



Community

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WHERE HAS COMMUNITY BEEN HIDING?

It has been quite a while since the last COMMUNITY. To use a sports analogy, we have been in a rebuilding season. We have made major changes to our game plan and are now ready for a winning season. Now in high gear, we have much to bring you!

PRESIDENTIAL MUSINGS

Richard (Rich) Dimenna is the Outgoing President of the Board of Directors of our local affiliate of Habitat for Humanity Inc. and a member of the Geezer Crew



The four years I've spent as Board President have been interesting ones for our affiliate, as we went from active home building to searching for the reasons and remedies for a lack of qualified partners.

Our last home dedication was in March, 2014. Since that time, we've been struggling to find qualified partner families, families that would work with us to build a home and then accept the responsibility of a mortgage to pay for the home. Now, as I'm getting ready to step down as Board Presi-

dent, we have begun work on House #71, and we have two more prospective partner families in the application process. This means we're back to building decent, affordable homes for families in need. This is the mission we embrace when we choose to work with or donate our resources to Habitat for Humanity.

In the rest of this newsletter, Brian has described much of the work that has taken place over the last two to three years, not only to identify and qualify partner families, but also to improve our policies and procedures to reflect new mortgage requirements from the Federal government, a new focus on safety resulting from increased OSHA oversight, and vastly improved financial counseling for our prospective partner families to better ensure their financial success as mortgage paying homeowners.

As if all that weren't enough, we've had resignations and retirements to deal with. Two dear ladies who have worked with the Family Selection committee decided that after 25 - 30 years of service to Habitat, they were ready for a break. We thank Mrs. Byrdyne Bell and Mrs. Brenda Reeves for their dedicated service and their enormous expertise, and we already miss them greatly. We've also gone through the process of finding a new Executive Director, since Dennis Hoyt decided that after 11 years in that role, he was ready for a rest. His shoes were hard to fill, but we are delighted to welcome Elaine Mathews as our new Executive Director, and we are very excited as she takes over the direction of our affiliate.

My term as President ends on June 30. Rick Martin will take over as the next President, and thanks to the excellent work of Dennis and the rest of the affiliate staff, he will be heading an affiliate that is in sound organizational and financial shape and poised to move forward. Dennis and I both plan to continue working with Habitat as Geezers and on the Construction and Public Relations committees. The Habitat mission is ongoing, and neither of us

wishes to walk away from it. But we're both happy to let someone else sit in the driver's seat.

WHERE ARE YOU?



We know that they are out there. We are looking to find them. You probably know some.

I am talking about potential Habitat for Humanity Partners. The CSRA has so many hard working folks who are living in substandard housing and paying more than they would to own one of our homes. You know these folks, they have a great work ethic, pay their bills on time and do their best to bring their kids up in a safe environment. . . But they don't have a high enough income to purchase a typical house. These people can become homeowners with what is typically about 60% of the Richmond County median income for the family unit. In other words, a Partner can purchase a quality house for considerably less than renting a low quality apartment. A zero percent mortgage and greatly reduced labor cost i.e., free labor by the Geezer crew and our many volunteers, make it possible.

When a family Partners with us, they receive counselling in all aspects of owning and maintaining a home. They put in many hours of sweat equity on their own homes and as such have an understanding of what it takes to build a quality house. We prescreen potential Partners and then, if they meet our basic requirements, introduce them to Security Federal Bank who assists with them with professional financial counseling. They work to improve the potential Partner's financial stability by effective budgeting and debt management and help them become better able to pay and sustain a

mortgage. It is most important that unexpected expenses not derail the ability to maintain the mortgage since Habitat for Humanity wants to see the Partner become a successful homeowner. Habitat for Humanity conducts its own mandatory training which forms part of the sweat equity requirement.

Security Federal Bank does not issue the mortgage, but they do service it by accepting the monthly payments and keeping accurate records, which they send to our affiliate monthly.

If you know a person or family who fits this description, let them know about the potential of home ownership by qualifying as a Habitat for Humanity Partner. Pick up a pre-application at the ReStore or call our business office for more information.

FEDERAL MORTGAGE REVISIONS

The Federal government has made significant changes to the issuing of mortgages, and our Habitat for Humanity affiliate has fully complied with them. The changes are primarily issues of transparency and response time. There are now strict time lines required to inform the applicant of their status and progress.

