



**Habitat
for Humanity®**
La Crosse Area

PARTNERSHIP

Winter 2011

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CONTACT US

For more information,
to become a volunteer,
or to make a donation,
please contact us:

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info@habitatlacrosse.org

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La Crosse, WI 54601
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restore@habitatlacrosse.org

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Add your name to our e-mail
newsletter list by logging on to
www.habitatlacrosse.org and
click on "newsletter" or e-mail
info@habitatlacrosse.org.

Habitat Happenings

By Cori Skolaski, Executive Director



As you'll read in this newsletter, we recently held our 2nd Annual Volunteer Recognition Event. In keeping with the idea of recognition, I'd like to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to everyone who contributes their time, talents, money, and well-wishes to Habitat for Humanity.

As we move into our 19th year of building safe, decent, affordable homes in partnership with families in need, we can look back with pride at what we've accomplished.

However, there's so much left to do! There are too many people living in substandard conditions in our community; clearly, poverty is no respecter of persons.

Many people skate close to poverty when sudden loss of job, illness, or divorce changes their circumstances. Often, it's only a good education and/or family support that provide a safety net. So what is the difference between "us" and "them"? Not much. Certainly luck and God's grace play a role. But at the end of the day, we're all part of the same global family, facing similar challenges. Rich or poor, we all care about many of the same things: health, happiness, family, children, peace, security, safety, dignity, and respect.

How do these families loosen the grip of poverty? Often, there's little they can do by themselves, as they measure their days by the yardstick of survival. While poverty levels are measured in terms of income, the condition of being poor brings hunger, inadequate shelter, sickness, instability, and illiteracy. Yet somehow families get by. They have faith... perhaps a faith in God, or in family, in tomorrow, in hard work, in themselves.

And that's where Habitat for Humanity comes in. Putting our faith into action, we provide a hand up, not a hand out. Decent housing can make a huge difference in the lives of poor families. It provides a foundation; once housing is there, many of the surrounding issues and problems almost magically fall away, giving families the opportunity to launch new plans, reach their full potential, and short-circuit the poverty cycle.

Like anyone else, Habitat homeowners hope for a better life, take joy in their children, value education, work hard for a living, and have faith. That faith sustains them through the tough times and gives them grace in the good times.

The work of Habitat for Humanity builds on that spirit and faith, both literally and figuratively. This non-profit Christian mission has built over 250,000 houses around the world, providing more than one million people with safe, decent, affordable shelter. Through the work of Habitat for Humanity-La Crosse Area, 33 houses have been built in Bangor, Onalaska, Holmen, La Crosse, Coon Valley, Westby, Viroqua, and Houston the past 19 years.

You can help. Through your gift of time as a volunteer, your financial contribution, and your prayers you can be a part of our mission to eliminate poverty housing. Thank you in advance for standing with us.

RAISE THE ROOF

with



**A BENEFIT
FUNDRAISER FOR**



Saturday, February 19, 2011
La Crosse Center, North Hall
Doors open at 6:30

COME and ENJOY

Delicious Food
Casino Games
Silent Auction
Raffle Prizes

TICKETS

\$8 in advance
\$10 at the door
\$5 with Student or Military ID
VIP Table Packages available RSVP
Tickets available at
Habitat ReStore & Festival Foods

More info @ www.habitatlacrosse.org

Sponsored By:



Comings and Goings

It is with a grateful heart for much good work that we say goodbye to Paul Fairchild as he leaves the Board of Directors. Paul has worked with Habitat for Humanity for many years, and has been a leader on the five projects in Vernon County. He has also stepped in and helped with evaluating sites we have considered purchasing, and he is a great person to bounce ideas off of. We will miss his calm, relaxed presence at our board meetings!

Congratulations to Jason Mather, who was promoted to the position of Construction Manager. Jai has worked for Habitat for Humanity for several years, first as the ReStore Driver, then moving into a part-time Driver, part-time Construction Coordinator position. We've now reached a point where we need more of his expertise, and in November he was made the full time Construction Manager.



2nd Annual Volunteer Gala

We would like to express our thanks to all who attended our 2011 Volunteer Gala on January 23rd, 2011 – in spite of a playoff game! It was great to start the night off with a win from the Green Bay Packers over the Chicago Bears for the NFC Championship.

