

Habitat Expanding Education, Training Beyond Homeowners

By Sylvia Oberle, Executive Director

Habitat for Humanity is poised at some very significant milestones. Internationally, Habitat is celebrating 40 years of a global mission that has served more than 1 million families. Here in Forsyth County, we are pleased to have been part of that mission for 30 years and are marking that with numerous exciting events, as you have read in other parts of the newsletter.



Habitat's sustainability and impact – world-wide as well as locally – are largely due to two very important parts of the Habitat model: empowerment, and the strength of our volunteer base. Habitat's sweat-equity policy – “a hand up, not a handout” – means that individuals work hard for their houses, receive valuable training in becoming a responsible homeowner and, through their mortgage payments, help sustain future building. And Habitat's volunteer base is truly like no other – annually a powerful force of more than 2 million people developing valuable skills to help others, rebuild communities and in many cases rebuild themselves.

Habitat International is encouraging affiliates to spread this model wider by having even more of an impact on the affordable housing sector. Not just house by house, but community by community – using our capacity of training and empowerment and our volunteer strength to reach beyond even our Habitat homeowner base.

That's a major reason why Habitat Forsyth, in its 30th year, is continuing to take a more visible presence in the community, by moving to our new location at 14th Street and University Parkway. The first stage – our new ReStore a short distance away on Coliseum Drive – has resulted in greater awareness of that resource and more revenue to serve more families.

Now we are ready for the next step: literally taking the capacity that has been built by so many through the years and locating it directly in communities we serve. We believe this is where we should be now.

Our staff is working with our volunteers and community partners to develop a comprehensive education and training program – both classroom and hands-on – that will help ensure that low- and moderate-income individuals have the decent housing they deserve, and that it stays decent. These programs will be geared toward Habitat homeowners and, initially, residents of the Boston-Thurmond neighborhood, but

increasingly available to other residents and to complement other community housing programs. We believe this is what we should be doing now.

We are grateful for those who have enabled us to take this step while maintaining our current operating costs. Most notably, the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust awarded Habitat a \$350,000 capital grant for the purchase and renovation of the building, which will be called the **Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust**

Housing Education Center. We appreciate their endorsement as we strive to develop a strong community-based asset. Other substantial support was provided by The Winston-Salem Foundation, BB&T, Dave and Becky Morgan, the Glenn Family Foundation, and NewBridge Bank, as well as several anonymous donors. I.L. Long Construction Co., Steele Group, and Wells Fargo are providing construction, architectural and financing support.

As we develop our new facilities we are also glad to be able to honor – and thank – several tireless volunteers and Habitat supporters for their vision and hard work. The warehouse is being renamed the **Dan Pearson Construction**

Technology Center and will house our construction activities, our hands-on maintenance training and tool-lending resource. Within the center, the **Bob Doty Community Workshop** will continue a long tradition of retirees and others helping to build and repair items for the ReStore and neighborhood use. We expect this to become an active place for training as well. And in our main building, the **Nell Cavanaugh Family Classroom** will be an expanded education resource area and WinstonNet site, all available for community use.

Finally, later this spring, work will begin on the **Jimmy Johnson Volunteer Center**, which will give us the capacity to house even more volunteer service teams that can help address housing and related needs. We view this as not only an extension of Jimmy's legacy of teaching and service, but also an opportunity to create a community-based hub that demonstrates Winston-Salem's culture of giving back.

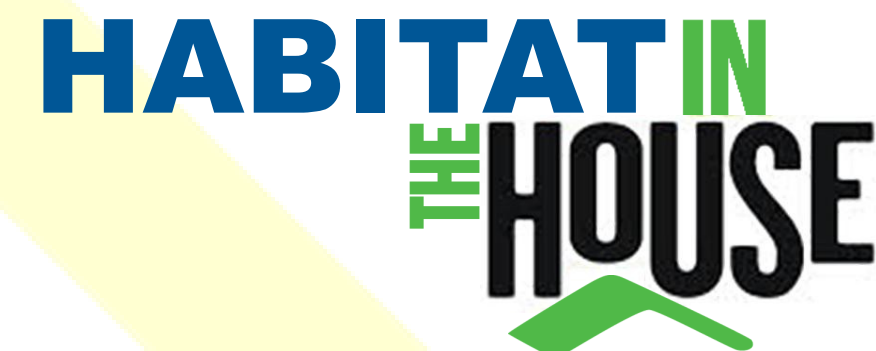
We do have a lot to celebrate, and we hope you are as excited as we are about the next 30 years. Come join us!



