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



# Raritan Valley Habitat for Humanity

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## Home Dedications For The Donaus and Fahmey Families

### "Achieving The American Dream"



*New homes bring new neighbors and new friends together in Franklin Township.*

"Helping those who help themselves...helping to fulfill the traditional American dream of home ownership." These were the words spoken by Brian Levine, Franklin Township Mayor, as he welcomed the Donaus and Fahmy families to their new homes at 31 and 35 Alex Place.

The dedication of RVHFH's most recent duplex build took place on a cold January 17, 2004, morning. Many friends, volunteers, and supporters braved the near single-digit temperature and came to



*Raafat and Neven Fahmy with Amanda and Joleen.*

celebrate with the Donaus and Fahmy families. Rev. Ron Pollock of St. John's Episcopal Church, one of the sponsoring churches, gave the invocation. Despite the cold temperature, Father Ron said that the warmth of "God's sun shines on us today."

Both families spoke of their gratitude for the many hours RVHFH volunteers spent building their homes. Raafat Fahmy said his family came to the United States as immigrants to find a new home. RVHFH made their dream a

reality. He asked God to bless their house and Habitat for Humanity. He said it would be hard to repay such generosity, but in return, they would raise "two nice kids to grow up to be a productive part of society."

Kechener Donaus quoted 1st Samuel: "God has blessed me in many ways; God has taken care of me." He continued by saying, "This dedication means God is at work in my family. We thank each and every one of you [for making the] dream come true."

After Dick Carr, Building Committee co-chair, presented the house keys to the new homeowners, the ribbons were



*Kechener and Renee Donaus with Phillippe, Thierry and Ann-Kerry.*



*The Donaus children are happy to find the closets big enough for a game of hide and seek.*

cut, and all were invited to see the new homes. Once inside, Diana Pecina and Jerry Reynolds sang, "Let's Build you a House," and everyone joined in on the chorus:

*"Come let's build you a house, and we'll fill it with our blood and sweat and tears.*

*You can live there in contentment with your children, with your spouse, In a home that's built to last throughout the years."*

*- Sarah Verbeke and Pam Ely*

# Volunteer Spotlight

This edition's Volunteer Spotlight falls on a very deserving member of the Family Selection Committee (FSC), Dot Crosby. A Somerville resident, who will turn 79 years young in March, Dot has been with RVHFH for almost 14 years. She and Joyce Kushinka (Building Committee) were recruited by Elsie Good, a former RVHFH volunteer and friend from church. They joined RVHFH right after the infamous "sleep out" on the steps of the United Reformed Church in 1990. Dot says she was inspired to join after hearing stories of the sleep out and imagining what it must be like for families without adequate housing.

As part of the FSC team, Dot fields calls from families expressing interest in being considered for a home, and she often participates as part of the two-member teams that perform the post-orientation home visits with the potential families. She also participates in the committee's evaluation discussions that occur after the home visits, where one family is chosen for recommendation to the Board.

Dot says that her work with RVHFH is particularly rewarding, and what she enjoys most about being on the Family Selection Committee is "meeting with the families and being able to experience the joy when one family learns that it has been selected" to be a future homeowner. What she finds frustrating are the occasional phone calls from people who do not understand Habitat for Humanity's mission and just want to apply for a much less expensive, brand-new house. Thankfully, as RVHFH becomes more recognized in the community, most people do understand its goal, so those types of phone calls are becoming infrequent.



Dot Crosby

## *FROM THE PRESIDENT...*

*Since the founding of our chapter, Raritan Valley Habitat for Humanity (RVHFH) has built 17 homes for 67 individuals (of which 43 are children) in eight communities. This achievement can be attributed to a number of factors. The three most important are a strong volunteer base, a dedicated Habitat staff, and an active committee structure.*

*In addition to the hundreds of volunteers who help with the construction of homes, RVHFH has a core of about 175 dedicated individuals who serve on the various committees. These individuals spend countless hours working toward achieving our mission of providing affordable housing. Furthermore, we are blessed with a staff that is extremely competent and willing to go far beyond the duties and scope of their jobs to complete tasks.*