NEW PARTNER



On April 30, we broke ground for a very nice two bedroom home at 2232 Birnam Place which is in a quiet well established subdivision. Our new partner and prospective home owner, Fawn Sebek, is highly motivated and already has amassed a great number of sweat equity hours. In the normal course of things, the Partner would work on another Partner's house before work on her own house begins. In this case our Partner

has worked throughout our organization to complete the hours and now can look forward to completing the remaining sweat equity hours while building her own house. We are pleased to have Wells Fargo as the house sponsor. We have had the pleasure of working with these great volunteers in the past and look forward to their participation in this project.



H-71 Ground breaking



H-71 Ten Yards of Concrete for the Foundation



Wells Fargo (H-71 Sponsor) Donate a \$15,000 Check to Habitat for Humanity and Volunteer their Time

NEW CONSTRUCTION & SAFETY

In the time since we built our last home, we have greatly increased our already stringent safety requirements. We take very seriously the safety of our construction volunteers no matter if they are experienced or novices. We have spent thousands of dollars on upgrading ladders, scaffolds, power tools, safety harnesses and other pieces of specialty equipment designed for the safety of everyone. Our Construction Supervisors and Geezer Crew have concentrated on the correct use of this equipment and we will be there to assist any of our volunteers in its use. It is our intent to not only meet all of OSHA requirements, but to be a leader in best construction safety practices.



COLLEGIATE CHALLENGE

As for many years, we were honored to work with 15 students for the Collegiate Challenge. This is a program where we have the opportunity to meet students who have decided to volunteer their Spring Break to the community. This year we had students from DeSales University in Pennsylvania (close to Allentown). The task was to paint a tired and neglected two story house in Harrisburg and make it acceptable to the community. Before the work could start, the Geezer Crew rebuilt the porch roof (which had collapsed) and repaired the siding and trim. The new porch roof was levelled and railings were fabricated and installed.

Materials were provided to Habitat For Humanity from various sources and we performed the labor at no cost.



Priming the Peak

The students came with the enthusiasm that we have come to expect from these motivated volunteers. They primed the home with oil base paint before finishing with a latex top coat. The house is transformed and you would never know that it had been the ugly duckling of the area. We were rewarded by comments from residents of the neighborhood.

These students are the leaders of tomorrow. Community service was more important than a Spring Break in Florida or another hot spot. Their accommodations and meals were provided by some of our local churches and the support of the Augusta community. The enthusiasm and responsibility of these young people assures us that our country has a great future in their hands



2016 Collegiate Challenge Team

501 TO 501



As you all know, Habitat for Humanity is a 501(c)3 Non-Profit organization. Recently we had the opportunity to assist another such organization. The Comfort House provides accommodations for families that are unable to afford the room and board required by a patient or caregiver receiving treatment from our local hospitals. The Geezer Crew installed new donated hardwood flooring and trim in two rooms and a hallway that had previously been carpeted. Removal of the carpet made the rooms more conducive to patients undergoing treatment. This was not a simple job, since the building was old and had been "remodeled" several times. Loose subfloor and dips and changes in elevation were corrected

before the flooring was installed. The finished product was appreciated by all and the Geezer Crew enjoyed both the construction challenge and the support for The Comfort House mission.

RESTORE

The ReStore continues to expand and flourish. Our long time manager, Doug Vandenhuerk, retired after many years of excellent service, so after an exhaustive search and interview process, we hired Tim Fabian as the new manager. Tim brings a background with over 20 years in retail, holding positions from sales, to Vice President with Fortune 500 companies. Before joining Habitat, Tim was a Regional Vice President for Ashley Furniture. Tim has a remarkable background in retail management and has brought the store to a new level of professionalism. Tim is supported by assistant manager Leo, associate Virgil, truck driver Mike, and so many of our enthusiastic and dedicated volunteers.



DECONSTRUCTION

We have seen a marked interest by homeowners and Contractors alike for partial or full home deconstruction. But for those of us who enjoy many of the remodeling projects featured on HGTV and This Old House, you have to cringe as items useful to the less fortunate are destroyed and relegated to the land fill. There is a better way!



