

A message from the President

On behalf of the board of directors of Habitat for Humanity of Schenectady County, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the latest edition of our newsletter. We have just completed the 15th house since this chapter of Habitat for Humanity began, and we are proud of the work we do here in Schenectady County.

We welcomed our first paid employee in the summer. Jeff Clark, who had worked as a Habitat volunteer when he lived in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, decided to leave the world of financial planning and take over as executive director of this organization. In the few months that he has been with us, he has been busy meeting people in government, community agencies, and in the neighborhoods. He even answered phones with us at WMHT during one of their fund drives. He is not afraid of rolling up his sleeves and getting involved in whatever project needs to be done, and I hope that you will have the chance to meet him at a Habitat event.

Following the recent natural disasters on the Gulf Coast, many people have been thinking about ways to help those folks who were devastated by the hurricanes and displaced from their homes. Countless Americans have reached out with their financial donations and emotional support to help the people in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida as they seek to rebuild their lives.

While an incredible amount of work still needs to be done in the Gulf states, we cannot lose sight of what needs to be done right here, right in our own backyard. Habitat for Humanity's mission—to build simple, decent, affordable housing—is a critical component of reaching out to the citizens of Schenectady County to enable our neighbors to live with dignity and pride in a home of their own.

HabitatBuilder

The newsletter of Habitat for Humanity of Schenectady County, Inc.

WINTER 2005

2 Get ready for a builder blitz build in 2006

3 Make a quilt block for the 2006 quilt raffle

4 How you can help HFHSC?

Habitat dedicates new Hamilton Hill home for the Thomas family



James Thomas celebrates with HFHSCI volunteers at the dedication of his new home at 319 Schenectady St., while his daughter Brittany checks out her new home.



Our latest homeowner, James Thomas, expects to be part of the rebuilding of Schenectady Street in the city's Hamilton Hill section. He worked hard to put in the required amount of sweat equity to qualify for the home where he and his daughter, Brittany, are now living. A host of Habitat volunteers helped to transform a once-vacant lot into a practical home for them.

This is what we do. We bring neighbors together to gather materials, do

fundraising and, ultimately, turn architectural plans into a beautiful reality — that of a home. We cannot do it without your support. We appreciate all that you do, and look forward to your continued encouragement — financial, spiritual, and emotional — as we seek to build our 16th home and beyond.

Greg Chambers
President, Board of Directors

From the Executive Director...

The past few months have indeed been a whirlwind for me. In these short months since I have been executive director of Habitat for Humanity of Schenectady County, I have spent a great deal of time meeting people at all levels of government — from city council members to county legislators, from mayors to State legislators, from school board members to town board members. I have also had the tremendous opportunity to speak with people from other community-based organizations, as well as ordinary citizens who share the philosophy that all people deserve a simple, decent place to live. I look forward to meeting many more of you in the months to come.

I was pleased to be involved in the October 30 dedication of 319 Schenectady Street in the city's Hamilton Hill section, the home for James Thomas and his daughter, Brittany. James and his friends contributed 300 hours of sweat equity toward the home. I am certain that he and Brittany will find the house, which was built with the help of so many volunteers, to be a wonderful place to call home. A 1979 graduate of the former Linton High School (now Schenectady High), James has lived in this area his whole life and is committed to helping improve his neighborhood. A second Habitat house will be built next spring at 317 Schenectady Street, so James and Brittany soon will have new neighbors.

When we watched the devastation of hurricanes Katrina and Rita on the Gulf Coast in August and September, followed closely by hurricane Wilma in Florida, we saw how the lack of decent, affordable housing can affect people. It has been gratifying to see the outpouring of support from all over the world to help the victims of those terrible storms. Habitat for Humanity International has been working to help people in Louisiana and Mississippi, and celebrities such as Harry Connick, Jr., Branford Marsalis, and the stars of Major League Baseball have all supported those efforts.

While we applaud and encourage continued support for Habitat for Humanity International's efforts on the Gulf Coast, we also must continue our work on the local level. We need your help as we strive to make Schenectady County a better place to live for everyone. We can always use volunteers with all kinds of talents, but what we really need at this time of the year is your financial support so that we can gear up for a very busy, productive spring. I hope you will consider making a year-end donation to Habitat for Humanity of Schenectady County. You can do so in honor or in memory of a loved one.

With winter coming on, people may have the impression that we don't do too much actual on-site building here in the great Northeast. That's not necessarily the case, as we are investigating new opportunities, no matter what the weather may be. Of course, we are planning and collaborating with businesses and individuals to convert our dreams into realities in 2006 and beyond. For that, we need you—and we give thanks for your past support.

Jeff Clark, Executive Director



Jeff Clark and James Thomas

HFHSCI sets lofty goals

On October 30, 2005, we dedicated our 15th house. Our goal is to complete 25 houses in the next five years (five per year). Our next goal is to complete 75 homes over a ten-year period.

This may be ambitious, but the need for decent, affordable housing in Schenectady County is tremendous. Habitat for Humanity of Schenectady County can reach these milestones if people in the community realize how important it is for the area and support our efforts with time, talent and treasure. Right now, the "treasure" part is the most critical, as we strive to set and attain goals that will improve not only the quality of life for the people who ultimately will live in the Habitat homes, but for the community at large.

Get ready for a builder blitz build in 2006

The Capital Region Builders & Remodelers Association, Inc. has committed to provide skilled professionals to build a house for HFHSCI in ONE WEEK! HFHSC will put in the foundation, in-ground plumbing and slab floor prior to the blitz week (date to be determined), then the builders will frame and finish the house in just one week.

