If there was a downside to the Jennifer Lane project, it was that it required us to commit almost all of our financial and volunteer resources for infrastructure and home construction to Jennifer Lane for several years. Our board was determined that we would continue to work in and near Bennington and that, as soon as our resources allowed, we would build new homes in both parts of the county at the same time.

In 2013, while we were completing our third and fourth houses on Jennifer Lane, we made a strategic decision to purchase property almost directly across from the first home we built for Fred and Doreen Miller on Swallow Hill Road in Pownal. Fred put us in touch with the sellers and we were happy to once again own land in the Southshire. That winter, we contacted people we thought would be interested in helping us develop plans for the Southshire. We held three meetings and there was lots of enthusiasm.

Buoyed by that enthusiasm and many good ideas that came from the Southshire Steering Committee, our board took a series of steps. In August 2014, we hired Mari Bennett to serve as a part-time Community Relations Associate to raise awareness and the resources we need to increase the scope of our service in the southern part of the county. Then, after an exhaustive search, we selected Sarah and John Gagnon and their family of three children, to live in the house we will build on Swallow Hill. This winter, John, who works for Weaver Excavating, got a head start on his sweat equity hours when he cleared the site. This April we will build the foundation, and volunteers will start building the home. We expect the house to be completed by late fall. Hoping to broaden community involvement, Mari asked Brian Coon, the CDC Building and Trades teacher, if there was interest in having CDC students build a shed for Habitat. Brian Coon presented this idea to his Board of Directors and they liked the idea so much that soon CDC students were building two sheds for Habitat with materials paid for by donations from area businesses. CDC students learned the basics of building a small house all the time knowing that the fruit of their labor would benefit a local family in need.

One thing quickly led to another. We learned that students from the Career Development Center had built two modules that would work perfectly for the first floor of the Pownal home. Our site supervisor was so impressed with the quality of the construction that we bought them and have arranged to have them delivered in early May. CDC students are building two sheds for Habitat. Brian Coon presented this idea to his Board of Directors and they liked the idea so much that soon CDC students were building two sheds for Habitat with materials paid for by donations from area businesses. CDC students learned the basics of building a small house all the time knowing that the fruit of their labor would benefit a local family in need.

We're Back in Pownal

John Gagnon at his Swallow Hill homesite.

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An immediate impact of the Hunter Challenge was that we had the funds we needed to purchase property on North Branch Street in Bennington. A home on 1.1 acres is in terrible shape and this summer we will remove it. We will build two homes on this lot; one each in 2016 and 2017. We also hope to buy the lot next door allowing for another home in 2018. When done, we will have made a decided impact on the neighborhood, removing two sub-standard homes, building three highly energy efficient new homes, and helping three families to live in safe, decent, and affordable homes.

We are very excited to be moving forward with our work in the southern part of Bennington County. To put things into perspective, we had never built two homes at the same time until we did it in 2013 and 2014 on Jennifer Lane. In 2015, we will build two homes again, but this time, at opposite ends of the county. Building two homes at once means that we have to double everything: the number of volunteers to build the homes, the money needed to purchase land and building supplies, and additional tools to work safely in two different locations.

(continued on page 2)
Buying more property and working with more families also meant that we needed additional legal help. We were fortunate that Tom Dailey, of Cummings & Dailey in Bennington, agreed to help us with our real estate transactions in the southern part of the county. Cummings & Dailey is a general practice law firm that specializes in real estate, business law, estates, and trusts. Tom helped us to purchase land on Swallow Hill, North Branch, and the modules from the Career Development Center. Like Marilyn Hand, who has completed all our legal work for the homes we built on Jennifer Lane in Manchester, Tom’s good work on behalf of the community where he lives and works will have a long-term positive impact!

We are very happy that Curt Merrow, who served as the site supervisor for the home we completed on Jennifer Lane this winter, agreed to supervise the construction of the home on Swallow Hill. Curt, along with Southshire Steering Committee member Dave Low, recently joined our Board of Directors. Board member Chris Ponessi, a Shaftsbury resident and owner of Mance Engineering Partners, completed the engineering plan for the lot. Chris, Mari, Barth, and Dave are working together to coordinate our near and longer term plans for the Southshire. We are always looking for more help. If you are interested in any aspect of our work, please email Mari at mariinvermont@hotmail.com.

None of the plans that we have for the Southshire could be accomplished without the hard work, generosity, and positive can do spirit of many people who care deeply about helping hard-working people who partner with us to build a home, and to build a brighter future for their families.

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**Searching for Buyers for Bennington and Manchester Habitat Homes**

We are actively looking for qualified applicants on a ongoing basis. Our challenge is to expand our outreach efforts so that all people who would be good candidates are aware of the incredible home buying opportunity that Habitat offers. Habitat’s criteria for home ownership are very specific:

**Applicants must have a definite need for better housing** and reside in housing that fits Habitat’s description of inadequate or substandard. For example, it might be overcrowded, have severe structural problems, be in an unsafe neighborhood, need basic repairs that the landlord will not make, not fit the family’s need for handicapped accessibility, or require more than 50% of the applicant’s income.

**Applicants must be financially ready to take on the long-term obligations** of buying and maintaining a home. Habitat sets specific minimum and maximum income requirements, based on the size of the household. A stable employment history, evidence of an ability to manage money responsibly, and the ability to make monthly payments are also requirements. If an applicant’s income is high enough to qualify for a traditional bank loan, the applicant does not qualify for Habitat. Total income for a household should fall within $27,000 for a family of one to $59,300 for a family of eight.

**Applicants must be willing to partner with Habitat** and work cooperatively from the time of selection until the mortgage is paid off. They attend meetings with Habitat representatives to prepare for successful homeownership. They must help build their home. Bennington Area Habitat for Humanity requires a minimum of 200 hours of sweat equity for each adult home buyer. When a couple is buying a home, the minimum total is 400 hours. A significant amount of the required hours should be completed at the construction site. Attendance at meetings and workshops involving homebuyer education is also a mandatory part of the sweat equity requirement.

**Applicants must have lived or worked in Bennington county for at least the last twelve months.** Habitat homes are affordable to those in lower income levels because they are built almost entirely by local volunteers. There is no profit included in the sale price and homebuyers receive an interest-free mortgage. A homebuyer can expect to pay approximately $700 to $900 per month for the length of the mortgage, which could be for 25-40 years, and these payments include real estate taxes and property insurance.

**Bennington Area Habitat recently purchased land in Bennington and plans to begin building for a deserving homebuyer in the spring of 2016. We also look forward to building another home on Jennifer Lane in 2016.**

For more information contact the Habitat office at 802-367-1000 or visit BenningtonAreaHabitat.com
We always wanted to build in Manchester because we knew that Manchester had excellent schools and, as much as living near to places of work and stores would be good for the parents, we understood that the impact upon the children of our families would be life-changing. But, land in Manchester was prohibitively expensive and the zoning regulations required us to purchase more land than was appropriate for truly affordable housing.

When, then Town Planner, Lee Krohn, and Town Manager, Pete Webster, brought the possibility of purchasing land on Jennifer Lane to our attention, we thought that it was beyond our means. While we had built 12 homes in other parts of Bennington County, we had never purchased more land than for one house at a time. Our mode was to raise the money we needed, purchase the land, find a family, build the home and, while building the home, raise more money to build the next one.

The thought of buying enough land to build as many as 22 homes was out of the question. Until…..Irene Hunter showed a strong interest in our work. She came to see us build the Jenks’ home in Winhall. Shortly thereafter, she contributed funds to pay for engineering on a tract of land on the Winhall and Manchester town line. We were not able to meet the seller’s asking price, but we were encouraged by her interest and other people in the area took notice. We worked for four years to secure enough funds to purchase and develop the 11 acres on Jennifer Lane that Lee and Peter had brought to our attention.

