

FALL 2020

toolbox

THE NEWSLETTER BY HABITAT FOR HUMANITY OF EASTERN CONNECTICUT



every
home

helps a family build
strength, stability,
and self-reliance



Co-founders of Habitat for Humanity, Linda and Millard Fuller pictured in 1988 a year after HFHECT's incorporation.

Letter from the CEO

“For a community to be whole and healthy, it must be based on people’s love and concern for each other.”

Millard Fuller, co-founder of Habitat for Humanity

In March Connecticut had one of the highest COVID-19 infection rates in the country. Amid our collective grief and uncertainty, our state-wide efforts and significant sacrifices changed the narrative.

The headlines in June heralded Connecticut as having the lowest rate of Corona-virus transmission in the nation. We continue to make progress against this virus, and we do it because of people’s love and concern for each other. That greater good mentality strengthens us, gives us

hope and lets us believe in a better tomorrow. We should take a moment to breathe deeply and exhale some of our stress.

Our collective efforts for the greater good, bring us closer to living out our faiths. When I first found Habitat, I was overcome by the idea of building something tangible and changing people’s lives. Along the way I found a deeper connection to faith, and a strengthened belief in humankind and in the greater good.

We should all draw strength from the good we’ve been able to do together during the COVID shutdown. Let’s channel that energy and together reinvigorate our work to rebuild a healthy community. While we hope you’re inspired to join our work, there are so many wonderful and important causes and political movements that can use our energy.

Millard believed in the “theology of the hammer” - in short that we are all on Earth to do good and help others.

I hope you will consider helping us put the “theology of the hammer” into practice while helping a family build some equity. We cannot yet open our sites to all who want to volunteer, but we are in desperate need for volunteers who can plan to build with us once a week consistently and to help on our many committees. You can learn more on our website: habitatect.org.

Habitat for Humanity and the theology of the hammer gives us the opportunity to put aside our differences to build a stronger community. In fact, I think Habitat for Humanity is the greatest peace-building idea on the planet.

Sign up to volunteer weekly, and bring someone you don’t see eye to eye with. Just remember, hammers are for building - not tools of persuasion.

Terri O'Rourke

Terri O’Rourke
CEO and
Executive Director





Working through the pandemic

Despite the Stay Home, Stay Safe order instituted by the State, HFHECT was able to continue our work with some strategic changes. Administrative staff worked remotely to carry on with day-to-day operations. ReStore staff completely reorganized, deep cleaned, and developed protocols to re-open. Our construction team operated with a skeleton crew and has slowly welcomed back regular volunteers.

In the Northeast and Windham areas we have completed our rehab on *Commerce Avenue, Danielson* and just began the flooring and interior painting in our home on *Serwan Avenue, Willimantic* (pictured below left to right).

On *Flanders Road, East Lyme* (pictured

above) we are finishing the deck and starting to sheet-rock the interior.

At the duplex on *Golden Street, Norwich* we are completing interior finish work then will install an ADA-compliant access ramp, walkways, and driveways. These homes will be the first completed in our Greenville Development in Norwich.

This summer we poured the foundations for our next four homes on *Sylvester Street/Margerie Street, Norwich* ahead of time so that we can start building this winter.

Your continued financial support during the shutdown and this year has made this progress possible. Whether you gave \$5 or \$500, every dollar helps. Thank you. •



Ways to Support Us



CHARTER OAK
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matching donations!

Charter Oak Credit Union is matching member gifts up to \$500 to charities through Wednesday, November 25.

Double the impact of your gift by making your gift online or with a check, and completing the Charter Oak matching gift form.

Last year we received an additional \$5,000 of support. Please help us reach this goal again.

For more details, visit charteroak.org

we are seeking
homeowners!



We are looking for future Habitat homeowners for homes in Danielson and Willimantic.

If you or someone you know are interested, please visit:

habitatect.org/homeownership



donate your car

donate your vehicle of any kind and in any condition, and help local families build a home and a better future!

habitatect.org/support

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Two hard-working family friends to move into Norwich duplex

Two families, who happen to be friends, are moving into our duplex on Golden street in Norwich. Their children flock to each other immediately - the older girls circling around a cell phone and laughing together, and the younger boys running through the halls and jumping off stairs as they imagine their new homes becoming their permanent playground.