339 Witt Street, Winston-Salem, NC 27103
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Habitat Marks 30th Year With Move, 5K, Builders Blitz and More

Since 1965, Habitat for Humanity of Forsyth County has built or remodeled more than 375 homes locally, and funded or built an additional 125 in Central America. That's a lot to celebrate!

We will begin observing this important milestone this spring, with the move to our new office/housing education center in late April and the **2nd Annual Hammerbird 5K** on May 9.

The new center will mark the first time Habitat Forsyth has owned its own building, and its location on 14th Street, within the historic Boston-Thurmond neighborhood that has been the subject of our intensive Neighborhood Revitalization effort, is also symbolic. But the Center (the former Contract Office Furnishings building) will be far more than just an office building. In fact, the emphasis will be much more on homeowner education and, as Executive Director Sylvia Oberle notes in her column (see inside), on having more of an impact on improving housing community-wide.

“Our focus throughout this whole complex will be on teaching and training, from financial education to hands-on maintenance training for homeowners once they are in their homes,” Oberle said. This educational emphasis will complement Habitat's continued work removing or renovating blighted and boarded-up houses and building new housing, she added.

Also included in Habitat's new location will be housing for volunteer service teams traveling to Forsyth County from across the country to work on houses. The extra space will allow Habitat to recruit even more teams to address the community's housing needs.

Participants in the **2nd Annual Hammerbird 5K** will get a view of the new Center as they walk and run route that begins and ends at Kimberley Park Elementary School the morning of Saturday, May 9. Runners and walkers will pass 70 houses that Habitat has built or remodeled while being cheered on by Habitat families! The goal for this year's race is to raise \$65,000, the cost of building one house. Registration has begun online at www.habitatforsyth.org, and gives users the option to register as an individual, to form a team, or to join an existing team. The first 250 registrants will receive a pair of free athletic socks, a \$17 value, from one of our sponsors, Farm to Feet!

On June 8-12, Habitat Forsyth will be one of a number of Habitat affiliates across the U.S. to host a **Builders Blitz**. Four teams of local builders and their subcontractors will come together to build — from start to finish — four homes in five days on 23rd Street. Habitat Forsyth's build will receive extra attention as one of five locations selected to be visited by a team from Habitat International and Steve Thomas, former host of the PBS series *This Old House*.

Many thanks to our builder teams who have committed to participate: **Chris Thompson** of **PCI Builders** and **Michael Ensore** of **Veritas Construction**; **Whitney Gifford** and **Ishenhour Homes**; **Rick Tozier** and **Sonoma Building**; and **Trent Adams** of **Adams Egloff Properties**.

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**2nd Annual
Hammerbird 5K**

**& One Mile Fun Run/Walk
Saturday, May 9, 2015**

Start/finish line and parking at
Kimberley Park
Elementary School
1701 Cherry St.
Winston-Salem

**8:30 a.m.: One Mile
9 a.m.: 5K**

**Register now at
www.habitatforsyth.org!**
Take advantage of “early bird”
discount through April 25.

Habitat Homeowner Was Refugee from Liberian Civil War

By Kim Underwood, Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools

The following is part of a story that originally appeared in the Feb 19 issue of the Winston-Salem Chronicle.

The people who work at the Special Services Center know Patrick King as the custodian who comes in each morning at 5:30 to open up the school. He spends his day taking care of his responsibilities with meticulous attention and a consistently positive attitude.



Patrick King, a custodian for the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools, is a Habitat homeowner.

The Special Services Center on Mock Street serves as home for a number of programs for the Exceptional Children's

Division, which serves students with special needs. The people there also know King as a man who has seen and experienced much during his 68 years of life. Born in Jamaica, King grew up in Liberia, where his father had gone to serve as the priest for an Episcopal church. As an adult, King became a police officer, got caught up in the country's civil war and fled the country. After spending eight years in a refugee camp in Ghana, he came to the United States.