It was our privilege to honor and show our appreciation for the Habitat for Humanity and ReStore volunteers who represented all aspects of our organization—ReStore, Construction, Committees, Board of Directors, Office Assistants, Special Events, Students from the UWL Habitat Chapter, and In-Kind Donors. In 2010 approximately 410 volunteers together contributed over 9,000 hours of their time and talents helping us achieve our goal of eliminating poverty housing! Out of these 410 volunteers, 26 people put in more than 100 hours and were presented with a Presidential Service Award for their accomplishment.

To all of our volunteers: please know how much we appreciate the work that you do and the time you take out of your hectic lives to work with us to fulfill our mission. On behalf of the staff, Board of Directors, and most especially those in need of safe, decent, and affordable housing – thank you.

SAVE THE DATE!

Saturday, February 19 - Raise the Roof with the Remainders @ the La Crosse Center

March 11-13 - La Crosse Area Builders' Association Home Show

March 25-27 - Greater La Crosse Home Show

Saturday, April 30 - Habitat for Humanity-La Crosse Area night at the Spartans



Find us on Facebook!



Officers

Kurt Schuldes - President
Mike Poellinger - Vice President
Jeff Wrobel - Treasurer
Tom Clafin - Secretary

Board of Directors

Ken Kryzenske - Past President
Chris Crye
Gina Gerrard
Tom Kieffer
Tom Knothe
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volunteer@habitatlacrosse.org

Putting faith into action,
Habitat for Humanity
brings people together
to build decent homes
and communities.



Construction News

We recently completed, sold, and dedicated two Habitat homes. One on January 29 at 417 Coon Prairie Avenue in Westby to Angela and Lucas Geier and their five children, and one on February 5 at 914 Hope Court in Holmen to Kee Xiong and Soua Thao and their six children. Both families completed 350 hours of sweat equity, and took credit and homebuyers counseling courses. They purchased the homes with a zero-interest mortgage. Congratulations to both families!



417 Coon Prairie Avenue



(Left)
Lucas & Angela
Geier Family



(Right)
914 Hope Court

In 2011 we will build two to three homes. We have chosen two families with which to partner on homes in Holmen and La Crosse. We'd like to begin a 3rd home in 2011 in either Houston, Viroqua, or Westby. It depends on a couple of factors: volunteer support of proposed projects, and finding families who wish to partner with us. It is strange but true: in both Houston and Vernon Counties, which both have measurable levels of low-income residents, eligible families seem to be reluctant to apply for housing with us. (In La Crosse County that is not the case; we unfortunately have more applicants than we can serve.)

We are not sure why there is reluctance in Houston and Vernon Counties, but we have some guesses: 1. Perhaps because these are rural communities with small towns, potential applicants hesitate to throw their hat in the ring because everyone will know their business. 2. Maybe it's because they feel the odds of being chosen are like winning the lottery – slim. 3. It could be that there is some sort of misconception about what a Habitat for Humanity home or partner family is like.

If it's #1, privacy concerns, it is true that when you are chosen as a Habitat homeowner in a small town, it is pretty difficult to remain anonymous. There is somewhat of a fishbowl phenomenon. However, Habitat for Humanity will not share any private information about you to anyone, such as your income, debt, or current substandard living condition. It is your choice whether to share any details. We won't disclose anything without your permission.

If the problem is #2, the lightning-strike theory, it is true that while being selected to be a Habitat homeowner is not automatic, it is not time-consuming or difficult to apply. We choose families based upon three criteria: 1. Need for decent housing (i.e. currently living in substandard conditions), 2. Willingness to partner with us (complete 350 hours of sweat equity, attend credit and homebuyer counseling), and 3. Ability to pay (you have to have some income and be able to pay approximately \$450-525 per month on mortgage, property taxes, and insurance). To start the process, applicants fill out an application and provide proof of their income and debt. The Family Selection Committee verifies the information, runs a credit report (we don't expect a clean credit report, but we expect to see a recent history of responsibility), and then committee volunteers make a home visit. It's a competitive process, and the Family Selection volunteers have the important task of carefully evaluating and choosing a family. Then, the real work – and fun – begins!