Sadly, Irene passed away before we had broken ground on the first home. Fortunately for us and the community we serve, members of the Hunter family, led by Susie Hunter, have taken a special interest in this project. The first gift was made to complete the infrastructure work. Not many donors are interested in helping to build roads, upgrade a town water supply and build a community septic system for 22 homes. But, the Hunter Trust designated that their contribution be used precisely for infrastructure. Without the promise of that gift, we could never have taken on this project.

Last spring the Hunter Trust offered us an extraordinary challenge. They promised to contribute two dollars for every dollar we raised in gifts and pledges through 2017 to enable us to build two homes and to complete as many as five minor home repair projects in 2014, 15, 16, and 17. We were thrilled by the generous response we received from our community. The Hunter Challenge was a once in a lifetime opportunity, and our friends rose to the challenge! While the need to raise funds will always be with us, as is the case for all non-profit organizations, we are pleased to report that we are able to move forward with confidence with our plans.

We just completed our 18th home. By the end of 2017, we will have completed 24 homes. While we receive interest-free mortgage payments, the income we will receive from 24 homes moves us ever closer to being financially sustainable. This would not have been possible had it not been for Irene Hunter’s and her family’s strong interest in helping low-income families to have the benefit of living in a community with excellent educational resources and the stability of having a place to call their home!

Do You Shop at Amazon? - If So, Give Us a Smile!!

AmazonSmile is a simple automatic way for you to support your favorite charity every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at smile.amazon.com you pay the exact same price as at Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to your favorite charity. We hope you will consider designating us, Bennington Area Habitat.

To shop at AmazonSmile simply go to smile.amazon.com. Tens of millions of products on AmazonSmile are eligible for donations. You will see eligible products marked “Eligible for AmazonSmile donation” on their product detail pages.

Your account on Amazon.com and AmazonSmile will be the same. Your shopping cart, Wish List, wedding or baby registry, and other account setting are also the same.

On your first visit to AmazonSmile, you need to select a charitable organization to receive donations from eligible purchases before you begin shopping. After that, every eligible purchase you make at smile.amazon.com will result in a donation. You can change your charity any time.

The AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price from your eligible AmazonSmile purchases. From time to time, Amazon may offer special, limited time promotions that increase the donation amount on one or more products or services or provide for additional donations to charitable organizations.

If you are an Amazon shopper, this is an easy way for you to support Bennington Area Habitat. Please, encourage your family and friends to become AmazonSmile shoppers also.
A Review of our Strategic Action Plan or Strategic Goals Achieved!

In January, just before our Annual Meeting and Potluck Supper, the Board met to review our three-year strategic plan. We do this annually to take stock of where we have been and reach agreement on where we need to go in the coming year. This year, we were pleased to report that we had made good progress on most of our goals.

- We built two new homes on Irene Way just off Jennifer Lane in Manchester, and we completed three ABWK (A Brush with Kindness) projects in the Southshire. In addition, we continued to hone our skills at building energy-efficient homes, this year receiving our best yet score.
- We increased the number of people involved in Habitat by hiring a Community Relations Associate to help us develop and organize our work in the Southshire, where we will build a new home in Pownal.
- We continued to find the recruitment of qualified families challenging, because, as a result of the economic downturn, many needy families have debt-to-income ratios that preclude their qualifying for Habitat mortgages. Nonetheless, we found a well-qualified family for Pownal and another for Jennifer Lane. These homes will be built in 2015.
- We strengthened our organization by recruiting four highly qualified new board members in 2014. Since the turn of the year, we have been immersed in a search process to find an executive director to replace Dick Malley. This was a daunting challenge but we were blessed with strong and eager applicants and are looking forward to welcoming Susan Sommer as our new executive director.
- In December we celebrated the first anniversary of our Shires Resale Store, which succeeded beyond our wildest dreams. We must find a new manager and a new location but are confident we will achieve our goal of earning enough to build a house by June 2017.

2014 was a very successful year in terms of fundraising. A generous 2:1 matching grant from the Hunter Foundation motivated our regular supporters and new donors. Many people made multi-year pledges.

We are so grateful for the support you have given us during the past year. You have worked at our sites and at our store. You have given in response to the Hunter Challenge. Although this makes us very happy, we have one final request. Please look at your friends, neighbors and employees and consider whether someone you know might qualify for a Habitat house. If you have questions about what that takes, give Alison a call at 367-1000.

All best,
Monica

Take our Quiz to test your knowledge of housing need, affordability and Habitat’s global impact. Share your results to help spread the word and raise awareness!

Throughout this newsletter look for the 8 questions and answers. Share your newfound knowledge with friends and family and help raise awareness of the need for affordable housing around the globe.

#1. About how many affordable housing units are available to the more than 11 million low-income households in the United States?

- 3 million
- 5 million
- 8 million
- 10 million

The Urban Institute estimates there are only 3.2 million housing units available at rents that low-income households—those earning 30 percent or less of an area’s median income—can afford. This means that for every 100 households classified as extremely low income, there are just 29 rental units that are affordable and available.
Farewell and Thanks to Three Valued Board Members

Farewell and thanks to Cliff Beebe, John Cilio and Brian DeCesare

Habitat International requires that affiliates have board term limits. After eight consecutive years of service, board members are required to rotate off the board for at least one full year. At our annual meeting in January we celebrated Cliff’s, John’s, and Brian’s many contributions to our affiliate, but we did not say farewell because, most fortunately for our affiliate, they all made it clear that they fully intend to continue to be involved with our work in the years ahead.

Cliff Beebe first became involved as a site supervisor for the home we built in Rupert with Kelli and George Lewis and their family. Cliff designed the home and supervised the build from start to finish. We were so impressed that we asked Cliff to join our board. Cliff continued to serve as our site supervisor for the home we built with the Morey family in West Rupert. He designed the home we built with the Siegrist family in North Bennington, and shared the site supervision for the Reed home in Bennington. Work requirements limited Cliff’s ability to work on site, but Cliff continued to chair the Building Committee and was an integral member of the committee that designed the first four homes that we built on Jennifer Lane.

When Cliff served as our site supervisor, he was in his element. He loved working with all volunteers and had a special knack for teaching unskilled volunteers to take hammer in hand and have at it. Cliff was comfortable up high, attaching the trusses, and moved like a cat. Building with Cliff was always fun and volunteers wanted to come back for more.

John and Nancy Cilio (also a former board member) first became involved when we were building the house with Christine and Brian Jenks in Winhall. After a few days of building, they contracted a serious case of Habititus and never looked back! John not only brought great skill to his work, but he was totally into the Habitat spirit. John leads by example. There is nothing with construction that he won’t try. John was comfortable high up on a ladder and in the basement. John, a career educator, used to paint professionally during the summers, and John left his brush marks on each of the homes we have built during his tenure.

John took on the responsibility for recruiting groups from area organizations to help us with build days. John worked hard to identify the person in each organization who would organize groups. John is a big reason why over 130 different people help build each of our homes. Through John’s efforts, more people helped build our homes, learned about what we do and how we do it, and became Habitat ambassadors.

John played a critically important role as a board member. We could always depend upon John to ask thoughtful questions whenever we were about to make a big decision. He drilled down deep into the question at hand and could be counted upon to see the decision through many different angles. If John concluded that we were making a good decision, we could rest easy because we knew it had passed John’s acid test. The decision to move forward with the Jennifer Lane project was where John’s persistent questions were most critical to our process.

Brian DeCesare first became involved as a member of the Dorset Church team that helped build the home for Christine and Brian Jenks. Brian had already done a lot of building and was very skilled. A residential home appraiser by profession, we were very happy when Brian accepted our invitation to join our board. Since then, we have not purchased a property without Brian’s professional advice. We have considered many properties that we have not purchased, and Brian has helped us to make good decisions about what not to buy. Brian played a key role in our board’s decision to purchase and develop the Jennifer Lane project.

Throughout the years, Brian has organized groups from the Dorset Church, usually at least once for every house we have built. This spring, Brian is organizing a group from the church to complete a vital Habitat home repair project for an elderly gentlemen who lives nearby. Professionally and as a volunteer, Brian has played a most significant role.

