year?

It was clear that the need for affordable housing was growing in our area, and the Board members felt strongly that Habitat's mission calls us to try to make this leap to the Block Builder category. The Board thus spent the better part of 2004 studying RVVHFH's activities in light of this challenge.

HFHI publishes a "Model for Capacity Building" on its website as a guide for affiliates that wish to increase their building capacity. From studying this model and from information gleaned from the experience of other affiliates, it soon became apparent that a decision to significantly increase building capacity brings with it additional costs to be reckoned with and some operational hurdles to be overcome.

In order to double our building capacity, we would have to consistently obtain at least six building sites per year. Site selection has always been the most limiting factor in our current level of building activity, since it is extremely difficult to find suitable building lots at prices that we can afford. Also, discussions with the Building Committee strongly suggested that these sites would have to be clustered into groups of three or more so that the Building Committee could manage the construction more efficiently and take advantage of economies of scale in

purchasing. And on top of this, we would need to raise at least twice the amount of revenue that we currently receive.

Fully aware of these challenges, the Board voted in December to move forward with the Strategic Plan. Since the plan will require some significant changes in how the affiliate operates and how it is governed, the Board decided on a two-year transition period and set as a goal the completion of six homes in 2007.

As a first step, and in order to get a running start on meeting the resulting financial burden, the Board decided to hire a new part-time staff member to focus on fundraising.

Over the coming year, the Board will also be considering the need to transition from our current Board of Trustees, which is composed of volunteers actively conducting the business of the affiliate, to a Governing Board composed of community leaders, which would set general policy for the affiliate and help obtain the needed funding to support increased building levels.

- Kevin Weidling

## Montgomery Girl Scouts Create Youth Site-Host Program

Working for Habitat for Humanity is an amazing experience. We are members of Montgomery Township Senior Girl Scout Troop 817 and have been working with Habitat for our gold award project. In the few months we've spent getting to know this organization, we have been struck by the effort, time, and care put in by so many dedicated volunteers.

We are thrilled to be a part of Habitat's work, but we were surprised to find that there are not very many other teenagers involved in the organization. To improve this situation, we are creating the Youth Site-Host program. The Youth Site-Host program will allow high school students older than fourteen to become involved with Habitat through the site-host job. (For those who are unfamiliar with the site-host job, the site-host greets the volunteers at the work site, signs them in, processes their paperwork, and kicks off the workday.)

We will be contacting Hunterdon county high schools and all present Habitat volunteers to recruit volunteers for the Youth Site-Host program. After potential site-hosts have been contacted, they can request more detailed information about Habitat and our youth program via email. They can then sign up for Sunday afternoon on-site training sessions, which are scheduled to begin in April.

Once volunteers have been trained, a schedule will be posted, and students, in groups of two to four, will help host the Saturday workdays at the Lambertville sites.

We hope that this program will be successful and will provide to other teens the same meaningful Habitat experience that we have enjoyed.

If you would like further information, please contact us via email at:

[habitathts3@aol.com](mailto:habitathts3@aol.com)

- Krista Magid, Caitlin O'Donnell,  
and Megan Fortgang

**RAISE THE ROOF!**  
Benefit Concert for  
Raritan Valley Habitat for Humanity

Join us  
for an evening of  
**Joyful Music**

Harlingen Reformed Church  
Route 206, Belle Mead

Saturday, April 30, 2005  
7:00 pm

\$ 10 Concert only  
\$ 15 Concert and  
Soup/Bread Supper at 5:30

Information: 908-359-3556

*Raritan Valley Habitat for Humanity Newsletter is published by Raritan Valley Habitat for Humanity, Inc., an affiliate of Habitat for Humanity International, a non-profit, international Christian organization based in Americus, GA, that builds decent low-cost housing for hardworking low-income families. Over 2100 affiliates are at work in 100 countries, including all 50 states of the U.S. Habitat is supported by volunteers and contributions from churches, businesses and individuals.*

**Raritan Valley Habitat for Humanity**  
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