If you or your contractor will call us first, volunteers from Habitat for Humanity will remove items that can be resold or repurposed. This can be as simple as removing kitchen or bathroom cabinets and appliances to a full house gut, where we remove windows/doors, fixtures, cabinets, electrical components, trim and other recyclable items. We don't actually tear the house down, but do remove as much as we are able to remove safely. The home owner or contractor saves money by having us use our labor to prep the job and we benefit by gaining inventory for the ReStore. Next time you plan a remodeling job, ask your contractor to give us a couple of weeks lead time before he starts work. Contact Tim at the ReStore.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RETIREMENT

Eleven years ago, our affiliate was in deep trouble and needed a strong and steady hand to turn things around. The guidance we needed came in the form of Dennis Hoyt.

Dennis had been our construction supervisor and had decided that it was time to retire from that stressful position. Instead, the board of directors convinced him to become the Executive Director. Before reluctantly accepting the



job, he prayed for guidance. As he says, "I didn't pray long enough to know what a mess I was getting into."

Eleven years have passed and we have now built a total of 70 homes that have lifted many deserving families out of poor substandard housing and made them successful homeowners. Yes, there have been many up and down moments, but under Dennis, we have always moved forward. Personally, I have known Dennis for 7-8 years and to me he was Mr. Habitat. I can't say enough about such a man who is so dedicated to Habitat for Humanity, its mission and his faith. I could count the number of people I know who truly meet these criteria on one hand and Dennis would always be there. Dennis regarded each day as a new starting point and the only direction was up! He always believed that today's decisions were simply a place to work from.

As they say, all good things come to an end, and Dennis announced that he was going to retire from the Executive Director position (however he plans to join us as a construction volunteer with the Geezer Crew). To say we were all stunned by the news would be a gross understatement as we faced the future without his guiding hand.

A LOOK IN THE REAR VIEW MIRROR

By Dennis J. Hoyt



I would like to begin by thanking each of you for making my time at Habitat rewarding and spiritually uplifting. So many people have contributed to the success of this affiliate since 2005 with gifts of wisdom,

knowledge, labor, service, donations and financial support. You have blessed this affiliate in a way which allowed decent affordable homes, with the highest regards for the safety of all our staff and volunteers.

When I started out with Habitat in 1999 as a volunteer and soon became construction supervisor, I had no idea how my path would change. My church had asked me to supervise the construction of a Habitat house. We were in the process of building a new church and the pastor felt that before we had a new church home, we should build a house for someone in need of a house. The congregation gathered for the first fundraiser for the new house; tables were arranged with posters at each table for electrical, plumbing, construction etc. We could sign up for a number of projects: meals, roofing, volunteer organizing, or painting. At the end of the evening we were very close to making our financial goal with a very large number of volunteers signed up to complete the project.

Time progressed and the affiliate found the need for an Executive Director. The first course of action was to have someone from the Board of Directors call my wife to ask if she thought I would take the position. At the time my plan was to finish the house I was working on and then take another position not at Habitat. This is a reminder for me to always remember when man makes plans God laughs!

The affiliate was experiencing financial difficulties when I first started as Director. The bank was not very interested in working with us at the time, so I decided to promote the ReStore with one of our volunteers. One of our Board members stepped up and managed the store for many months. This act of service really kick-started the affiliate.

When people think of Habitat, they think of the construction of houses; they don't think of any the hundreds of things that it takes to construct a house! A number of Construction Supervisors have worked on previous homes, each contributing to the success of Augusta Georgia Habitat for Humanity. Working alongside the Construction Supervisor is a special team we call The Geezers! This group of men and women contribute significantly to our construction, deconstruction and special projects that require a higher standard of skills.

Mortgages and the documentation of homeowner records was a full time job. Resources were not available! A Board member stepped up, taking on this task! This was an unending task. It never ended because in thirty days you started all over again. Not only did she keep up with the mortgages, she was accountable to the Board of Directors for fully reporting when explanations were in order.

The Affiliate Office Manager kept me on track with meetings, reports, board meetings, interviews, events, partner family communication, sweat equity, accounting and book keeping - just to mention a few things! One can see, it takes a team of volunteers and staff to build a quality home. The affiliate has new Leader. I pray that you will provide her with the same support that was given to me over the years.

Again, I thank you.

May the peace of the Lord God be with each of you.