The CRBRA steering committee consists of:

- Joe Constantine, Contantine Builders, Amsterdam;
- Lee DeGraff and Anne Rockwood, DeGraff Bloom Custom Builders, Charlton;
- Russ Metzger, Masullo Brothers Builders, Schenectady.

These folks are not only recruiting the rest of the builders' team, but are soliciting support from their industry colleagues to get donated materials for the project. That support is already starting to pour in, according to Joe Constantine.

The site is 829 Emmett Street, and the family selection process is underway. This will be an exciting project, and we are looking forward to working with this outstanding group of professional builders to bring this project to completion.

Your church can become part of Habitat for Humanity

As part of its 40th anniversary celebration, Christ Community Reformed Church, located at 1010 Route 146 in Clifton Park, decided to get involved in a local community undertaking. Greg Chambers spoke to our Consistory about Habitat for Humanity of Schenectady County, which led to the pledge work hours for 2005. I was asked to serve as the volunteer coordinator for our church. Altogether, 23 of our members worked on the house at 319 Schenectady Street and 12 others were involved as hosts for the CRBRA Parade of Homes in September. In total, our church involved 35 individuals, donating a total of 405 work hours to Habitat.

Your church can do the same for HFHSCI in the future. We had a great time, and helped our community as well. It's a terrific community project.

—Fred Esmond

Make a quilt block for the 2006 raffle quilt!

Our 2006 Habitat raffle quilt will have a theme of “Hearts and Flowers for Habitat.” We need quilt blocks to create this quilt. You can use any technique that will be washable; our quilt is meant to be used. Please make a block and help make this project a success. This year we have an optional fabric which you can incorporate in your block (Moda Marble Color # 9880-31, a medium green), which will help tie the blocks together. The fabric has been donated by Quilt Essentials of Loudonville.

If we get too many blocks for one quilt, we reserve the right to hold onto the extra blocks for a second quilt, to be used at an event and date to be determined.

The date of the raffle has yet to be determined, but it will occur within our 2006 building season.

If you have any questions email Mary Phillips at habitat@hfhscny.org or call Habitat for Humanity office at 395-3412. See our website for additional information: <http://www.hfhscny.org>.



Requirements:

- Blocks must be washable.
- Prewash all fabrics.
- Finished block size 10" X 10" (Unfinished size 10-1/2" X 10-1/2")

Theme: Hearts and Flowers for Habitat

Techniques: This can be pieced, appliqued, or any other technique you choose. However, if paint is used, it must be washable and NOT three-dimensional.

Submission deadline: February 10, 2006
Send to:

Mary Phillips
HFHSCI
Box 9043
Schenectady, NY 12309

HFHSCI volunteers recognized

On November 12, HFHSCI honored several long-time volunteers with formal awards to recognize their many years of service to the organization. The event took place at the First Baptist church at the corner of St. David's Lane and Route 7 in Niskayuna.

- Volunteer of the Year — **Dick Baertsch.**
- Winners of the Al Finke Award for Distinguished Service — **Bruce Pomeroy** and **Stephen Stone.**

Following the formal recognition program, HFHSCI raffled off the 2005 quilt — and the winner was **Bernard Witkowski**, our licensed electrician. We then reviewed the organization's efforts of the past year and discussed plans for the future.

Thanks to the many volunteers who helped make 2005 a success for this chapter of Habitat for Humanity. We can't do it without you!

Habitat's *Wish List*

HFHSC needs a number of items to help with our work in the community. These items include:

- a new **laptop computer** (or another hard drive for the existing laptop)
- a **projector** to connect to the laptop (for community and church presentations)
- a **plumber** to join the building committee
- **concrete forms** for four-foot walls
- **scaffolding**
- donated **dumpster** services
- donated **toilet** services



HFHSC holds first-ever golf tournament

Thanks to the folks at Mohawk Ambulance, the first annual HFHSC golf tournament took place last June at the Stadium Golf Course in Schenectady.

HFHSCI Board President Greg Chambers took First Place and Building Committee Chair Bruce Pomeroy took Second Place.



Bruce Rogers of HFH International displays the trophy.

How can you help HFHSC?

It's simple. Get out your checkbook.

That's what we need the most at this point—your financial support. Your donation to HFHSCI is tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law. Now is the time, as the year winds down, to think of the people who need simple, decent, affordable housing in our community. *Just tear off this coupon and mail to:*

**HFHSCI, P.O. Box 9043
Schenectady, NY 12309**

Your company may match your donation. Please check with your human resources department for any necessary forms. For General Electric employees or retirees, go to: http://www.ge.com/foundation/matching_gifts.html for further information about matching gifts.

Habitat is a 501(c) 3 organization.

Please print

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Ste _____ Zip _____

Phone (_____) _____ email _____

This donation is in memory of _____

Amount \$ _____ check Visa Mastercard American Express

Acct. # _____ Exp. Date. ___/___/___

Signature _____

Make checks payable to: Habitat for Humanity of Schenectady County, Inc.

Yes, I want to become a volunteer. Please check off what you would like to do:

Build Public Relations Fundraising Office Work

Other (please explain) _____



Habitat for Humanity of Schenectady County

**PO Box 9043
Schenectady, NY 12309.**

Schenectady County Habitat for Humanity is an ecumenical Christian ministry whose mission is to build simple, decent, affordable housing for those who are unable to pursue home ownership in the conventional manner.

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