To say that Cliff, John, and Brian contributed a lot to our affiliate’s success is an understatement, at best! Cliff, John and Brian, we are very grateful and look forward to your continued involvement.
Habititus is a dangerous condition. It attacks both the heart and the brain and it leaves victims helpless to escape its tenacious grasp. It can last for years and many of those affected by this syndrome report that their lives have been changed forever.

Dick Malley, Executive Director of Bennington Area Habitat can attest that all of that is true. He and his wife, Kathy volunteered at a Habitat build site in East Arlington in the summer of 2002 and were both immediately stricken with a severe case of Habititus. Within six months they were on the Board of Directors where they remained for 8 years. Kathy chaired the Family Selection and Support Committee, a position she remained in for 12 years. Dick started by helping with fundraising and organizing the outreach efforts as well as the database and then added additional duties related to photographing volunteers and managing the website. Four years later in 2006 he became President of the Board, a position he filled for the next 6 years. In 2011 Dick became our affiliate’s first full-time staff member when the Board invited him to become Executive Director.

During the time of Dick’s presidency and subsequently in his role as Executive Director, Bennington Area Habitat has experienced tremendous growth and change. His focus has been on building an organization that is sustainable, that can stand the test of time. In order to achieve that goal, many pieces had to be put into place. Our very hands-on Board needed to evolve beyond micro-management to a Board that delegated responsibilities to committees. In turn, these committees needed to each have a clear purpose and be empowered to do their work. With Dick’s encouragement and direction, this was accomplished.

Understanding that the need for safe and affordable housing in Bennington County is significant, our Board voted to undertake the purchase and development of 11 acres of land in and around Jennifer Lane in Manchester that would ultimately house 22 families. This meant raising almost a million dollars for the infrastructure before we could begin to build the first house. With Dick leading the way, the septic system for 22 homes was built, the town water supply was upgraded and the town road was paved. And this summer we will begin construction of our 7th home on Jennifer Lane.

While we had successfully built one house a year for many years, under Dick’s leadership we have transitioned to building two houses a year so that we can serve more families. During the past three years we have successfully built five homes and this year, for the first time, we will build two homes at opposite ends of Bennington County. When Dick first joined Habitat, the Bennington affiliate had completed two homes and was receiving two interest-free mortgage payments. Today we receive eighteen interest-free payments every month, money that goes right back out to build more homes for more Habitat families.

Dick has been front and center in ensuring that our affiliate has raised the necessary funds to continue our ambitious building program. Thanks to the success of the Hunter Challenge and the very positive response from our loyal supporters, we can look toward the future confident that we can continue to build homes with and for our partner families.

And now it is time for Bennington Area Habitat to take another step forward, this one with a new Executive Director at the helm. Dick has announced that he will be retiring at the end of June. He and Kathy have put in thousands of hours of work on behalf of Habitat and it’s time for a rest. We have been blessed beyond measure by their leadership, dedication, tenacity and support and we thank them wholeheartedly for all they have done to enrich the lives not only of our partner families but of all of us who have worked with them over the years.

### Questions continued

#### #2. How much of the world’s population now lives in urban areas?

- 12%
- 21%
- 33%
- 54%

A century ago, just two in every 10 of us lived in cities, but today 54 percent of the world does, a proportion that is expected to reach 66 percent by 2050. Close to 90 percent of that increase will be concentrated in Asia and Africa, according to a United Nations’ report.
We Have Been Inspired by Kathy Malley’s Dedication to Habitat

In the summer of 2002, shortly after moving to Vermont, Kathy and Dick Malley began their journey with Habitat. They worked to build a home with and for Jackie Slade and her family in East Arlington. John Davies was the site supervisor, and he introduced them to the Habitat family. Kathy recalls that John’s knowledge of construction was enhanced by his ability to make a new volunteer feel she could make a helpful contribution. Additionally, his patience and sense of humor made the work fun. Kathy and Dick both soon joined the Board of Directors. Kathy spent the next eight years on the Board and twelve years as the chair of Family Selection and Support.

Kathy worked tirelessly to make sure the process by which we identify homebuyers and help them become successful homeowners worked efficiently. Before she decided to step aside she spent many hours producing a Homebuyer Manual which serves as a resource for newly selected homeowners and their support partners.

In looking back, Kathy recalls that hammering a nail in straight was much easier than finding and qualifying families. The process was (and continues to be) often long and complicated. But the result is always the same—one very happy family!

Given the extent of the need for affordable housing in Bennington County, one would think that finding homebuyers would not be a difficult task. But there are very specific criteria for people that Habitat can serve. Our families cannot make too much, or too little income. They cannot have too much debt. And they must have a definite need for better housing. Once prospective homebuyers are identified, they must be helped through the process of qualifying, including taking financial skills training. If accepted, they contribute sweat equity to the construction of their home. Homeowners also need to understand Habitat’s mission and how they will become ambassadors—intentionally or unconsciously—for our affiliate’s future success in many ways. For 12 years, Kathy guided most of our current Habitat homeowners through the arduous process of becoming successful homeowners. She has maintained close contact with several of these families over the years.

Kathy’s greatest feeling of accomplishment has always come from helping families better their lives with better housing. and, her greatest satisfaction comes from working to fulfill the mission of an organization that she truly believes in, and doing so with many caring and dedicated volunteers who share that mission.

We thank Kathy for her dedication and enormous contribution to our affiliate over the last twelve years. We hope she enjoys some time to relax and recharge before she finds herself involved in other worthwhile activities.
Parting Reflections from Dick

Anyone who has worked with me on our building site knows that I am willing to try and will do most anything to help (except to go high up on a ladder!), but as any of our core builders will attest, my value to Habitat has not been through my building skills. Since 2006, when I became board president, my focus has been to build an organization that is sustainable – an organization that could stand the test of time.

We worked hard to build strong committees that had clear goals and were empowered to do their work. Building a strong Board of Directors whose members had diverse skills was critical to our success. As we moved in this direction, the Board has been able to focus increasingly on the bigger picture, setting policy and securing the funds that were needed for the long-term.

In our years with Habitat, the greatest satisfaction for Kathy and me has come from getting to know the families with whom we have worked. While we did not help build the Miller and Clark homes, we got to know Fred Miller as a fellow board member, and I have had a lot of contact with Martha Clark. Kathy chaired the Family Selection Committee that selected 14 of our families. Kathy and I spent time helping to build 16 of our 18 homes and came to know our Habitat families as a result. We have enjoyed the special relationships that are forged among our volunteers and with our families as we work together to build a home and prepare for the new opportunities that having a stable place to call home will provide.

Over the process of building these homes, I have gotten to know many people who have played tremendously important roles in making our work possible. Some never help on site, but none of our families would have had a home without the commitment and hard work of countless individuals who raise awareness, funds, find and support our families and perform the myriad of tasks involved in our efforts to provide affordable housing. This past year, another small army of volunteers became involved with the Shires ReSale Store. Well over one hundred different volunteers contribute as many as 3,500 hours to build a Habitat home, but most of those hours are contributed by a small group of very skilled and extremely devoted volunteers – our core. It has been a privilege to work with them. The friendships that have been forged working with our core volunteers is extraordinarily special to me.

It is now time for our affiliate to take yet another step toward being a truly sustainable organization. With the board’s appointment of Susan Sommer, we have someone uniquely qualified who brings to our affiliate the perspective of working successfully with other affiliates and the energy needed to write the next chapter. As our new Executive Director, Susan needs the time and space to establish herself with our volunteers, supporters, our families and our community. That is as it should be. I will miss the intensity of being intimately involved with almost all facets of what we do. But make no mistake, I will be intently interested and invested, albeit, from the sidelines, in our continued success.