Liberia is in West Africa, directly southeast of Sierra Leone. Corruption, diamonds and other factors led to both countries being torn by civil wars. During the first civil war in Liberia from 1989 to 1997, more than 200,000 were killed. "The whole country was upside down," King said.

King's brother William went to work one day and never came home. King heard that he had been beheaded. A foster brother was also killed. King heard that he, too, was beheaded. As a police officer in Monrovia, the capital of Liberia, King was considered a threat by some factions. One day, he was captured by a group of men. It was not a day he expected to live through.

But when one of the men realized that King had once helped him, he told the others that King was his father, and so King was released.

King sees that as the hand of God. "Only God got me out of there," he said. "I got free. I fled the civil war." Although he was unable to get help through the American embassy, people from Nigeria – a country to the east – were ready to do what they could to help. "I got on a Nigerian warship and I fled to Ghana," King said. "I got out with my two sons. ... I stayed in the refugee camp in Ghana for eight years."

Other members of his family had also been able to get out of Liberia and eventually migrated to the United States. With their help and the help of a program sponsored by the Lutheran church, he finally came here in 1998. In 1999, a second civil war broke out in Liberia.

King worked part-time for Winston-Salem Forsyth County Schools and other organizations for several years until becoming a full-time employee of the school system in 2005. At the Special Services Center, King works a split shift. After coming in at 5:30 a.m. to open the building, he works until 8 a.m. and leaves. He returns at 11 a.m. and stays until it's time to close the building.

At times, he does extra work on the side – cleaning houses or painting. He also collects discarded textbooks and sends them to Liberia, where they are still useful and much needed.

Along with adult children, King has children who are still in school and live at home — a home he purchased through Habitat for Humanity of Forsyth County. King said he likes to putter around the house and tend his garden, where he grows sweet potatoes and other vegetables. He is always doing something, he said. "My wife says, 'You can't rest.'"

Passionate Volunteer Used E-Mail to Raise \$\$ For Habitat

It's been more than 60 years since third-grader Brenda Sloan and her family moved into a home of their own in the Boston-Thurmond neighborhood, but she still recalls it vividly.

Brenda, her parents and her three siblings lived in a crowded apartment at 20th and Cherry Streets where they all slept in one room. One day her mother announced that they were going for a walk. A few blocks up 20th Street, they stopped at a house under construction. Her mother, who had been quietly saving money for a home, proudly announced that it was theirs.



Brenda Sloan, volunteer and board member

"It was such an emotional experience when we moved in," Brenda said. "I remember that new house smell. My favorite room was the kitchen, with all those cabinets. My sisters and I had our own room for the first time. I remember how good I felt, knowing that we owned a house – OUR house."

Brenda moved away after graduating from "the old Atkins High School" in 1965. Years later, as an academic librarian at the University of Mary Washington in Fredericksburg, Virginia, she came to know several Habitat homeowners. "I saw that these people were willing to go through a process to qualify to get a house, and then to do their sweat equity. It was fascinating to me, and I wanted to be a part of it."

By the time her 65th birthday approached in 2008, Brenda was a breast cancer survivor and retiree who had moved back to 20th Street to take care of her mother. Her church, United Metropolitan Missionary Baptist, had become involved in the Apostles Build, and Brenda saw a chance to finally get involved with Habitat.

The days on the construction site made her sore all over, but she kept going back. "I had people taking pictures of me in my hard hat, holding a hammer, up on a ladder, and I know some

of my friends thought I was crazy," she said. "Some said, 'Sloan, can't you just hand out nails?' But I didn't want to just hand out nails. I wanted to see how houses are put together."

Now 71, she continues to volunteer enthusiastically at construction sites, although she said, with some reluctance, that she is giving up tasks that require climbing on scaffolding.

"I go to the dedication ceremonies, and I always cry," she said. "I know what these families are feeling when they are moving in." And after years of watching her neighborhood deteriorate, she is thrilled to be part of Habitat's Neighborhood Revitalization program, she added.

Brenda is now a member of the Habitat board of directors. A self-described "e-mail junkie," she has written many times about her fondness for Habitat to a large network of friends as far away as California and Washington State – people she has known from Kimberley Park Elementary, Atkins High School, N.C. Central University, Atlanta University and other places she has lived.

When Habitat board members were challenged to raise \$1,000 each between January and June 30, 2014, "I thought of my network," she said. "I wrote to everyone and reminded them about my passion for Habitat, and I asked them to make a donation."

