

**Family Partnership**  
Betty Harris

Volunteers are the lifeblood of our organization, including the Family Partnership Committee. We are grateful for the pioneering efforts of Jean McAdam, Robert Fishbeck, and others who provided us with the firm foundation on which we continue to build.

The Family Partnership Committee guides families through the transition from renting to homeownership. We help them set up a budget to meet their financial requirements, assist them in creating their new living space, and provide educational workshops to ensure their success as homeowners.

I feel blessed to work on a committee whose volunteers exhibit such commitment and pleasure in helping hard-working families achieve the goal of homeownership. And it is particularly rewarding when homeowners continue as volunteers after completing their sweat-equity requirement. I am proud and pleased to have two such people on my committee: Michele AuClaire and Tabetha Murray.

We are always looking for new recruits. If you enjoy people and would like to help hard-working individuals who do not qualify for a standard mortgage to achieve homeownership, consider joining us. I promise you, you will not regret it!

**From the President's Desk...**

Stephen McCorkell

I hope this issue of the Glens Falls Area Habitat for Humanity newsletter finds all of our loyal volunteers in good health and spirits. On these pages we will focus on the role of volunteers and the ways their contributions have led the Affiliate for the past twelve years.

We are dedicating this edition to the memory of Bruce Conklin, who recently passed away. As one of our most loyal volunteers and the person most instrumental to our successes in Saratoga County, Bruce truly represented the kind of volunteer spirit that we seek to recognize.

Many of you may not be aware that GFAHFH remains an all-volunteer organization, even though that is not the trend throughout Habitat International. More and more affiliates are transitioning from volunteer to paid administrations as their mission expands in a given region. We find ourselves at that same crossroads: Do we continue as an all-volunteer organization, or do we seek out a means to support a paid staff? It is our desire to expand our mission; however, there are many limitations to such an undertaking. Overcoming those limitations and increasing our organizational capacity will be the primary focus of the board during the next year.

While we are looking to the future, it is also a good time to pause and reflect on all that we have done in the past. In general terms, volunteers have shaped this organization by their involvement on the board and affiliate committees, or in support of individual builds.

Our all-volunteer board is the core leadership group charged with overseeing the direction of the Affiliate. The next layer of leadership lies within our committee structure—better known as the group

that makes the rubber hit the road. The Affiliate is blessed with many unsung heroes within the ranks of our committees. Their people-power truly allows us to accomplish our mission. Of course we are most known for our use of volunteers for the purpose of building simple, decent houses. While this continues to be our focus, the role of volunteers is becoming much more diverse within the Affiliate. Volunteers with a variety of skills and passions are needed along with those who simply want to know the joy of building a house with their own hands.

A rather unique thing happens at a Habitat site. The hardest part of any build is getting everything lined up to begin. Land, permits, blueprints, food, materials, foremen, and funds all need to be in place before the first chute of concrete can be poured. But once the word is out that work has begun, a loyal band of volunteers always seems to emerge from thin air. Week after week they are on the scene, often performing tasks they did not know they could. It is the spirit of the assembled volunteers that makes all of the seemingly mundane board and committee work worthwhile. This spirit provides the fuel to move us from one build to the next.

Thanks to the efforts of GFAHFH volunteers, 16 families all have a home to call their own. The collective volunteer spirit has made a lasting impact on the communities we serve. To all our volunteers: Please accept this word of thanks and rest assured that the memory of your past and present dedication to Habitat has not been forgotten. ▲

**Habitat's Amazing Volunteers**

Nicole Bissonette

It amazes me that homes can be built by volunteers. And the more I work with Habitat for Humanity, the more amazed I become. Habitat volunteers do so much more than build houses. They screen families through the Family Selection process. The Partnership Committee works with families before, during, and after the build. Fund Raising finds ways to cover our many expenses. Church Relations keeps in contact with some of our biggest supporters: local churches, temples, and other religious groups. Public Relations does important work, including publishing this newsletter. And these are just a few examples.

As volunteer coordinator, I'm a contact person for people who want to be involved with Habitat for Humanity. I try to match

an individual's skills and interests with the organization's numerous needs. I am in touch with many potential volunteers who end up doing amazing things with Habitat for Humanity. They may volunteer one Saturday to work on a build site—or they might work every Saturday. They might want to join a committee or make lunch for a work crew. I get messages and e-mails from people who are new to the area, recent retirees, teenagers, and others who have heard about the great things Habitat for Humanity does and want to be part of it.