“Home is where my family is, where we are all together,” said future homeowner Ahmad. “Habitat for Humanity has helped us find and build our very own home.”

Ahmad and Zainab’s family currently live in a small 900 square foot apartment in a neighborhood that is not always safe. The six of them vie for space and privacy every day. They are eager to move into their Habitat home, to stop paying

an expensive monthly rent, and to raise their children in a safe neighborhood. Their youngest daughter is in a wheelchair, yet the apartment does not have a ramp. She relies on her family to get her chair in and out of their home every time they go somewhere.

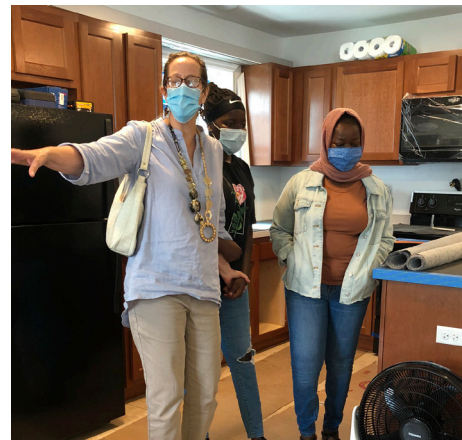
When we were discussing where her ramp will be installed in the new house you could see her face light up. Having a ramp will give her the independence to access their home easily and safely; something every child is entitled to.

Ahmad found out about Habitat through a friend who was accepted into our program last year. Just a year after their own application was accepted, the family is working hard to complete their sweat equity hours, and they are helping to build the home they’ll soon own.

Ezairig and Amna first emigrated to Egypt with millions of other refugees fleeing war-torn Sudan. The living conditions were difficult in Egypt, and in 2013 they decided to apply for immigration to the United States to raise their family in a safe, stable environment.

The family is currently living in a very small apartment with two bedrooms to share between six family members. Their apartment doesn’t have space for the children to play or spread out and do their school work.

“We were elated to be selected for a new Habitat home,” said Amna. “Currently we are working to accumulate the required sweat equity hours and hope to be in our new energy-efficient home soon!” Beyond homeownership this home means security and safety.



Our families and their volunteer family partners enjoyed seeing their future homes and each other.

Meet Amanda, a future Habitat homeowner

On our recent site visit with our families and their partners there was so much excitement that both houses were buzzing. Ahmad and Ezairig talked through the building progress with our staff while Amna and Zainab talked to volunteers and explored the homes room-by-room. The children were busy claiming their bedrooms and inspecting all the nooks and crannies of both homes.

Before leaving we wandered out to the enormous backyard and discussed the various locations for gardens that the families are excited to get planted. There is plenty of room for the children to play and relax outdoors.

The homes are sure to bring these families the kind of life they've worked so hard to provide for their families for so long. •



Amanda learned about Habitat through a homeownership program at a bank where she works. After speaking with a Habitat homeowner, Amanda decided to start the application process. Since being accepted into the program Amanda has begun earning her 'sweat equity'

hours towards home ownership. Construction has begun to slowly resume this past summer and she continues to partner with Habitat. The word 'home' means many things to Amanda, including safety, structure, stability and growth. This is her opportunity to build a safe haven for herself and her daughter, where they can grow and thrive, together.

"Being a part of Habitat for Humanity is a reward all in its own," says Amanda. "It's given me an opportunity to make a fresh start for me, my daughter, and the growth of my family."

Amanda will be moving into the nearly-complete home on Flanders Road in East Lyme, which is next to another Habitat for Humanity home that we completed and sold in 2017. •

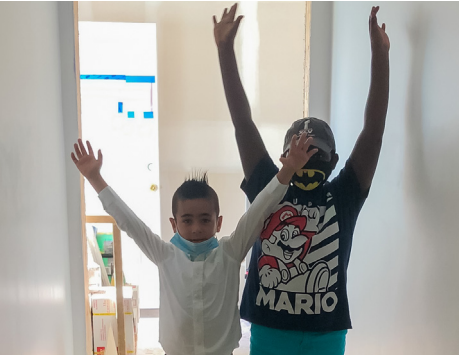


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Donations accepted 10 am - 4 pm

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flooring	