If the hesitation with applying is because of #3, misconceptions about our program, it can be easily settled. The homes Habitat for Humanity-La Crosse Area builds are simple, decent, and affordable. They meet all state and local construction guidelines and standards, and are Energy Star rated. We use quality materials and only new items and materials are used for construction (used donations are sold in the Habitat ReStore). Habitat homeowners are no different than anyone else. In the experience of our staff, in general they seem to be hard-working, determined, goal-oriented, and very grateful. Approximately 70% of our partner families are two-parent households. At any time, no more than two or three of our partner families are delinquent in their mortgage payments (and none more than 60 days past due). They have jobs or, in a few cases, are disabled. All of our partner families have children. Family sizes range from two to 15; the average size of our families is 6.5 people.

We are eager to build in both Houston and Vernon Counties, but we need the help of the people who live there; please join us either as a volunteer or as an applicant. For more information, email us at info@habitatlacrosse.org or call 785-2373. For more details on becoming a Habitat homeowner, visit our website at www.habitatlacrosse.org.

2011 Women Build

Habitat for Humanity-La Crosse Area is seeking teams of women to participate in Women Build 2011. They will work together to build a home in partnership with a family in need – **and we need you!**

We're asking teams of employees, families, churches, civic organizations, and more to participate. Each team of 6-10 volunteers will be asked to raise \$1,000 for the event. Teams will choose their volunteer spots on a first come, first serve basis beginning on May 1 and continuing through the summer. Team Leaders will be invited to participate in a Women Build kick-off day on Saturday, April 30.

You'll learn new skills, make new friends, and put your faith into action building a home for a family desperately in need of a safe, decent, affordable place to live. To learn more about Women Build or to register, please visit www.habitatlacrosse.org or call 608-785-2373.



In conjunction with the 3rd annual La Crosse Area Women Build and Mother's Day, we are offering a unique opportunity to recognize a woman who has made a difference in one's life by giving a gift to Habitat for Humanity-La Crosse Area in honor or in memory of that special woman. We will send a card to the woman being honored; if received by Monday, April 25 it will be in time for Mother's Day! Please visit our website www.habitatlacrosse.org to make a special gift in honor of a special woman in your life.



Counting Our Blessings

Along with cash contributions, Habitat for Humanity is lucky to receive many in-kind donations from businesses. It's a huge benefit to us - we receive goods and services at discounted prices or at no cost.

Here is a partial list of our in-kind heroes. If we have inadvertently left your business name off of this list - please let us know and accept our apologies!

Anonymous Donors: Some of our in-kind donors prefer to remain anonymous. You know who you are; thank you very much for your generosity!

Home Construction: Thank you to the following businesses who have donated towards our current construction sites - Advanced Multimedia Solutions, Badgerland Roofing, Builders Flooring, First Supply, Jaeckle Distributors, Jim Keil Drywall, Modern Crane Services, Perfect-O-Flooring, Real Estate Services LLC, Skinner Construction, Tri-State Concrete Pumping, Tri State Insulated Concrete Forms, Tusker Construction, and Wieser Precast.

First Supply: First Supply is our landlord and gives us a great deal on our rent for our ReStore and office space.

Local Banks: Associated Bank is a wonderful partner by providing creative in-kind support. We are the mortgage lender for all Habitat homes, but Associated Bank processes the mortgages for us which saves us a tremendous amount of work and staff time.

ReStore: Thank you to the following who have donated products - Ace Hardware, Adam Binsefld, Bath Fixer, Caledonia Lumber, Carpet City, Contractors Millwork Supply, Flooring Interiors, Hallman Lindsay, Habitat ReStore of Winona, Mathy Construction, Onalaska United Methodist Church, 7 River Surplus.

Valspar Paint: Valspar donates interior and exterior paint for our homes.

WebTeam (La Crosse): Thank you for hosting our website at no charge!

Whirlpool Corporation: Whirlpool donates new stoves and refrigerators to ALL Habitat homes built in the United States. We deeply appreciate and honor this outstanding corporate partner.



ReStore ReView

By Steve Baker, ReStore Manager



Come one! Come all! Come to the Habitat ReStore where you can find low cost building materials, furniture, and appliances at a fraction of retail prices. Our store has a new look to it – more open, better lighting, and nicer displays. As most of you already know we are open to the public. Better yet, the proceeds help our local Habitat for Humanity chapter build simple, decent, and affordable homes in the Coulee Region.