Sincerely,

Dennis J. Hoyt

NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Providence shone upon us as the Board of Directors created an interview team and solicited applicants, one of whom was Elaine Mathews. Elaine came to us as a highly qualified, experienced Habitat for Humanity Executive Director from Greene County Habitat for Humanity in Greensboro, Georgia. There she did it all...Partners, Property Acquisitions, Mortgages, ReStore, Construction and the myriad of other things that make up operating a Habitat for Humanity Affiliate. Best yet, she has family in the Augusta area and had a strong desire to move here



Elaine served as Executive Director of Greene County Habitat for Humanity in Greensboro, Georgia for nearly nine years and is experienced in all of the organizations program, fundraising, executive and leadership roles and has a breadth of perspective and experience.

Elaine's experience also includes serving as Executive Director of New Bethlehem Community Center located here in Augusta, which served the low income community with after school and summer camp opportunities, GED preparation classes, and senior meals programs. As a volunteer, she also served as the treasurer of the Augusta District and with the North Georgia division of the United Methodist Women organization. Other positions were in the accounting field prior to her nonprofit work.

Elaine and her younger two children, Dylan and Makayla, will relocate to Augusta. Makayla is 18 years old and will be off to college in just a few months. Dylan is 16 years old and is looking forward to his senior year of high school. They are returning to Augusta to be closer to family members already here. In Elaine's spare time, she is looking forward to spending more quality time with her oldest daughter, Amanda, her son-in-law, Michael, and her granddaughter, Leila.

Dennis and Elaine have worked side by side to make the transition and in April, the transition took place with a retirement party for Dennis and all of his associates (see photo collage). It was a bittersweet moment, but he will continue to be a resource to Elaine and the affiliate.

The legacy that Dennis has left is an affiliate that once was in deep trouble and is now on a solid footing and respected by the community. Elaine is taking over an affiliate that is sound; staffed with good, competent, and enthusiastic people; and ready to move forward. She can continue to grow and build on a firm foundation!



Dennis Hoyt and Elaine Mathews

I WANT TO VOLUNTEER

To sign up to volunteer, go to our website www.augustahabitat.org and press the VolunteerUp icon.

If you are a new volunteer, create an account, or if you are an existing volunteer, login. Select the month that you want from the top of the page to see what is available. Click on the item you are interested in and follow the instructions. If there is nothing listed on that page, don't be concerned because the schedule may not yet been determined. Check back with us later. We look forward to seeing you!



HOW YOU CAN HELP HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

Donations

As a non profit organization dedicated to providing quality housing to those who are willing to do what is necessary to achieve stability and home ownership, we are always in the need for donations at whatever level you can afford.

Donations are tax deductible and we willingly accept PayPal through our website www.augustahabitat.org. direct donations at our office at 1002 Walton Way, Augusta, GA, 30901, or by mail to P.O. Box 657, Augusta, GA, 30903.

ReStore

Also welcomed are new or gently used building products etc. which can be donated to the ReStore. Sales from the ReStore provide much of the funding that finances new homes for our Partners. The ReStore often has those hard to find items that are no longer in production. If you need a door, hardware or plumbing parts for an older home, please visit the ReStore, you may very well find the part(s) you are looking for.

Please think of the ReStore the next time you are replacing an item that is still serviceable. Please talk to your friends and let them know that they can help our ministry with any donation that they are able to make.

These donations are tax deductible.

Please help us to help others less fortunate than ourselves.

Volunteer

If you would like to volunteer your time, please visit our web page www.augustahabitat.org and click on the "VolunteerUp" icon or contact our office during business hours at Augusta/CSRA Habitat for Humanity, 1002 Walton Way, Augusta, GA. 30907, Phone (706) 481-8681 extension 101 We welcome anyone who would like to assist our affiliate.

If you want to work in the construction of a new home, we require no experience...Experienced leaders will be glad to assist you. Feel free to contact us for other opportunities to help the community.

We have many corporate and local companies that support us on a regular basis. The support of these organizations is critical to our continued success.

Special thanks to Claffey Printing who help make "COMMUNITY" possible.

If you have a comment or suggestion regarding COMMUNITY, please direct your comments to Brian White (Editor of COMMUNITY) at brianw1491@gmail.com.

Augusta/CSRA Habitat for Humanity Inc.

Augusta/CSRA Habitat for Humanity, People Helping People



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