*Our committee structure is strong because of the many talented leaders who head all our committees. The outstanding work of the Building Committee is evident when we view the homes we have constructed. The Funding committee has led us with new initiatives, and this past year we had a successful corporate partnership with Aventis, who sponsored a home in Franklin Township. The Site Selection committee has laid the groundwork for the future with some creative steps towards obtaining building sites. As a result, we have signed a redevelopment agreement with the town of Lambertville and will be constructing four single-family homes in the area between 2004 and 2006. We also have contracts and negotiations under way for additional building sites.*

*Our other committees (Church Relations, Family Selection, Family Support, Finance, Human Resources, Public Relations) were by no means idle. Because of their fine work, United Way once again certified our chapter.*

*You may be surprised to learn that RVHFH also undergoes an internal review of our governance with Habitat for Humanity International. Once again we achieved ratings that exceeded Habitat guidelines. These excellent ratings are clear indicators that your chapter is well managed and an excellent steward of the funds you donate.*

*Because of the backing of our many supporters, our financial base is solid. We have the funds to purchase building sites to achieve the next two-year building goals. Our challenge now is to obtain additional funds to construct and build homes on these sites.*

Silvio Verdile

Dot remembers the days before RVHFH was incorporated, when volunteers used to meet casually on a weekly basis. Since then, she has enjoyed watching RVHFH grow and blossom over the years, helping many families and inspiring many volunteers.

RVHFH is not the only organization to benefit from Dot's involvement, however. She also volunteers with

several other organizations, including the Samaritan Homeless Interim Program (SHIP), the Senior Citizens Housing Board, and Somerset Medical Center, where she helps organize blood drives.

Dot represents volunteerism at its best. She is truly an inspiration to all.

- Lisa Esposito

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

Acknowledgements shown are for program support July 1<sup>st</sup> through December 31<sup>st</sup> 2003  
and for donations to the Alex Place homes.

## **GOLDEN HOUSE SUPPORTER \$5,000 +**

Amboy National Bank  
Aventis CNS Department  
Binsky & Snyder, Inc.  
Clinton United Methodist Church  
Countrywide Home Loans, Inc.  
Expo Design, Home Depot  
Federal Home Loan Bank, New York  
Franklin Township Affordable Housing Trust  
Hunterdon /Somerset Association of Realtors  
Joseph J. Palka, Jr., P.E.P.P.  
Maranatha Baptist Fellowship of Somerset  
Raymond R. and David W. Trombadore  
St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Gladstone  
St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Basking Ridge  
The Aventis Pharmaceuticals Foundation  
The Church of St. John on the Mountain  
United Reformed Church, Somerville  
Vollers Excavating and Construction

## **GOLDEN HAMMER SUPPORTER \$1,000 - \$4,999**

3M Foundation  
A-L Services, Inc.  
American Concrete and Masonry  
Anonymous (2)  
Arnold A. Schwartz Foundation  
ASZ Construction  
Beer Coleman  
Bethlehem Presbyterian Church  
Bill Buzby, B2A/SURVSAT  
B.J. McGlone and Company, Inc.  
Bonland Industries  
Bradco Supply Corporation  
Bridgewater Wholesalers, Inc.  
Calvary Episcopal Church  
CertainTeed Corporation  
Chase Home Finance  
Christ Church, Flemington  
City Cleaning Contractors of N.J., Inc  
Clinton Presbyterian Church  
Compass Group, USA Division  
Dan Hanrahan, Assessor  
Janice & Nicholas Detura  
Ellen Gillespie, Mauro, Savo, Camerino & Grant  
Fisher Hamilton LLC  
Forest Electric Corporation  
George Yanizeski, Real Estate  
Gerard Sheet Metal Fab., Inc  
Greenman-Pedersen, Inc.  
Karen & Richard Guinness  
Robert & Susan Haake  
Hi Tech Data Floors  
Robert & Lucille Huggins  
J. Kinney, Inc.  
Jack Dolan & Sons Plumbing  
James Sherrer & Sons  
Kling Lindquist  
Kraftmaid Cabinetry  
Kurz Foundation  
Lamington Presbyterian Church  
Liberty Corner Presbyterian Church  
Lipoczky Brothers  
Cathleen Mallaney  
Mehl Electric, Inc.  
Minno & Wasko  
Monterey Carpets  
Muller Associates, Inc.  
National Starch & Chemical Corp.  
Newton Presbytery  
North Branch Reformed Church  
North Jersey Marble & Granite  
One Source Energy Service, Inc.

