

FALL 2019

toolbox

THE NEWSLETTER BY HABITAT FOR HUMANITY OF EASTERN CONNECTICUT



New beginnings

By joining Habitat for Humanity of Eastern Connecticut (HFHECT), the Windham Habitat is starting a new chapter of a journey that began over 25 years ago. Our growth over those years has been a blessing that has allowed us to build homes for over 12 families, and has also stretched us beyond the capabilities of the all-volunteer affiliate that we have been.

We have collaborated with HFHECT over the years and have always shared a very supportive relationship, so this merger felt like the right move at the right time.

We will continue to build in the Windham area and are thankful not only to HFHECT for making this possible, but also to all our supporters and volunteers over those 25 years.

So many people have helped with building, fundraising, family support, and more of the work that makes the Habitat mission possible.

In fact, many of the Windham board members will be actively involved with HFHECT and our regular construction crew will be on board as we begin construction of our next home on Serwan Avenue in Willimantic.

We plan to continue working with all of our past generous supporters as we move forward and we thank you for all that you have done and all that we know you will continue to do



Peter Bachiochi
Board of Directors (Former President, Habitat for Humanity of the Windham Area)

Helping more families than ever

The merger with Habitat for Humanity of the Windham Area occurred on July 1, 2019, six years to the date after our first merger with the Northeast Area Habitat for Humanity.

As a result, we have a total service area of 1,200 square miles, making ours the largest Habitat service area in Connecticut.

Each merger helps the regional stakeholders serve more households. Since our first merger we have helped five additional families and currently have two projects planned for the towns of Brooklyn and Sterling.

In the newly added portion of service area, we are planning to begin working on a new home on Serwan Avenue in the Willimantic section of Windham.

We are so pleased that this merger is also allowing us to engage more volunteers and donors in the mission of decent shelter for all, and to welcome two additional Habitat for Humanity Chapters from Eastern Connecticut State University, and the University of Connecticut.

Thank you for your continued support during

this next exciting phase in our mission to ensure everyone has a decent place to live.



Terri O'Rourke
CEO and Executive Director



Members of both boards and staff persons celebrating the merger at a celebration on July 1, 2019 in Norwich

Charter Oak Matching Gifts



CHARTER OAK
CREDIT UNION

Charter Oak Credit Union is matching member gifts up to \$500 to Habitat for Humanity through Wed., November 27.

Double the impact of your gift by completing the Charter Oak matching gift form and mailing it to our office!

charter oak.org/content/matching-gifts/



We are seeking volunteers with some experience in construction and building to serve as Crew Leaders once a month. Crew Leaders will help move projects along by teaching volunteers the skills they need to be super effective!

To further advance our projects, we are recruiting regular volunteers called Faithful Framers, who can commit to volunteering on build sites once a week. No experience is necessary!

These positions are crucial to ensure that families in our community can achieve strength, stability, and self-reliance through an affordable home

Learn more or sign up by emailing Cindy Jordan, Volunteer Coordinator:

volunteer@habitatect.org
860.442.7890 x. 215

Norwich wall raising

On Tuesday, September 10 Eversource and officials from the City of Norwich, Bob's Discount Furniture, Jewett City Savings Bank, Liberty Bank, The Edward and Mary Lord Foundation, Greeneville Revitalization Zone, Pfizer, Putnam Bank, were in attendance to raise the walls of our two homes at 122 & 126 Golden Street. This wall raising event represented the start of our 14 home development in the Greeneville section of Norwich.

Eversource had 12 of its team members from across the state convene on the work site to meet with Habitat staff and a group of regular volunteers known as the Faithful Framers. Eversource's team was instructed by Construction Services Manager Dale Brown, to "focus on safety and having a great time and a meaningful day."

The team constructed and helped to erect six interior walls, finishing out the interior framing.



With Eversource working on one homes and the community funders on the other, each group raised the front walls of the homes into place marking the end of the framing phase.