We're stocked by all donations, so if you are cleaning out your garage, replacing furniture or appliances, or doing some remodeling give us a call or stop down. We accept donations during all store hours. We also offer free limited pick ups in La Crosse, Onalaska, Holmen, and West Salem. We ask that if you can fit the items in your car, that you bring them to us. For more information about what we accept, visit our webpage or just give the store a call during store hours.

ARE YOU SPRING CLEANING?



Habitat ReStore takes more than windows and doors!
We take small donations of hardware, tools, furniture, and large appliances!

Your items help Habitat for Humanity-La Crosse Area eliminate poverty housing in the Coulee Region. Your contributions may be eligible for free pick up and tax benefits.

Donations - Call 608-785-2375 and ask for Jim.

For more information go to www.restorelacrosse.org/donations.shtml.



ReStore Sales

**25 % Off
Furniture**

February 16-28



ReStore Closings

So our volunteers and staff can enjoy the holidays with their families, the ReStore will be closed:

Easter: Saturday, April 23

Memorial Day: Saturday, May 28

4th of July: Saturday, July 2

Habitat ReStore

434 3rd Street South
(between King and Cass Street)
La Crosse, WI 54601
(608) 785-2375
www.restorelacrosse.org

ReStore Hours

Wednesday 10 am - 6 pm
Thursday 10 am - 6 pm
Friday 10 am - 6 pm
Saturday 9 am - 3 pm

Our Mission

- ... To raise money for the building of Habitat houses.
- ... To sell usable merchandise at reasonable prices.
- ... To recycle building materials, keeping them out of our landfills and in circulation where they can benefit the La Crosse area.
- ... To promote awareness of Habitat for Humanity-La Crosse Area and it's goal of eliminating poverty housing in our community.

What We Do

The Habitat ReStore is a unique building materials retail outlet that enables you to buy the supplies you need for home or office renovation, remodeling, and decorating projects at a fraction of the cost.

We collect new and used building materials and sell them at a fraction of retail prices. All profits go directly to Habitat for Humanity-La Crosse Area for building more houses and to remove families in need from poverty housing.



Every donation helps change someone's world.

Imagine your contribution combined with those of other individuals, businesses and organizations from around our area. Imagine what you could mean to a family in need of a safe and decent house.

Please give today.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

I would like my gift to be anonymous in publications.

Contribution Amount

- __ \$480+ Architect's Club
- __ \$240 Homebuilder's Club
- __ \$120 Carpenter's Club
- __ Other: \$ _____

I will be a 2011 Raise the Roof Sponsor!

My business, church or organization will be a 2011 Raise the Roof Sponsor!

- ___ \$ 2000 Platinum
- ___ \$ 1000 Gold
- ___ \$ 500 Silver
- ___ \$ 250 Bronze
- ___ Up to \$250 Friend

Payment Method. Thank you!

- __ Check enclosed made out to Habitat for Humanity-La Crosse Area
- __ Please Bill Me: __ Monthly __ Quarterly
- __ Charge my: __ Visa __ MasterCard Name as it appears on card: _____
- Card No. _____ Exp. Date _____

Mail to: Habitat for Humanity-La Crosse Area, PO Box 2123, La Crosse, WI 54602-2123 or contribute online at www.habitatlacrosse.org



P.O. Box 2123

La Crosse, WI 54602-2123

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Here is your chance to make a difference in a unique way! Donate your vehicle to build Habitat for Humanity homes in the La Crosse Area through Habitat International's Cars for Homes™ program! Simply call 877-277-4344 or visit the www.carsforhomes.org to donate cars, trucks, boats, RVs, motorcycles, airplanes or other motorized vehicles – running or not!

Accepted vehicles are sold through wholesale auctions, salvage yards and automotive recyclers. Donors are sent acknowledgment from Habitat for Humanity International and the forms required by the IRS regulations. Net proceeds are disbursed to affiliates, based on zip code of the donor, as unrestricted funds to help build more homes.

Give the gift of hope by donating your vehicle to Cars for Homes™ – help Habitat-La Crosse continue to fund houses for families in need!

DONATE a CAR
to help build homes.



Habitat
for Humanity®

Cars for Homes™



877.277.4344

www.carsforhomes.org