Much to her surprise, the checks began to roll in – and continued coming even past June 30, meeting and exceeding her goal of \$1,000.

"Brenda is such an inspiring example of what one person – at any age -- can do to help Habitat," said Sylvia Oberle, Habitat's executive director. "And it has been particularly wonderful having her insight and involvement as a board member and volunteer, given that she grew up in the neighborhood."

Parishes Come Together to Build House, Honor Pope Francis



Local Catholic parishes, along with several anonymous donors, are banding together this spring to build a Habitat House in honor of Pope Francis.

The Pope Francis Build is bringing together several local parishes and other Catholic organizations. The project was inspired by a generous anonymous donor who has specified that the project 1) honor Pope Francis for his commitment to social justice and reinvigorating the

Catholic Church; 2) provide a unifying, celebratory opportunity for both Catholic and non-Catholic volunteers to work together toward a common goal (as Pope Francis says, "Work confers dignity.") and 3) To further Habitat's mission of building and preserving homes.

Since the build was announced, two additional donors within the Catholic churches have come forward with gifts. If you would like to contribute, go to www.habitatforsyth.org.

"Mardi Gras" Gala Honors Volunteers

About 180 people gathered at the Habitat ReStore on Feb. 23 to honor those who had volunteered for Habitat at least four times in the past year.

Keeping with the Mardi Gras theme, the normal bright lighting of the Habitat ReStore was dimmed in favor of thousands of white Christmas lights. Hundreds of pieces of furniture, appliances and building supplies for sale were cleverly concealed behind backdrops depicting the wrought iron-trimmed balconies of New Orleans' French Quarter.

A number of volunteers who had donated at least 75 hours of their time in the last year received the President's Volunteer Service Award from the Corporation for National and Community Service. Bronze awards were given for 75-150 hours of service; silver awards were given to those who volunteered 150-250 hours; and gold awards were given to those who had served more than 250 hours.

Sylvia Oberle, executive director of Habitat Forsyth, then presented the Corporation's most prestigious award – the **Lifetime Achievement Award**, given to recipients who have devoted at least 4,000 hours to one organization – to long-time volunteer **Dan Pearson**. Oberle also announced that Habitat's new warehouse will be named the **Dan Pearson Construction Technology Center**. The warehouse is part of Habitat's new Housing Education Center campus on 14th Street.

Habitat also used the occasion to honor two other loyal and devoted volunteers – **Bob Doty** and **Nell Cavanaugh** -- by announcing that the Center will include the **Bob Doty Community Workshop** and the **Nell Cavanaugh Family Classroom**. Both will provide more classroom and work



Sylvia Oberle, Habitat executive director, honored Dan Pearson, Nell Cavanaugh and Bob Doty at the Mardi Gras Volunteer Gala.

space for workshops and classes on owning and maintaining a home — not only for Habitat families, but also for other low- and moderate-income residents of the community. For the first time, Habitat also presented a Corporate Partner of the Year award — to **Wells Fargo**.

Habitat could not accomplish its mission of helping local working families purchase affordable, quality housing without the help of volunteers, Oberle said. "The cost of hiring people to perform the more than 25,000 hours of work that volunteers donated last year alone would cost the agency tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of dollars," she said.



Without You, It Doesn't Happen

You can also safely donate online at www.habitatforsyth.org or pay with credit card by calling 765-8854, ext. 101.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

My Gift of (payable to Habitat for Humanity) will help "build it":

____ \$50 (sink) ____ \$100 (window) ____ \$1,000 (roof shingles) ____ \$2,500 (kitchen cabinets) Other _____

My gift will be matched by _____

In honor of _____ In memory of _____

Mail to Habitat for Humanity, 339 Witt St., Winston-Salem, NC 27103

Spotlight On:

Bell Davis & Pitt PA

We like to thank groups and individuals who are "unsung heroes" of Habitat — people who work quietly behind the scenes to help us in our important work of enabling local families to purchase quality, affordable homes.

The law firm of Bell Davis & Pitt is one such organization. For a number of years, the firm has performed pro bono legal work for Habitat, including handling homeowner closings. This contribution saves Habitat approximately \$20,000-\$30,000 a year — allowing us to allocate those funds for other needs.