Mining Our Past to Inspire Our Future

Habitat’s founding, its phenomenal growth and its ongoing work has been well-documented in numerous books through the years. But working through all of the books takes more time than most can devote to it. And many of the early books have receded into history, or may seem dated or lie forgotten at the bottom of drawers or the back of bookshelves. As Habitat approaches its 40th anniversary, Jill Claflin who served in the Marketing and Communications Division of Habitat for Humanity International from 1996 until her retirement in 2014 created “Mining Our Past to Inspire Our Future.” This guide is something of a CliffsNotes version of material included in those earlier books—shared in the hope of increasing understanding and perhaps encouraging some users to read or reread the original books.

What follows are “Quotes that Help Explain Habitat for Humanity” from the guide.

“What the poor need is not charity, but capital, not caseworkers but co-workers. And what the rich need is a wise, honorable and just way of divesting themselves of their overabundance.”
~Clarence Jordan, farmer, biblical scholar and founder of Koinonia Farm, where the concepts behind Habitat for Humanity took root

“A house is to a family what soil is to a plant. We all seem to know this deep down. You can pull a plant up out of the soil, pour all the water in the world on it, give it plenty of sunlight, and it will eventually die because it is not rooted. A plant needs to be rooted. A family is like that. If a family in not rooted, it will not flourish. It will not grow...will not blossom. But once a family is well-rooted, all kinds of wonderful things will begin to happen.”
~Millard Fuller, founder of Habitat for Humanity

“When the history of Habitat is written, the actual houses may be the least important part of the story. Way above the brick and mortar will be the people, the relationships, the volunteers, the homeowners, the “aha” moments. The walls broken down may be more impressive than the best walls put up.”
~The Rev. David Johnson Rowe, in his book “My Habitat for Humanity: The (Mostly) Good Old Days”

“I get a lot more recognition for building houses in partnership with poor people in need than I ever got for the Camp David Accords or for SALT II or for all our projects in Africa and Asia or anything I do now since I left the White House. I can walk down the aisles of airplanes (talking to people), and invariably the number one thing that anybody ever says is, “Tell be about Habitat”…
~Jimmy Carter, in remarks from his appearance at Habitat for Humanity’s 12th anniversary celebration in 1988
We Welcome Susan Sommer as our new Executive Director

As of the end of June, Bennington Area Habitat will experience a major transition. Dick Malley, our beloved Executive Director, will be retiring after 12 years with this affiliate, having served 6 years as Board President and 4 years as Executive Director. Dick is leaving very big shoes to fill to say the least! However, after a thorough and careful search among a field of strong candidates, the search committee is excited to announce that Susan Sommer from Phelps, Wisconsin is our unanimous choice to be the new ED.

Susan comes to us with solid Habitat experience. She worked as an assistant construction supervisor at the Hilton Head affiliate followed by a stint as their assistant ReStore manager. Most recently she was Director of Development with Wild Rivers Habitat in Northern Wisconsin. Previous to that she was an Assistant District Attorney with the Milwaukee County DA’s office followed by several years in general practice. Susan’s husband, Tuck Daniels, has worked with Habitat as a construction supervisor. Both bring a strong love for the organization and a deep empathy with and compassion for the families who partner with Habitat to become homeowners.

Susan will be joining our affiliate in mid-May. She is excited about this new position and the chance to continue working with Habitat as this is the work that is meaningful to her life. In her own words she calls it “the work of the heart.” Referring to herself and Tuck she wrote, “Our skills and talents in construction and advocacy, as well as our genuine affection and gratitude in working with volunteers and home owners, make us a strong team in doing God’s work for people in need.”

Susan and Tuck love the hands-on work of Habitat, and obviously are not intimidated by heights!

Welcome Global Village—June 14th—June 21st

Bennington Area Habitat’s first Global Village team spent a week working on the home of Brian and Christine Jenks in the summer of 2006. Since then we have hosted teams each summer except for two. The week that a team spends building with us has always been a fun and productive week—for the team members and for us as hosts. The team spends each day at the build site, with one day reserved for recreation, and several evenings participating in dinners that local Habitat volunteers arrange. Every group that has worked with us has rated their experience in Vermont as a high point in their work with Habitat. They find our affiliate welcoming and our work inspiring. We are always in awe of the amount of energy and spirit that team members bring to our builds.

Join us in welcoming a Global Village team that will be coming to Vermont to enjoy a mission driven vacation, making a difference to our community and mostly to Sarah and John Gagnon and their family. During the week, we will take care to introduce the team to the beauty of our state and the people who make our community so special. The team will stay at the alumni house at Bennington College. As they will be building in Pownal, most of their non-building activities will be centered in the southern part of Bennington County.

The team will build every day during the week, and, as we usually build only two days a week, they are sure to fast-forward our builds. Habitat’s Global Village program organizes teams of volunteers to build Habitat for Humanity projects all over the world. The Global Village program is another step with Habitat to create a world where everyone has a decent place to live. The team will be led by experienced team leaders, Kristin Distelhorst and Maria Winston. Kristin wrote, “I lead GV teams because I love meeting and working with like-minded people for a common good purpose: housing for all.” Maria added “I believe Habitat brings out the very best in the human spirit by touching directly the lives of both the homeowners and the volunteers. It is such a rewarding experience to work together making dreams a reality – a warm, safe, affordable home!”
Rev. Kathy Clark has served as the Pastor of the Federated Church of East Arlington since 2007. Prior to attending seminary, she served as the Executive Director of PAVE, the United Way of Bennington County and Bennington County Head Start. Kathy's early work with Bennington Area Habitat for Humanity began as the organization was just getting started. At that time she was on the Home Buyer Selection and Support committee and served as Group Volunteer Coordinator. Her current area of interest within Habitat is Community Relations, especially working with faith communities.

Kathy was drawn to BAHFH as a board member "because of the opportunity it presents to be an integral, on-going part of helping families move into home ownership through the coming together of community. The notion of partnering with families is my favorite part of the Habitat model, for this is what we strive to do also in faith communities. None of us does this thing called life alone." Kathy and her husband Roger (a Shires ReSale Store volunteer) are the parents of a daughter, Selene, who will graduate in May from the University of Vermont.

Curt Merrow moved to Shaftsbury, Vermont in 1983 from Buffalo, New York with his late wife Patty to start their family on his grandfather’s former dairy farm. He started working shortly thereafter for Art Carlucci, a local building contractor, and remained in his employ for thirty years. His new life partner, Cindy Waters, and he continue to live on his family farm.

After retiring in the summer of 2013 he happened to meet Dick Malley who invited him to volunteer at the build site on Jennifer Lane. The enthusiasm and friendliness of the core builders, prospective homeowners, and their mission was infectious and Curt was hooked. When he learned that two houses were planned for 2014 on Jennifer Lane and one in Pownal in 2015, he knew that an additional site supervisor would be needed; when offered the position he gladly accepted. The next invitation extended from Dick was to join the Habitat Board of Directors. Curt’s background in construction and location in Shaftsbury (increasing board representation from the southern portion of the county) will be beneficial to planning for BAHFH’s future, and that is the role Curt plans to play.

Curt wholeheartedly endorses Habitat’s mission of partnering volunteer labor with deserving families’ sweat equity to provide quality affordable homes. He comments, “I have been blessed with the generosity of others, and I am happy to pass that on.”

Ellen Leeds and Sandi Hedman have rejoined the Executive Board after a year’s absence. Over the years, in addition to serving on the Board of Directors, Ellen has served as a family partner, organized many of the Global Village Team visits, and served on the Resource Development Committee. She recently worked with the Search Committee to find a new Executive Director for Bennington Area Habitat.

Sandi became involved with Habitat by serving on the Faith Relations Committee which morphed into the Community Relations Committee. She served for eight years on the Board of Directors and has worked on hosting Global Village Teams, the auction, the newsletter and currently is chair of the Homeowner Selection and Support Committee, which is charged with finding qualified candidates for our Habitat homes.

Questions continued

#3. Of the roughly 2 billion children in the developing world, how many are without adequate shelter?

