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Two New Homes Started In Manville



Dedication day is also a workday as these volunteers make progress on the foundation.

On June 26, 2004, RVHFH dedicated the site for its 18th and 19th homes at 1104 and 1106 Roosevelt Avenue in Manville. Rain was in the forecast - and the skies were a bit gray - but the rain held off, and the ceremony, which brought together two new partner families, Habitat friends, and volunteers to ask for God's blessing on these two new homes, was held.

Andy Aleff, Vice President of RVHFH, opened the ceremony with greetings to the crowd and acknowledged the support of the Somerset County HOME Program, KMC Telecom, and the Manville Area Church Partnership.

Lynn Santulli from the Pluckemin Presbyterian Church then offered the Invocation. Pluckemin Presbyterian is in the Manville Area Church Partnership, a group of seven churches providing monetary and "hands on" support in the building of these two homes.

Next, Betsy Kuzio, Secretary of RVHFH and a member of the Church Relations Committee, related her personal experience in getting her church, Immaculate Conception, involved in the Manville Area Church Partnership. Because some members of her church were looking for a way to help others on the building crew.

and enjoy some camaraderie and fun as well, Betsy was able to recruit these volunteers to work on the building crew.

Linda Lewis, RVHFH Family Selection Chairperson, introduced the two new partner families, the Dixon-Abner family and the Jeffrey-Hall family. Linda shared her feelings about being a member of this committee and her satisfaction in knowing that we are helping two more families realize the dream of home ownership. Each of the two families brought a small contingent of extended family and friends to support them on

this exciting day.

The ceremony concluded with the Litany, which was led by Alice Abner, an Elder in her church and the grandmother of the Abner children.

Welcome and Best Wishes to our newest partner families!!

- Maggie Chigi

Raritan Valley Habitat for Humanity



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THREE RVHFH VOLUNTEERS JOURNEY TO GUATEMALA



This past May, Liz Kepniss and Sue and Bob Haake participated in a Global Village build in Tohicipan, Guatemala. Liz would like to share her experiences with you through excerpts from her journal.

May 16: I boarded a plane heading to Miami where I was to meet 16 other Habitat volunteers from the Northeast, including fellow Raritan Valley Habitaters Sue and Bob Haake. Together we flew into Guatemala City to begin our Global Village adventure.

May 17: New city, new country - two weeks of the unexpected lay ahead of me. We were told that we would have an hour or two to explore Guatemala City before the bus departed for Totonicapan, commonly referred to as Toto. After settling in at the hotel, we headed down the street to the Habitat Affiliate's office, where we were welcomed by staff, volunteers, and even the homeowners with whom we would be working side by side.

May 18-21: The team was split into two smaller teams, each team going to a different site, working with a different family. My family had nine children that started with 19-year-old twin daughters and ended with two-and-a-half-year-old fraternal twins.

Continued on page 4

Volunteer Spotlight

When Anny Bestel left corporate America in favor of a freelance career, her life changed in more ways than one. Not only did her decision help to improve her quality of life by removing her from the "rat race", but it also enabled her to spend more time pursuing the volunteer work that she had had to put on hold while maintaining a corporate career.

A long-time financial contributor to Habitat for Humanity, Anny had always been interested in its mission and had longed for the days when a less frenetic lifestyle would enable her to be more than a financial contributor to the organization. Anny's dream became a reality about two years ago when she became an "official" volunteer on the Family Support Committee.

Anny worked very closely with the Donaus family while their Habitat house was being built. As a liaison between Habitat and the Donaus family, Anny's responsibilities included being in touch with the family on a weekly basis to help them stay on track with the hours that they, their friends, and church group needed to work. In addition, she also served as an information repository by providing the family with information on various workshops and other ways that they could add to their sweat equity hours. The Donaus family's native language is French and luckily, Anny speaks French as well, which certainly made communication much easier.

Anny says that she really enjoys being part of the Family Support Committee because it is an important job that requires constant vigilance. As with any large building project, there is always the possibility that something that can't be controlled can go wrong, such as a month of rain, so staying on top of things that can be controlled, such as the family's hours worked, certainly helps the process run much more smoothly.