Peapack Reformed Church  
Phillips-Van Heusen Foundation, Inc.  
Presbyterian Church at Pluckemin  
Marie Reilly  
Roselle Savings Bank  
S.M. Electric Company, Inc.  
Siemens Building Technology  
Silver Line  
Skanska USA  
Somerset Savings Bank  
Spruce Run Lutheran Church  
St. John's Episcopal Church, Somerville  
St. Paul Lutheran Church, Flemington  
Spencer & Elaine Strycharz  
Trimech Corp.  
Trinity United Church, Warren  
Turtle & Hughes, Inc.  
Whirlpool Corporation  
William Pelley  
Wornall Secure Business Solutions  
United Way of Somerset County

## **GOLDEN SAW SUPPORTER \$500 - \$999**

American Legion Stevenson D'Alessio Post 12  
Brian Jannone, Prudential Pioneer Real Estate  
George & Beryl Blake  
Chemical Engineering & Instrumentation  
Consultants, Inc.  
Clemens Construction  
Frank Eustace  
Flemington Supply, Inc.  
First United Methodist Church, Somerville  
Frank R. Holtaway & Sons, Inc.  
Paul & Ann Lawrence  
Lower Valley Presbyterian Church  
Magyar Savings Bank  
Parul Mehta  
Mr. John  
Pamela Pearson  
Porter Cable  
R&R Stairs  
Rutgers University Intercollegiate Athletics  
Ronald Simpson  
South Branch Reformed Church  
Star Lo Electric, Inc.  
St. Joseph's R.C. Church, Bound Brook  
Stowaway Self Storage  
Ethel & Donald Terhune  
Waste Management  
Kathleen & Kevin Weidling

## **GOLDEN PAINT BRUSH SUPPORTER \$250 - \$499**

Andrea Aleff  
Central Jersey Nurseries  
John Chester & Whitney Quesenbery  
Clover Hill Reformed Church  
Dennis W. Hudacsko, Planner  
Tom & Pam Ely  
Robert & Virginia Finan  
Frenchtown Community Fellowship  
Ronald & Sharon Huard  
Hunterdon Central High School  
Mary & Neale Jenkins  
Elizabeth Kuzio  
Middlebush Reformed Church  
Montgomery United Methodist Church  
Carl & Adele Quick  
James Richard  
Rockaway Reformed Church  
Sara & Bruce Shundler  
Tamke Tree Experts  
Taratec Development Corporation  
Roy Wagoner

## **GOLDEN SPADE SUPPORTER \$100 - \$249**

Allentown Caging Equipment, Inc.  
American Display  
Amwell First Presbyterian Church of Reaville  
William & Sylvia Anderson  
Mildred & Albert Bieber  
Elizabeth Breedlove  
John & Gayle Canary  
James Carriere  
John Cassady  
Stephan & Marion Chandler  
Charles Chapin  
Timothy & Nandini Checko  
Christ Presbyterian Church, Bridgewater  
Timothy & Amy Clarkson  
Denise & George Crombie  
Dorothy Crosby  
Kenneth & Marilyn Cummings  
Christine Curtis  
Cyrus R. Fox, Inc.  
Nina Davis  
David & Jeanine DeFreese  
R. L. & Marie Dewees  
Marie & David Digges La Touche  
Seth Esterkin  
Jon & Marilyn Fineman  
First Savings Bank Perth Amboy  
Tracy Frame  
Franklin Township Sewerage Authority  
Martin Galinak  
Deborah Gelormine  
Elizabeth & Joseph Gunnet, Jr.  
Werner & Lotte Hack  
Judith Hendler  
Holland Presbyterian Church  
John & Ann Holt  
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Christine Hurford  
Christopher & Theresa Joyce  
Laurie & Albert Kedersha  
Christopher J. Kerr  
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Stathis & Leonardis, L.L.C.  
Joseph & Nancy Swain  
The Califon United Methodist Church  
Vicki Tuschak  
Raymond G. Tyburski, Jr.  
Union Township Board of Education - Grade 1  
Deborah Jean Varga  
Silvio & Barbara Verdile  
Marjory Stroup Walters  
Robert & Margaret Warner  
Elvira & William Williams  
Karen Williams  
Sheila Wilson  
Robert & Margaret Wilson  
James & Clare Wisor, Jr.  
Yale Residential Security Products  
Barbara Yanni  
Sandra Zablocki & Mark Rostek