It is amazing that volunteers build homes. But the truly amazing thing is the volunteers themselves. If you would like to become more involved with the Glens Falls Area Habitat for Humanity, please contact me at 584-9574 or nickib@spa.net. ▲

**A Volunteers' Volunteer:  
Bruce S. Conklin 1948-2003**

Dick Harris

As one of several hundred people gathered at the memorial service for Bruce Conklin, I listened in awe as the Rev. Bill Lasher reviewed his lifetime of service. This smiling, outgoing, lover-of-life man who wore rainbow suspenders had been a giant in our midst.

As chair of the Showcase of Homes project of the Builders' Association of Saratoga Springs, Bruce helped raise tens of thousands of dollars for Habitat for Humanity. He donated the land for the King Road house and served as construction coordinator for several projects.

In addition to his Habitat efforts, Bruce built the Shelter of Saratoga for homeless people, initially financing the project himself. At the forefront of international church construction projects in Mexico and Brazil, he

also led a number of work camps at Skye Farm Camps, Covenant Hills Christian Camp, and the Troy Conference Center.

He was a mainstay in the kitchen at the United Methodist Church, where he served on various committees and was otherwise involved with church work. He was a true volunteers' volunteer.

The Glens Falls Affiliate has lost a dedicated volunteer who was so much more. This big guy in the plaid shirt and suspenders was a friend to all. He truly believed in the Habitat for Humanity goal of affordable housing for all who are willing to work for it. He not only believed in it, he lived it.

We are blessed that he passed our way. As a way of saying thanks, we will dedicate a future build to the memory of Bruce Conklin. ▲

**Planting A Family**  
Ralph Nicholson

One important aspect of Habitat volunteer work is the planting of a deserving family in a home of their own. *Planting* reminds me of what Steve McCorkell calls one of my "homely anecdotes."

A short distance from our campsite in Okeechobee, Florida, are some oak trees—and a family of squirrels who chase each other around, up and down the trees. They have a curious pattern of behavior: Individually, they bring acorns from the far parent tree and carefully (delicate paw-pats and all) "plant" them in our yard. I can say, honestly, that those squirrels upset the old adage, "Nuts never fall far from the tree."

There are Habitat families who some would say are stuck, pretty close to the tree. Even though they are working hard, circumstances are such that they never seem to get ahead enough to be able to afford decent housing for their families. What they need are some hard-working volunteers to help them change the pattern, to "plant" homes and families with loving care, paw-pats and all. That's the true spirit of Habitat for Humanity.

**Volunteers Wanted for Family  
Selection Committee**

Nancy Flint-Budde

The Family Selection Committee has seen a lot of change in the last two years. During that time dedicated volunteers, such as Peggy Laursen, have retired from the committee after years of service, necessitating the review and reassignment of committee responsibilities. Family Selection has been fortunate to have new members volunteer to assist in the important work of sending out applications, reviewing responses, and assisting potential Habitat families in becoming qualified to participate in our affiliate's program.

One new volunteer, Priscilla Petta, quickly offered to oversee the sending

out of applications when requested and to provide the committee with a monthly report to help us track the requests. This required a lot of initiative on her part, and her organization has been a blessing to the committee.

Other members have been effective as volunteers in coordinating interviews, following up on applications, and assisting in monthly meetings for review.

The Family Selection Committee is looking for additional members to help with our important work. Interested volunteers should contact Nancy Flint-Budde at 854-3598. ▲

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**Construction Update: House #15**

Stephen McCorkell

In true Habitat fashion, a loyal band of volunteers has again joined us, this time to build House #15 on Medbury Road in the Town of Greenfield. Skidmore College and the Affiliate are taking turns at providing volunteers for the project. This arrangement has worked very well and exposed many new faces to the work of our Affiliate.

This build is utilizing a three-bedroom, one-bath floor plan that is popular with southern Habitat affiliates. Since this is a new floor plan for us, we had George Olsen, our architect on the project, make some minor modifications to the standard plans. The most notable change was the addition of a large front porch. This feature makes the house look quite sharp from the street, and will provide a nice space for Sheri Van Ness and her family to enjoy for many years to come.

With help from Mark Rogers of MJR Construction and Bill Morris of Morris Ex-

cavation, the site was prepared and a concrete basement was poured. Since then, Chuck Jacox, our project manager, has guided the project along a smooth course. The walls and roof have been constructed, and rough-in mechanical work has begun. The gentlemen from Apache Framing led our efforts during the first two Saturdays; needless to say, without them we might still be framing! Not only were they skilled at their trade, but they were also adept at working with our volunteer labor force. I suspect by the time this article appears in print, the house will be nearing completion, as we are hoping to have the family moved in before the holiday season.

As always, our volunteer builders have risen to the occasion and exceeded our expectations. If you have not been able to join us on a Saturday, please stop by the site. I guarantee you a unique and memorable experience, along with a good lunch! ▲

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