- 1 in 9
- 1 in 7
- 1 in 5
- 1 in 3

One-third of children in the developing world lack adequate shelter, and millions of people die every year from substandard housing and its accompanying conditions: unsafe water, poor sanitation, temperature extremes. Waterborne diseases alone kill some 4 million infants and children every year, and the World Health Organization estimates that nearly 2 million people in developing countries die each year from a single cause: indoor air pollution caused by leaky and inefficient household stoves.
Dedication of the Van Vleck Home

On December 14, 2014, friends of Habitat and the Van Vleck family gathered to dedicate their Jennifer Lane home at 43 Irene Way. The 1,200 square foot home was designed by John Lavecchia of r.k. Miles with significant input from Russ and his father. The house was built by many volunteers with home buyers, Russ and Lyn, their good friend, Chad Paustian, and site supervisor and dad, Peter Van Vleck.

In keeping with tradition, several persons, including Peter, Chad, and Russ and Lyn spoke about what Habitat means to them. Too young to speak, Van Vleck daughters Cassidy and Christa were active participants in the event. Kathy Clark, our newest board member and pastor of the Federated Church of East Arlington, blessed the house. Bonnie Franklin and Barbara Trafford of the First Congregational Church Needlework Group presented an afghan made by a group of church women to the Van Vleck family.

Russ and Lyn provided far more than the required minimum of 200 hours of sweat equity per adult member of the family. Nonetheless, they did not rest on their laurels as Russ primed all the walls in the Benson home next door.

Questions continued

#4. True or false: One-fifth of all Americans live in unhealthy neighborhoods.

True
False

Sadly, this is true. A study by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation found that nearly one in five Americans lives in a neighborhood with low-quality housing, pollution, and limited access to healthy food, physical activity and job opportunities. Find out how you can help build healthier communities.

#5. One of UN-Habitat’s seven indicators of adequate shelter is “tenure security,” meaning:

A lifelong job
Protection against forced eviction
Construction that reduces disaster risk
Fixed rent or mortgage rates

Tenure security refers to legal protection against forced eviction. In most cases, the protection of secure tenure takes the form of legal documentation of land ownership. But around the world, huge numbers of families reside in informal settlements and lack this security. Habitat CEO Jonathan Reckford calls secure land tenure one of the “critical foundations” for breaking the cycle of poverty, and Habitat has worked for fair land laws around the world, including in Bolivia, Cambodia, Malawi, Macedonia, Lesotho, Sri Lanka and Haiti. Add your voice to the call to make housing a global priority in 2015.

Our Sponsors

Many businesses provided generous support for the Van Vleck home, including: Berkshire Bank, Efficiency Vermont, Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston, Heritage Family Credit Union, Manchester and the Mountains Chamber of Commerce, Orvis, Stewarts, Vermont Country Store, Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, and Whalen, Hand & Gilmour TLC.

Contributing Contractors

Garrett Williams’ Brophy Electric Service, RMS Plumbing and Heating, Stroffoleno Drywall, VanVleck Construction, and Lawrence White Construction

Contributed or Discounted Building Services and/or Supplies

Brown Enterprises, Dow Chemical Company, Ferguson Enterprises, Glenn Sherman and Sons Inc., Green Mountain Appraisals, r.k.Miles, Schneider Electric, Valspar, Whirlpool Corporation and Yale Locks

Sponsors and Supporters of the Van Vleck Home

Russ and Lyn hold a bird house replica of their home that was presented to them by Fred Hilliard.
March 21st was the second full day of spring, but judging by the piles of snow in front of the Benson home, anyone who had not lived in Vermont during this winter would have thought it was mid-winter at its best! As we spent many cold and snowy days completing the home, it was most fitting for the Benson-Evans home to be decorated with lots of snow. Over 50 friends of the family and volunteers who worked on the home joined Janet and Tyler. Sadly, illness kept Pat and Tony Evans from joining us for their special day.

Some special presentations were made. Harriett Boone and Sandy McHenry, members of the Congregational Church in Manchester, presented a beautiful afghan that they and other members of the church had crafted especially for the dedication. The Vermont Chapter of the Embroidery Guild of America made a sampler for the home that memorialized the dedication. Core Builder, Fred Hilliard presented a hand crafted bird house that was a replica of the home. Another member of the Core Building Team, Stu Hoskins presented Janet with an album of photos that had been taken from start to finish of the build.

All told, over 3,441 volunteer hours were contributed to building the home over 66 Wednesdays and Saturdays. Ninety-five different people worked at least one day on the home. Theresa O’Callaghan, President of the Castleton State College Habitat Chapter, represented the students from CSC who came every other Saturday during the fall. Annie Bessette, representing the South Central VT Board of Realtors, congratulated Janet on her new home. During the summer and fall, members of the Board of Realtor’s helped build and in addition, they made a financial contribution to the home.

Some people came once or twice, but people contributing over 100 hours included; Keld Alstrup, Dick Malley, Nancy Cilio, Fred Hilliard, Olavi Wiriki, and Harriett Durand. With over 200 hours, were Stu Hoskins, John Cilio, and Charlie Stewart. Curt Merrow and Oliver Durand contributed 335 hours each! Without the immense contribution of our winter warriors, the home would not have been completed until late spring.

The home received a HERS rating of 44 by Efficiency Vermont. The lower the score, the better, and anything below 70 receives a 5++ rating. The 44 was our second best score ever and is testimony to the great job that architect, Greg Boshart of Maple Valley Design Build did in designing the home and the attention to detail that our builders, led by Site Supervisor, Curt Merrow, did in building the home.

Board member, Kathy Clark, Pastor of the Federated Church of East Arlington, completed the ceremony by leading the group in a house blessing. The dedication of our eighteenth home was a grand day of celebration and reflection for all. We look forward to finishing the landscaping when the snow melts, to starting the home for Sarah and John Gagnon and their family in Pownal, and to building a home with and for Shannon Gordon and his three sons on Jennifer Lane this spring. The beat goes on! There is more to do!
Bennington Habitat’s Home Repair Program (formerly A Brush with Kindness)

Several years ago, Habitat International launched the Brush With Kindness program to focus on interior and exterior minor repairs that make a home safer, healthier and more energy efficient.

Our affiliate is proud to have completed 14 minor home repair projects, helping 12 families, since we started this program. In 2014 we completed three projects. Curt Merrow designed two entrance ramps that he built with Mari Bennett, Dean Hanson, Dave Low, Jim White, and Barth VanderEls. Curt and Barth patched a hole in a very low roof (our volunteers do not generally do roof projects). All three projects were located in the Bennington area with people who already own their own homes.

We look forward to continuing the program in 2015 and are currently accepting applications. Applicants must:

- Own and live in their home
- Have lived in Bennington County for at least one full year at the time of application
- Be able to repay an interest-free loan for the cost of the project (labor is done by volunteers except in rare instances)
- Have a maximum household income of approximately no more than 80% of the median income for Bennington County:
  - 1 person—$35,950
  - 2 people—$41,050
  - 3 people—$46,200
  - 4 people—$51,300

If you know of someone who would like help with repairs on their home, or if you are interested in volunteering to help with our projects, please contact our office at 802-367-1000 or by e-mail at bennhabitat@yahoo.com.

Questions continued

#6. Children of homeowners are how much more likely to graduate from college than children of renters?
   1. 1.6 %
   2. 16 %
   3. 116%

Researchers at the University of Tennessee found that homeowners’ children are 116 percent more likely to graduate from college than children of renters of the same age, race and income. They’re also 25 percent more likely to graduate from high school and have higher math and reading scores, with fewer behavioral problems.

#7. True or False: People who volunteer are statistically less subject to depression?
   True
   False

It’s true! Researchers at the University of Exeter, reviewing 40 studies from the past 20 years on links between volunteering and health, found that volunteers showed improved mental health and lower depression rates—and even lived longer. Give yourself a boost while helping others through Habitat!
The cold and snow of winter did not dampen the excitement and anticipation experienced by the Gagnon family as they looked forward to breaking ground for their soon-to-be new home on Swallow Hill Road in Pownal. Even as the snow kept coming, they spent many a day this winter clearing the land to have it ready for digging the foundation as soon as the ground thaws.