Anny likened her position to being on a "cheering squad" for the family and said that while it entails much administrative work and coordination, being able to attend the house dedication once the project has been completed is emotionally rewarding. "Watching the ribbon being cut and the house keys given to the family helps you realize how many people contributed their time and efforts to such an amazing project and more importantly, how the completion of the house is a life-changing event for the family."

-Lisa Esposito

FROM THE PRESIDENT...

Raritan Valley Habitat For Humanity has just started construction on two attached homes in Manville, our first homes in this community. We will also be starting construction on a home in Lambertville and have reached an agreement with Lambertville to build additional homes in a redevelopment district. In addition, we have plans underway for homes in Bernards Township and Bernardsville. Completion of all these homes will take a great deal of effort by many volunteers.

Our chapter has initiated a strategic planning process to determine how we can increase the number of homes we construct each year. Habitat International classifies our chapter as a Home Builder (i.e., we construct 3 to 4 homes per year). We are in the process of determining what we need to do to move up to the level of a Block Builder (5 to 9 homes per year). While we have a lot of work to do, we do know one thing: we need more volunteers if we are going to increase the number of homes we construct each year.

Winston Churchill said, "We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give." Please consider becoming a volunteer for our chapter. Building a home involves a lot more than working at a construction site. There is a place for each of you. Please call our office at 908-704-0016 to find out our needs and how you can help.

Silvio Verdile

Call For Volunteers

The Fall Raffle Committee needs your help selling raffle tickets at local events throughout Somerset and Hunterdon Counties. Please contact the RVHFH Office at 908-704-0016 or rvhfh@rvhabitat.org if you can help at any of the following events:

June - August

Friday Nights - Cruisin' Downtown
Somerville, Main St., Somerville
(In front of United Reformed Church)

July 23, 24, 25 – NJ Festival of
Ballooning, Readington

September 5 – Manville Street Fair,
Main St., Manville

September 10 - Realtors Golf Outing,
Branchburg

September 18 - Branchburg Country
Fair, White Oak Park, Branchburg

September 25 & 26 - St. John the
Evangelist Festival, Lambertville

October 3 - Somerville Street Fair,
Main St., Somerville (In front of United
Reformed Church)

**The prize drawing will be held at
this Street Fair.**



*The coffee
will be
on...*

Join us for a

VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION

July 27th, 7:30 PM

United Reformed Church

100 West Main Street, Somerville, NJ

Raritan Valley Habitat for Humanity is grateful for the generosity of our supporters!

Acknowledgements shown are for program support January through June 2004.

Golden Heart and Hammer Supporter \$10,000 +

County of Somerset HOME
Investment Partnership
Ronald & Diana Consiglio

Golden House Supporter \$5,000-\$9,999

Neshanic Reformed Church
Yardville National Bank

Golden Hammer Supporter \$1,000-\$4,999

AT&T Foundation
Basking Ridge Presbyterian Church
Christ Church, Flemington
Commerce Bank
Immaculate Conception Church,
Somerville
Investors Savings Bank
Jersey Heritage Doll Guild
Lowe's Home Improvement,
Hillsborough
MetLife Foundation
Somerset Savings Bank

Sovereign Bank Foundation
Spruce Run Lutheran Church
St. Paul Lutheran Church, Flemington
The Bonafides of Somerset Hills
United Way of Somerset County
Wal*Mart, Clinton

Golden Saw Supporter \$500-\$999

Blawenburg Reformed Church
Bridgewater United Methodist Church
Clover Hill Reformed Church
Colalillo Shop Rite
The Congregational Church of
Bound Brook
ExxonMobil Foundation
FirstEnergy Foundation
Flemington Presbyterian Church
Brian Jannone, of
Prudential NJ Properties
Just Give
Paul & Ann Lawrence
Ortho McNeil Pharmaceutical
Our Lady of Lourdes Church,
Whitehouse Station
Pamela Pearson
Presbyterian Church at Pluckemin
Rockaway Reformed Church, Whitehouse
Station