# Awards Presented At Annual Meeting

On February 2, 2004, RVHFH members held their 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting at the United Reformed Church in Somerville. Highlights of 2003 accomplishments were presented by the committee chairs, and the slate for the 2004 board of trustees was elected. The new board members are Betsy Kuzio, Recording Secretary, and Eileen Esposito and Richard Smedley, Church Relations Co-Chairs. Thanks and appreciation was extended to the outgoing 2003 board members: Denise Chang, Parul Mehta, Diana Pecina, Jim Richart and Sarah Verbeke.

## The Board recognizes the following people as Outstanding Volunteers For 2003:

Church Relations Award – Cathy Kerr  
Construction Volunteer Award – Pat Kelly  
Fundraising Awards – Amy Denecke, Ed Kennedy,  
Christopher Spolarich  
Public Relations Award – Liz Kepniss  
Volunteer Coordination Award – Ed Royer,  
Dave Smack

## The Landmark Five Award was given to supporters who have donated to five or more homes. It was presented to:

Beer & Coleman Architects - *Architecture*  
Bill Buzby, B2A/Survsat - *Engineering and Site Planning*  
Ellen Gillespie Esq., - *Legal Services*  
Raymond R. and David W. Trombadore –  
*Legal Services*

In addition to these outstanding contributors, almost 200 RVHFH volunteers and staff were acknowledged in the annual report for their combined efforts to build simple, decent homes for families in need. Thank you all for making 2003 a banner year for RVHFH!

- Sarah Verbeke

## Social@6 Fundraiser

In a balloon-filled room (*thanks to Girl Scout Troop 451 for dressing the room!*) at Raritan Valley Community College on Saturday, February 21<sup>st</sup>, friends and supporters of Raritan Valley Habitat for Humanity gathered for an enjoyable cocktail buffet and a hilarious presentation of "I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change". The Social@6 event was held to raise funds in support of our building goals for 2004 and to raise awareness for Habitat's mission of building affordable homes in Somerset and Hunterdon counties.

The evening began with a sumptuous pasta and stir-fry buffet, accompanied by a selection of beer, wine and soft drinks. A silent auction with 27 items was opened, and feverish bidding ensued. By the time the bell was rung, signaling the end of the bidding, over \$3800 had been raised. Another \$5000 was raised through a raffle for a gourmet dinner for four at the Ryland Inn in Whitehouse. The lucky winners were Kathleen and Dave Maleski.

Throughout the evening, a slide show highlighting Habitat's most recent building project in Somerset was shown on two giant screens. The montage of pictures captured the 21 Alex Place build, from groundbreaking to home completion.

At 8 o'clock the lively group moved to the Edward Nash Theatre for a performance of "I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change". The show, based on the Off-Broadway hit of the same name, was fast paced, creative, and entertaining. Many were able to relate to one or more of the characters, and thus many chuckles and guffaws were heard from the audience!

Great food, great company and a wonderful performance combined to make this year's fundraising event an enormous success. Funds raised through this event will help RVHFH make simple, decent housing a reality for all in our area who desire and need it.

- Maggie Chigi

**PLEASE JOIN US  
FOR A  
VOLUNTEER  
ORIENTATION**

**Tuesday, April 27<sup>th</sup>  
7:30 PM**

**United Reformed Church  
100 W. Main St.  
Somerville, NJ**

*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 in over 1700 locations in the U.S. and Canada and 76 other nations worldwide. Habitat is supported by volunteers and contributions from churches, businesses and individuals.*

*Raritan Valley Habitat for Humanity  
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