CEO and Executive Director Terri O'Rourke welcomed the large crowd of spectators saying, "this is a milestone; this multiyear development is the largest undertaking in our 33 year history."

When completed in 2022, Habitat for Humanity of Eastern Connecticut will have built and rehabilitated a total of 108 affordable homes across Eastern Connecticut.

This represents an investment of more than \$14.5 Million by Habitat for Humanity in local communities, and 108 families who will have achieved strength, stability, and self-reliance through affordable home ownership.



Making our house a home Written by homeowner Ashley Karabelas

Becoming a Habitat homeowner was one of the best experiences in my life. It never really felt “real”. While I was volunteering at the house I currently live in, I couldn’t grasp that this would one day be ours. The construction was a lot of work, but it was rewarding to help work on my own home and it felt great to work on other Habitat families’ homes.

Along the way, I met some of the kindest, non-judgmental people that work and volunteer for Habitat and I’m very thankful for that. Meeting people that were willing to help and didn’t even know me or my kids was such a great experience.

Since moving into our home life has become a lot less stressful. We won’t have to move again or worry about finding a new apartment.

We have much more space, and a nice yard for the kids to play in. It is much more quiet living in a house, and we get so much sunlight! Overall, we have much more privacy and happiness living here.

My whole life I felt like I was just surviving and now that I own a home, I feel like I’m living. Becoming a homeowner has given my family so much stability and made me worry less.

Living in the new house this summer was beyond amazing. I feel like it was the perfect time to move because the kids were out of school. We had so much fun organizing the house and setting up each of our rooms. The kids played in the yard almost everyday with our dogs in the sprinkler and rode their bikes on our street. It was a summer we will never forget!

They love living in our house and bring up often how lucky we are to live here.

I was so nervous for them to switch schools this fall, but luckily they have both adjusted amazingly well!

After his first week back my son said, “this school is the best!”. Their teachers were great with helping them transition because they knew they were new to Groton and very nervous. They have both made a lot of friends and enjoy going to their new school daily.

The Habitat staff, volunteers, and donors are genuinely some of the most amazing people I have ever met in my life. and they all have changed our lives forever.



Cars for Homes

Your old car can become a new home for a hard-working family in need. Our donation process is simple, fast, and costs you nothing.

[habitat.org/carsforhomes](https://www.habitat.org/carsforhomes)

Save the Date



Habitat for Humanity Gala
 Friday, May 1, 2020
 Mashantucket Pequot Museum
 Ledyard, CT



The gift of a lifetime takes on a life of its own

Elizabeth Hogan was at the Chapman Street home dedication ceremony to hand the Karabelas family the keys to her former home.

"I was one of five children, and growing up I was always taught to share," Elizabeth says. Just as she was considering a move to a retirement community, she came into an unexpected inheritance at the passing of her beloved aunt.

"I no longer needed to sell the house to buy my new home, so I thought of this as a way to make a once-in-a-lifetime gift for someone, and to make it in memory of my Aunt Hellen." Elizabeth says that donating the home to Habitat made her feel good because she knew that a vested homeowner would move into the house.

"Habitat gives folks all the tools they need to be successful."

Of the experience she also noted how easy it was to make a gift of this kind "donating my house relieved me of the insurance and taxes, which was a burden lifted."

"I was surprised that I didn't have to incur any legal fees for the donation. Habitat set up an attorney who handled the transfer at no cost to me. It was just so easy and I want folks to know that in case they find themselves in a situation where they can give back in this way."

"I was so touched to be a part of the dedication - Ashley sent me a beautiful card and note afterwards, but what I remember most is when I was in the back bedroom admiring the work

[Habitat] did, Dynazty came dancing in and with a huge smile said, 'this is my bedroom!' The look on her face was just priceless!"



Elizabeth, Ashley, Dynazty, and Avondrai pose in front of the fireplace after the home dedication.



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