Rotary Club of North Hunterdon
United Reformed Church, Somerville
White Rose Food

Golden Paint Brush Supporter \$250-\$499

Andrea Aleff
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Peapack Reformed Church
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Readington Reformed Church
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Cynthia & Arthur Truska
Roy Wagoner

Golden Spade Supporter \$100-\$249

Amwell First Presbyterian Church
Bridgewater United Methodist Church

John & Gayle Canary
Chinese Christian Church of Somerset
Christ Presbyterian Church,
Martinsville
Church of St. John on the Mountain
Timothy & Amy Clarkson
Elizabeth Dinowitz
Robert & Virginia Finan
Gerard & Debra Finley
Fresh Impressions
Steve & Nancy Hovey
Ronald & Sharon Huard
Laurie & Albert Kedersha
Richard & Jan Kline
Joyce Kushinka
Michael & Jane Manley
Moms Club of Annadale
New Jersey State Federation of
Women's Clubs
Prudential Foundation
Diane Rindgen
Edward & Janet Royer
Bob & Mindy Shanks
Douglas Smith
Solebury Friends Meeting
Staiano's Furniture
Peggy Travilla
Raymond G. Tyburski, Jr.
Lori Weiss-Thole

Hunterdon Hills Fundraiser

On March 27 at the Hunterdon Hills Playhouse, more than 320 people wined, dined, bid, and bought at a dinner auction to benefit RVHFH. The gala event raised \$41,000 for home construction in Hunterdon County.

It was the third annual dinner auction organized by the Hunterdon House Partnership, a dedicated group of volunteers representing an ecumenical partnership of Hunterdon County churches.

Attendees were welcomed by the music of pianist Gary Ross and an atrium sale of miniature birdhouses. Each miniature birdhouse contained a surprise certificate for an item with a minimum value of \$25. RVHFH President Silvio Verdile and his wife Barbara were among the birdhouse shoppers who quickly emptied the arbor of all 104 birdhouses.

In the main dining room, the Hunterdon Musical Arts' Music for Youth's Fiddlers and the Shaw Trio entertained as guests browsed and bid on more than 60 silent auction items.

Dinner featured a choice of entrees served at festive tables decorated with fresh flowers arranged in mock toolboxes.



Connie Creveling standing proudly by the dollhouse she and her neighbors built and decorated and which would become the premier item of the auction event.

Harrie Copeland IV followed dinner with his debut as an auctioneer. Fresh from Missouri Auction School, Harrie skillfully managed the sale of more than 50 live auction items.

Guests engaged in spirited bidding as Harrie sold a wine tasting party for 12, a sailing weekend on Chesapeake Bay, six months of fresh flowers, a furnished Victorian doll house, tickets for sporting events and theater performances, catered appetizers, homemade desserts, spring bulb planting, handmade quilts, chair upholstery and carpentry services, and much more.

The generous underwriting by several businesses ensured the event's success. Sponsors included the individual agents of Weichert's Clinton office, Sovereign Bank, Commerce Bank, Wal-Mart, Colalillo ShopRite, North Hunterdon Rotary Club, First Energy Foundation, and Calvary Episcopal Church. Many Hunterdon County businesses donated auction items.

Congregations supporting the event included Calvary Episcopal Church, Church of the Holy Spirit, Clinton Presbyterian Church, Clinton United Methodist Church, Lower Valley Presbyterian Church, Our Lady of Lourdes, Rockaway Reformed Church, Spruce Run Lutheran Church, and St. Elizabeth Ann Seton.

The dinner auction was the fourth fundraising event since the founding of the Hunterdon House Partnership. To date, the committee has raised funds for five Habitat houses!

Special thanks to chairman Sylvia Heidbreder and her hardworking committee: Diane Alexanderson, Sally Bird, Connie Creveling, Chris D'Alleinne, Maggie D'Aversa, Joan Fairchild, Judy Ferguson, Cathi Hynoski, Lydia Lehmuller, Lee Magee, Heidi Romano, Lyn Salsky and Jan Strack.