With their three children - Summer, Michael and Ian - Sarah and John Gagnon have been living for many years in subsidized housing in Bennington. With an optimistic, can-do attitude, they have made the best of it, but have longed for the stability, security and comfort that come with home ownership. As John himself wrote last fall,

"Less than a year ago, the idea of owning a home seemed impossible. I was one of three children raised by a single mother on state assistance in less than adequate housing with little to no food. We learned to survive, but I think every child has dreams of growing up and being successful, having a good job, a family, and a nice home. I know I did. Then, sometimes, things get out of order. Sometimes you want better things, but you wind up repeating the same mistakes and hardships as your parents, and any sort of change seems impossible no matter what you want for your kids.

About nine years ago, a friend was talking about a home Habitat for Humanity built in his neighborhood. I was drawn to the story like a moth to a flame, but that’s all it seemed like at the time - a story. Then, in April of 2014 I was reading an article about Habitat's work in Manchester. They had land in Pownal and they needed applicants. I decided to take a chance. Now, seven months later, all of our prayers have been answered!! To say I am thankful would be the understatement of a lifetime. There aren’t words enough to express how I truly feel. This is nothing short of a miracle. The staff at Habitat for Humanity are surely guardian angels whose generosity and caring for others knows no end. Without Habitat for Humanity, my dream of owning a home would still be just that, and forever out of reach. On behalf of my family, and myself, we thank you from the bottoms of our hearts and look forward to becoming a part of the Habitat family and to start a new chapter of our lives. THANK YOU!"

Anyone interested in helping with the Pownal build should be in contact with Alison at 367-1000.

Habitat for Humanity welcomes volunteers of all skill levels.
On Tuesday, March 10, 2015, the Board of Directors approved the Home Buyer Selection Committee’s recommendation that Shannon Gordon and his three sons be selected for a home we will build in the summer and fall of 2015. They had been selected for a home on Jennifer Lane before, but, things changed and they withdrew from the program. Shannon reapplied this year, and we were very happy to tell Shannon and his family that their dream to own their own home is back on track! What follows is the letter that Shannon wrote to accompany his recent application.

Hello Habitat Family and Friends,

It has been a long road since the last time I was in Manchester building a dream home for my family, but it still feels like it was yesterday that I was swinging a hammer or carrying material up a ladder.

So here is an update on what has been going on for the last year or so for the boys and me. This school year Bailey and Ben both started at a new school (MAUMS). They have adjusted to the new school and have found many things to enjoy like football, dances or just staying after school to get some extra help with school work. Camden (age 3) has grown so much in the last year. He has just started head start and enjoys building things or pretending he’s driving an excavator or dump truck. He loves his tractors, all sizes big or small but if you ask him what color they should be he will tell you BLUE because that is his favorite color and he wants everything blue.

Right now I am working for a company in Bennington called NSK. I currently make steering columns for automobiles. I have learned so much in the short time that I have been working at NSK.

I enjoy spending as much time as possible with my children, having fun or preparing them to handle the hard lessons that life has to throw at us. My children are very strong individuals. With everything that they have been through in their short lives they keep pushing forward with a smile on their faces (most days) like nothing can stop them. As a father, it makes me proud that they don't let things in life keep them down for long.

We currently live in Bennington, and it was an adjustment that the boys and I had to make. It's a tight fit right now but another good thing is that we are a close family, and we work hard to make things work out the best they can no matter what the situation.

For the last few years I have been working towards owning a home so my family will have a stable lifestyle that will help them all in so many ways. I believe that my children will do better in school because they will not have to worry about moving again.

I have worked very hard to show my boys what it is like to be out in our community and to give something back. They have volunteered their own time to helping others in need. This winter, Bailey and Ben have been shoveling the neighbor's walkway and driveways. Due to their ages, this is a hard task for them but my two boys did this on their own without being asked. This shows me that they have been picking up on some great things that life has to offer. My boys will always lend a helping hand to someone in need.

The boys and I would like to say thank you for considering us. We would love nothing more than to work with so many wonderful people on building our dream home.

Yours truly, Shannon Gordon
The History of Habitat

Summary
Habitat for Humanity International was founded in 1976 by Millard and Linda Fuller. Today, Habitat for Humanity is a true world leader in addressing the issues of poverty housing.

Koinonia Farm
The concept that grew into Habitat for Humanity International was born at Koinonia Farm, a small, interracial, Christian community outside of Americus, Georgia. Koinonia Farm was founded in 1942 by farmer and biblical scholar Clarence Jordan.

The Fullers first visited Koinonia in 1965. They had recently left a successful business and an affluent lifestyle in Montgomery, Alabama to begin a new life of Christian service.

At Koinonia, Jordan and Fuller developed the concept of “partnership housing.” The concept centered on those in need of adequate shelter working side by side with volunteers to build simple, decent houses.

The Fund for Humanity
The houses would be built at no profit and interest would not be charged on the loans. Building costs would be financed by a revolving fund called “The Fund for Humanity.” The fund’s money would come from the new homeowners’ house payments, no-interest loans provided by supporters and money earned by fund-raising activities. The monies in the Fund for Humanity would be used to build more houses.

Inception of Habitat for Humanity
In 1968, Koinonia laid out 42 half-acre house sites with four acres reserved as a community park and recreational area. Capital was donated from around the country to start the work. Homes were built and sold to families in need at no profit and no interest. The basic model of Habitat for Humanity was begun.

Zaire
In 1973, the Fullers decided to apply the Fund for Humanity concept in developing countries. The Fuller family moved to Mbandaka, Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo.) The Fullers’ goal was to offer affordable yet adequate shelter to 2,000 people. After three years of hard work to launch a successful house building program, the Fullers returned to the United States.

Expansion into Habitat for Humanity International
In September 1976, Millard and Linda called together a group of supporters to discuss the future of their dream. Habitat for Humanity International as an organization was born at this meeting. The eight years that followed, vividly described in Millard Fuller’s book, “Love in the Mortar Joints,” proved that the vision of a housing ministry was workable. Faith, hard work and direction set HFHI on its successful course.

Phenomenal growth
In 1984, former U.S. President Jimmy Carter and his wife Rosalynn took their first Habitat work trip, the Jimmy Carter Work Project, to New York City. Their personal involvement in Habitat’s ministry brought the organization national visibility and sparked interest in Habitat’s work across the nation. HFHI experienced a dramatic increase in the number of new affiliates around the country.

Habitat today
Through the work of Habitat, thousands of low-income families have found new hope in the form of affordable housing. Churches, community groups and others have joined together to successfully tackle a significant social problem—decent housing for all.

Since 1976, Habitat has built or repaired over 1 million homes, serving more than 5 million people worldwide.
What our Tithe Means to Us

Habitat affiliates are expected to tithe 10% of all unrestricted gifts and net income from fund raising ventures, such as the Shires ReSale Store, to help build homes in other countries. Every dime goes directly to support construction. Each year our board discusses where we will send our tithe. In some years we have simply asked Habitat International to direct it where it is needed the most. When Haiti was devastated, we asked that it go to support the housing in Haiti. Through June 2014, we had tithed $58,313, enough to build 17.4 homes in other countries.

This year, we designated that our tithe go to Kenya. Our interest in Kenya was sparked because one of our board members, David Nichols’ son, Charlie, is doing some very creative work in Kenya, using solar energy to supply power to help Kenyan farmers with drip irrigation. We thought it would be terrific to forge a personal connection with Habitat in Kenya and know more about how our tithe was making a difference. Habitat International encouraged us to contact Habitat in Kenya because the need for affordable housing in Kenya is acute. Kenya is on HFHI’s priority list.

Board member, Keld Alstrup, and Dick skyped with Habitat Kenya. Three people were on the call with them, and it was very eye opening and inspiring to say the least. Not counting the value of the land and infrastructure, it costs us about $110,000 to construct a home. For that amount of money, twenty-two homes can be built in Kenya!

