

Glens Falls Area



Serving Warren, Washington & Northern Saratoga Counties

All I Want for Christmas Is...a Volunteer or Two

Dick Harris



79 Platt Street – Framing and siding are completed along with utility services. Interior utility rough-in work can now begin.

Dial the number, wait for the first ring, and then sit down at the kitchen table. After a few moments a voice says, “Lo.” “Hi,” I say. “Dick Harris, Habitat for Humanity. You called our Glens Falls office and asked for a call back. What can we do for you?” “I’m interested in volunteering to help you build a house,” comes the response. “I’ve got my own hammer and I’m available when you need me. Where are you building, and when can I show up?”

While I graciously welcome the new volunteer and give him Nicki Bissonette’s phone number, I also inquire if he might be interested in any other opportunities, like committee work. Usually, the response is, “Nope, that’s not my cup of tea.” Most people seem to feel the

glory in working for Habitat is in the pounding of nails. But I truly believe they miss much of the real joy our organization has to offer in working with and for our families.

So, you may ask, what’s on my Habitat Christmas wish-list? There are a lot of things you might consider:

In the area of Church Relations, I envision three assistants for the committee chair—one from each of our service-area counties. The three would be responsible for developing a network made up of one person from most of the churches in their area to serve as contact persons who would, in turn, spread the word about fund-raising events and volunteer needs, and arrange for Habitat repre-

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President's Message

Stephen McCorkell

As I sit down to write this message on a bright Sunday afternoon, I find myself again wishing for a few more good Saturday build-days before the first snow arrives. House #17 on Platt Street is well underway. Before Christmas the majority of the siding was finished and all of the utility service connections were completed. The Affiliate is working on this build in partnership with the Glens Falls Building Trades Council, an organization of regional labor unions who agreed to adopt the project as their own. Since September local union members representing a variety of trades have joined with us to work on Saturdays.

Of course, as one build starts, the Affiliate board begins to think about the next one and wonders if another group of volunteers will answer the call to care. We have always been blessed in this regard, but we thought that perhaps we should be direct and use the space in this newsletter to better explain what GFAHFH needs in the way of volunteers.

Habitat for Humanity International has done an outstanding job of capturing the

public's imagination about our mission; however, it would seem that most people think all we do is frame houses. Framing a house is great fun; but in reality, it occupies only four days out of an average build that may take as long as six months to complete.

So, besides framing, what do we need to keep building houses? We need folks who are willing to take on the challenge of leadership! We are in dire need of volunteers who can make the time to organize builds, order materials, manage special events, and perform a variety of committee tasks. Committee tasks especially are a great way to become involved in GFAHFH. Over the past year we have been successful at reforming our Church Relations, Public Outreach, Fundraising and Special Events Committees. Still, all of these need additional leaders to remain viable.

Please consider joining, or rejoining, our "behind the scenes" team as we continue to build simple, decent, affordable housing in Warren, Washington, and Northern Saratoga Counties. ▲

Help Wanted

...for the Family Partnership Committee. We work with the selected families to prepare them for the transition from renter to homeowner. We do this through a series of educational programs—and by providing friendly guidance and advocacy in:

- 1) setting up a savings account for the initial payment on the house, and
- 2) selecting siding, roofing, cabinetry, flooring, and appliances for the new home.

We meet on the second Tuesday of each month, from 7 to 8 p.m., and work with the family on their home during the build. Two members of the committee are assigned to each new family on a rotating basis, allowing for flexibility in scheduling during a build.

If you enjoy working with people and believe that simple, decent housing is a right for all families, we would be happy to welcome you to our group. For further information call committee chair Betty Harris at 583-2458. ▲



Some of our volunteers from the Glens Falls Building Trades Council take a break at Platt Street. Left to right – Doug Blacklock (Project Foreman), Les Weller, Phil Tucker (President of the Building Trades Council) and Phil Dobie.

Help Select Families

The Family Selection Committee seeks volunteers to assist in finding applicants, reviewing submitted applications, interviewing prospective families, and recommending families to the board of directors for approval as Habitat for Humanity homeowners.

Our committee meets monthly—usually at 6:30 p.m. on the last Wednesday—at the Habitat for Humanity office on Upper Glen Street in Queensbury. This is a great committee for those who enjoy assisting applicants over several months as they work toward qualifying for the program. We often work with a family for one to two years before they are approved.

This committee is an excellent choice for a volunteer who may not want to be involved in the more physical aspects of building but is eager to help Habitat for Humanity meet its mission. If you are interested in helping, call Nancy Flint-Budde at 854-3598. ▲

Calling All Volunteers

Nicki Bissonette

When people think “Habitat for Humanity,” they think of volunteers building houses. Indeed, Habitat does build homes—with people who might not otherwise know the joys of homeownership—and the Glens Falls affiliate has been doing so for twelve years. Since Ralph and Lillian Nicolson founded GFAHFH in 1992, we have built sixteen homes. Construction is now underway at House #17 on Platt Street in Glens Falls, and once again, there has been no shortage of labor—all of it volunteer.

It’s always the case that an overwhelming number of people want to volunteer on the worksite. After all, it’s a truly rewarding experience to bang nails, paint, or even clean up a worksite that will eventually become a home. GFAHFH services Warren,

Washington, and northern Saratoga Counties, and we have great on-site support in all three areas (so many volunteers, in fact, that there is often not enough work to go around).

While I am truly thankful for everyone’s support on the build sites, I must also say: it’s essential that we have more support “behind the scenes”! What we most need now are volunteers to work on committees such as Family Selection, Family Partnership, Fund Raising, and Public Relations. And there are numerous other ways you can help out too—by being a liaison for your church or civic group, playing music at a home dedication, or assisting with a fund-raiser, to name a few.

So remember: Habitat is not just about constructing homes. I invite you to get involved in other areas. If you are interested, please contact me at Nickib@spa.net or leave a message at 584-9574. ▲

Servin’ Time!

Our annual spaghetti dinner will be held on **Friday, February 18**, at the Church of the Messiah in Glens Falls.

The cost is \$8 for adults and \$4 for kids 8 and under.

Time and ticket sales will be announced at a later date.

We’ll have the same great kitchen crew and food, so mark your calendars and watch for the announcement of ticket sales.

If you would like to be involved in any way, call Dick Harris at 583-2458.

Christmas... *continued*

Dick Harris

representatives to speak to the congregations about our mission. We have the chair; we need the county assistants and the church representatives.

We also need volunteers to work on the Bon Ton "Care to Share" program twice a year, manning a table outside the stores in the Wilton and Aviation Malls to sell discount coupons for several days prior to the sale. We need additional folks to serve as greeters for the Showcase of Homes program in conjunction with the Saratoga Builders Association. We could use a few good people to work on our annual spaghetti dinner in February.

And last—but far from least—we need people to work on a Fund Raising Committee, to explore additional ways

to develop funds to expand our program capabilities. In order to consider a build, we must have a minimum of \$40,000 in the bank. In today's economy that's a big chunk of change to raise, and we need people whose primary focus will be on how to do that.

So if you want to get close to the action, be a part of the inside group, make a difference in someone's life, and enjoy the rewards of volunteer work, call me at 583-2458. (I'll also take calls from anyone who wants to pound nails.) ▲

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