-Andy Aleff

Building Update

Construction of a two-family home in Manville, Somerset County, is off to a good start. The new homes will be located at the intersection of Eleventh Street and Roosevelt Avenue, the site of an old single-family home which was demolished to make way for new construction. The foundations for the new homes are now complete, allowing us to begin a full schedule of volunteer days to start the framing.

The layout of the homes will be identical to the duplex we completed earlier this year in Franklin Township. Lessons learned from the Franklin Township build will help to speed up construction on the Manville homes.

The town of Manville and the neighborhood residents have been very helpful and supportive of this project.

We anticipate starting construction on a ranch-style home at 32 Belvidere Avenue in Lambertville, Hunterdon County, by late summer. Advanced work on the architecture, permits, and selection of contractors should allow us to get started on this home as soon as we own the property.

We continue to be blessed with significant donations of material and services. These donations reduce the cash required to build each home, making our funding dollars go further and helping to offset inflation in building material costs.

- Dick Carr

HUNTERDON/SOMERSET ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS

2004 Golf Outing

Friday, Sept. 10th

Neshanic Valley Golf Club
Branchburg, NJ

Includes:

Lunch, Putting Contest,
18 Holes Scramble Play,
Cocktail Hour, Dinner &
Awards Presentation

\$170 per player

For more info or to register contact:
Dillon Bryant or Courtney Orlando
At: 732-469-1516 X-355



Guatemala

Continued from page 1

Between the twins were two daughters, ages 18 and 15, and two sons, ages 16 and 10. We never met the ninth child, a daughter, who was born between the 15- and 10-year-olds, and since we were strangers, no one asked where she was. Santa, the loving and kind mother, was alone most of the time while her husband worked and lived in Guatemala City where he could earn a better wage; he makes the almost four-hour journey home once a month.

Arriving for the first time on site, my team and I continued the work the family and the mason had begun: digging out the foundation. During that first week, I learned how to create a solid foundation by digging solid ditches and using reinforcements made out of metal rods known as rebar, and how to pour concrete.

May 22-23: My trip was not all work and no play. We took an overnight trip our first Saturday in Guatemala to Quetzaltenango, or Xela (shay-la), as it is locally known, for an evening of rest and relaxation. Surrounded by three volcanoes and full of old buildings, it was a beautiful city to relax in. Before heading back to Toto, we drove through the local town of Zunil, home of San Simon, a local saint whose legend is a combination of Catholicism and local folklore.

May 24-27: Back to work and learning how to lay brick. While I felt I was a quick study in bricklaying, what intrigued me most of all was that the bricks were cut to fit the holes - with a machete! We worked hard to cut, lay and mortar the bricks to build a safe home for our family, never noticing how quickly our time in Guatemala was coming to an end, but when the end came, goodbye in any language was difficult to say.

On our last day on site, all 17 Global Village volunteers, both families, and representatives of Habitat Guatemala came together in our family's home to say goodbye. A brief ceremony, followed by many tears, ended our time in Toto.

May 28-29: We left Toto and headed south to Antigua for one last chance at R&R before we headed home. On the way, we stopped in the town of Panajachel on Lake Atitlan to begin our two full days of being tourists. Both towns offered us the chance to relax, wander, shop, and take many, many pictures. (I personally took almost 230 pictures!)

May 30: Goodbye. We all parted ways and headed back to our respective homes to resume our lives. We all took a piece of Guatemala back with us in our hearts and left part of our hearts in Guatemala.



Now that I am home and back to my life in Jersey, I am more grateful than ever for the blessing this trip was to my fellow Global Village adventurers and to me. My knowledge of and appreciation for the work of Habitat for Humanity first drove my interest to volunteer for RVHFFH. My Global Village experience has only renewed my commitment to and faith in the good work we all do.

- Liz Kepniss

The pictures for this story were submitted by Sue Haake.



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