The housing deficit in Kenya stood at 2 million in 2012 and continues to grow at a rate of over 200,000 units a year. Lack of affordable housing financing is a limiting factor for low income families. There is a proliferation of informal settlements in urban areas with 60% of the population living in slums. Families live in overcrowded homes typically with only one room and no adequate ventilation. Families are at high health risk of diseases such as malaria, respiratory infections, and jigger infestations. The poor, especially children and women, the elderly, and people with disabilities are worst hit.

Kenya’s challenges are immense, but we came away from the call excited about the possibilities that could come from our connection with them. The people we spoke with were sincerely interested in forming a relationship with our affiliate. To be sure, there is no shortage of places where the need is tremendous and where we could have an impact with our tithe, but Kenya is our choice for now.

At their request, we put them in touch with Charlie Nichols, and we are anxious to see how that connection might increase our knowledge of Habitat Kenya’s work and indirectly broaden our impact.

A Kenyan Habitat Family

Emily Kundu is a member of Nyota Njema self-help group in Bungoma County. She joined the Habitat program in April 2012 and is currently serving her third loan. (Habitat Kenya issues up to five loans over the course of home construction). With the first loan she did the foundations; with the second she built until the lintel stage; and with the third, she roofed the house and moved in in April 2014. Before she joined Habitat, Emily was living in a two room mud house. With Habitat’s help she applied for an electricity connection. She plans to take another loan for the finishing touches—plastering, painting, a ceiling board and possibly tiles. Emily is married to Protus Kisembe. They have one child. Emily’s main source of income is cattle hawking—she buys cattle depending on available funds and sells them at a profit during market days. This is a male dominated business, but Emily has done the trade for three years and beaten the odds through hard work and the desire to succeed. She also farms sugarcane as her alternative source of income.

“I am very grateful to Habitat for Humanity for enabling me to acquire a good and decent house for my family. Surely, Habitat is fulfilling their mission of building houses, building hope,” said Emily.
**Fred Hilliard and Carl Mohlenhoff—Unsung Heroes**

We were especially pleased that two members of our core building team, Carl Mohlenhoff and Fred Hilliard, were chosen by the Manchester Board of Selectmen to receive Manchester's Unsung Hero Award, presented annually to area residents who have made a difference in the community.

The Unsung Hero Award is a community service award that began 25 years ago in 1989. Each year the Manchester Select Board Citizen Recognition Committee accepts nominations from townspeople who have worthy candidates in mind, and then chooses those they felt best exemplify selfless community service. This number can vary from one to five people.

The Manchester Select Board honored 2014's Unsung Heroes at a recent Select Board Meeting. After the names of the 64 past recipients of the award were read from a plaque that hangs in the Kilburn Meeting Room of Town Hall, the five current recipients — Bill and Becky Burke, Robert W. Thompson, Carl Mohlenhoff and Fred Hilliard — were presented with the town's Unsung Hero Award.

"These Heroes are the people who work quietly, often behind the scenes," said Select Board member, Wayne Bell. "The people our community counts on to make happen all the ideas that spawn the events that make these valley and mountain towns such wonderful places to live and raise families."

Of Carl Mohlenhoff and Fred Hilliard, much was revealed about their extensive work for Habitat for Humanity in this region, as well as their work at the Equinox Nursery's "Plant a Row for the Hungry" initiative. The quiet and unassuming nature of each recipient was stressed, with the "behind-the-scenes" mentality of the five winners being reinforced.

Fred Hilliard, for instance, did not even know that such an award existed. To his surprise he received a letter in the mail two weeks prior to the award ceremony. "It feels good," said Hilliard of his award. "And it was surprising! It makes me proud of the work I'm doing. We're already thinking about next year, what we're going to do to improve the farm a bit. With Habitat for Humanity, we'll just keep doing one house after another."

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**Searching for Habitat Homebuyers**

Bennington Area Habitat volunteers will again be very busy this summer. In Pownal we will be building a home with the Gagnon family, and on Jennifer Lane we will be building with the Gordons.

In 2016 we anticipate that we will be building in Bennington on land that we have recently purchased, and also in Manchester, on Jennifer Lane. We will soon begin our search for homebuyers. Please help us expand our outreach efforts so that all who would be good candidates are aware of the incredible home buying opportunity that Habitat offers. Habitat’s criteria for home ownership are very specific:

**Applicants must have a definite need for better housing and they must also be financially ready to take on the long-term obligations of buying and maintaining a home. Income must be between 30% and 60% of the median income for Bennington County. An acceptable credit report is necessary. Applicants must be willing to partner with Habitat and work cooperatively - a minimum of 200 hours of sweat equity are required for each adult home buyer. Attendance at meetings and workshops involving homebuyer education are a mandatory part of the sweat equity requirement.**

Often many of our applicants meet one of these requirements, but not the other. Recently we have partnered with Neighborworks of Western Vermont to provide financial counseling and homebuyer workshops for newly selected homebuyers and also for applicants who are ready to make a serious commitment to minimize or remove financial obstacles that might be preventing them from consideration. We welcome recommendations of potential applicants.

For more information visit our website at www.benningtonareahabitat.com or call our office at 802-367-1000
How Efficiency Vermont works with us…..and could help you!

Over the years, we have worked closely with Efficiency Vermont. We not only want to build homes that are initially affordable for our homeowners, but also homes that are affordable for our home owners to maintain, heat, and light over the lifetime of their homes. This is an elusive goal because, just like computers, the technology for making homes more energy efficient is evolving rapidly. With every house, we find new products and techniques that make our homes more energy efficient.

Efficiency Vermont provides technical assistance, rebates, and other financial incentives to help Vermont households and businesses reduce their energy costs with energy-efficient equipment, lighting, and approaches to construction and major renovation. Jeff Manney has been our primary contact; Jeff inspects our homes at each stage, helping us with advice, and testing to make sure we are meeting Vermont’s stringent energy code. Jeff has been a tremendous help to us, and we greatly value the relationship we have developed.

A secondary goal for us is to model for all Vermont homeowners the benefits of meeting or exceeding Vermont’s energy code. We have learned that many contractors don’t meet the code because doing so increases their labor cost and, when push comes to shove, many home buyers select the lowest bid, not realizing that they are settling for a home that will cost them far more in energy costs; a false saving at best. To be sure, we can build a highly energy efficient home because volunteers perform most of the work. But, we hope that people who know about our work will be motivated to invest a bit more and will follow our example.

When a home is completed, Jeff performs a blower door test, and provides us with a HERS rating. The score is much like the scoring in golf; the lower the better. A score of 70 or below receives a 5++ rating. We are proud that our scores have continued to improve, and we are getting to the point where any further improvement will be cost prohibitive for us. We received a 41 and a 44 for the last homes that we completed, our best scores yet.

Additionally, Efficiency Vermont partners extensively with contractors, suppliers, and retailers of efficient products and services throughout the state. Efficiency Vermont is operated by a private nonprofit organization, the Vermont Energy Investment Corporation, under an appointment issued by the Vermont Public Service Board. We urge our readers to contact Efficiency Vermont to learn more about ways to make their homes or businesses, new or existing, more energy efficient. You are sure to receive some excellent advice and could end up saving money and reducing Vermont’s carbon footprint. To learn more, check out their website at www.efficiencyvermont.com.

HERS Scores—Here are the fundamental ideas behind the HERS Index

(copied from energy Vanguard’s website)

- It's a linear scale, with 100 meaning the rated home has the same energy use as the HERS Reference Home.
- The HERS Index includes the energy consumption from heating, cooling, water heating, lights, and some appliances.
- Each one-point change on the HERS Index scale represents a 1% change in energy efficiency.
- A HERS Index of 0 means the home has net zero energy use. That is, the home produces as much energy as it uses.
- The image below shows the scale for a home with a HERS Index of 65, which would be 35% more efficient than the Reference Home.
Dick Malley Interviews Ruth Banghart, A Habitat Homeowner

When we build a house with and for a family over six or more months, we get to know each other well. Our core volunteers become part of the family. Ruth Banghart’s house, the fifth one we built, was the second one I worked on. I well remember the first time I met Ruth. I had recently joined the Board of Directors, and fellow board member, Jack Gunther and I were asked to meet Ruth and her family at her apartment to assess their need for housing and Ruth’s readiness to partner with us. Ruth was living at Haines Manor in Manchester. The apartment was too small, but I was very impressed with how neat Ruth kept her home. Ruth’s son, Gabe (3) slept in one room, Nicole (14) slept in another one, and Ruth slept on a day bed in the living room. The condition of her home spoke volumes about her pride. I knew that, if given the opportunity, Ruth would take great care of her Habitat home. Jack and I recommended her to the board, and it wasn’t long after when we started to build her home.

I have stayed in touch with Ruth over the years. Ruth has reached out to us and has organized fund raising events, basket raffles, and bingo nights at the Modern Woodmen in Wells. Ruth volunteered to do this, not because she was asked, but because she wanted to help us to assist more hard-working families in need. Ruth’s spirit and gratitude have been inspirational. It is not easy to be a single mom, to work three part-time jobs, to raise two children and to still find time to give back to help others. That is the Ruth Banghart I respect and admire so much!

One snowy evening in early March I had a wonderful time interviewing Ruth for this article.

How did you first hear about Habitat? My mother had won a gift certificate to Camille’s beauty salon, and she gave it to me. Camille started to ask me questions and one thing led to another. Camille asked me if I ever want to live in my own home. Camille’s father-in-law, Jack Gunther, was on the Habitat Board, and Jack encouraged me to apply. I never thought I would be picked. But things fell into place. When the Manchester Lions Club learned that Nicole was disabled (she is autistic) they thought we might qualify for a special grant offered by Lions International. The Manchester Lions Club partnered with Habitat, and they worked together to raise money for my home. It was matched by the International Lions Club. Before I knew it, the land was cleared and my house was started!

Another organization played an important role in my life. At the same time I applied to Habitat I started attending a financial workshop, Assets for Opportunity, taught by Shelley Farris of BROC. I learned essential things about managing my limited financial resources, how not to use credit cards, and how to pay myself first. They had a powerful incentive. If I could save $1,000, BROC would match it with $2,000. It was hard, but I did it! The $3,000 was my money to do with as I wanted. Habitat requires that you pay a $500 deposit when you start to build the home and one month’s mortgage payment when you close on your home. Unlike a conventional mortgage, there was no expectation that I would make a significant down payment. Rather than put the $3,000 in the bank, I decided to pay it all to Habitat so Habitat could use it to help other people like me. The lessons I learned from that workshop have served me well. I am very proud that my credit score today is excellent.

What surprised you most about working with volunteers to build your home? It amazed me to see the house come together, from the blueprints to a finished home. I learned a lot through the process.

How have things changed for you through living in your Habitat home? It made me feel that I had a place of my own! I could go outside my home, I could plant flowers around it, and no one could tell me what I could and could not do. It was wonderful to have my own bedroom and to have peace and quiet.

What advice would you give someone who was contemplating applying for a Habitat home? Do it. Don’t give up. Keep trying. Take it one day at a time. Be willing to make the sacrifices you need to qualify. Focus on the needs, not the wants, and you will get to where you want to go. Don’t think about it. Just do it!
**What have you learned about yourself as a result of living in your home?** I was afraid I couldn’t manage taking care of my home; managing the yard, the bills, and the care of the house. After the first year of living in my home, I realized that I really was doing it! I gained confidence. I loved being independent.

**What did you and your family do to make your house, into your home?** We filled it with love. Everything in the home has meaning to my family and me. Everywhere I look, I see things that were special to me, my friends or my family; things that were given to me by friends and family. There are lots of plants. Last fall I planted 100 daffodils, and I can’t wait to see them in full bloom this spring. One of the first things we did was to put up a swing set, and we built a shed.

**What is special about working with Habitat?** Habitat’s mission is to help people. You pay a mortgage, and the payments help other people. There is no profit motive. Being able to help more people is what motivates Habitat volunteers. When you pay rent, the money goes into someone else’s pocket. When you make your mortgage payment, your money helps someone else.

**If you were selecting a family for a Habitat home, what would you look for?** I would look for need. Does the family really need a better lifestyle and are they willing to work hard for it and to make the sacrifices to make it happen? A Habitat home is more than a place to live. It is a foundation on which your family can grow. Like a good foundation, it provides a stable place from which every family member can grow, secure with the knowledge they have a safe place in which to live. I would look for a family that wanted this and was willing to work to achieve it; willing to live within a tight budget to make it work; willing to invest sweat equity in building their home with volunteers and willing to let go of the things they really don’t need.

**We often say that Habitat is not a hand out, but a hand up. What does this mean to you?** Habitat works with you from the very start. Habitat helps to prepare you for the responsibilities of owning and managing your own home. Habitat is a family organization. You are part of a network. Habitat walks with you through the whole process. Habitat is like a tree. It has roots that go deep, that nourish the tree, and help it survive severe storms. It has many branches that reach out into the community. When the leaves fall, they, like the mortgage payments, help the tree grow stronger and taller, to reach more people. I am glad I am part of the Habitat family tree.

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**Quilt Raffle to Support Bennington Area Habitat**

Bennington Area Habitat is truly appreciative of the fine skills and efforts that went into the quilt that was presented to them recently and of the generosity of time that went into the quilting process. Just as there are many tiny pieces brought together to create a quilt, Habitat homes are the result of many people coming together with their individual efforts and skills. All the pieces fit together to create a thing of substantial beauty.

Women of the Second Congregational Church in Bennington and the Federated Church of East Arlington and friends spent the winter months creating this beautiful, handmade, machine quilted quilt because they wanted to do something to support Habitat, and this is what they do best.

The Double/Queen bed quilt (92”x82”) is currently on display at the Shires ReSale Store in Manchester. Plans are underway to display the quilt at area churches and public venues.

Tickets are $5 each or 5 for $20 and are available at the Shires ReSale Store, the Habitat office, the Federated Church of East Arlington and the Second Congregational Church in Bennington.
The Shires ReSale Store has enjoyed phenomenal support this past year, confirming that there is an alternative to the landfill for our gently used furniture, building supplies, appliances, tools, housewares, and home improvement products. Donors receive a tax deduction and know that their donations will go on to become useful to someone else. Shoppers win with access to goods throughout the year at a fraction of retail prices. It’s a win—win situation!

We are grateful to Jill Simon, our landlady, who has supported our vision with an affordable rent package and to Charlie and Ruth Stewart, Dick Malley and Norma Will who worked tirelessly to move Habitat’s fund raising from auction block to store front.

We are, however, at a crossroads. Our current building on Route 11/30 is under a sales contract. We are hopeful that negotiations for another location in the Manchester area will be successful. Watch for news within the next two months promoting pre-move sales and an announcement of our new location.

Additionally, we are grateful to Amy Maier and Cheryl Young who are coordinating our store operation through this transition period. Both have been volunteers at the store and are familiar with its operation and procedures. We remain open for business on Thursdays and Fridays from 11:00-4:00, and Saturdays from 10:00-4:00.

Are you in need of a “new” dining table and chairs? We have 5 sets ranging from patio, walnut and mahogany, to cherry and maple—round and rectangular. And if you don’t need any chairs, we have 5 tables without designated chairs—to say nothing of many coffee and end tables.

Our store depends on volunteer staff. We are most appreciative to the many members of the South Central Vermont Board of Realtors who provide shift coverage one day per week—that’s 33% of our opening hours!

To join the Shires ReSale Store team, e-mail us at shiresresale@hotmail.com, call us at 802-367-1000 or look for more information on our website at http://www.benningtonareahabitat.com/index.php/shiresresalestore or on our Facebook page.

Shires ReSale Store Remains Open
Located in the old Skier’s Edge Building
Route 11/30 East of Manchester

Thursdays and Fridays 11-4
Saturdays 10-4.
Closed on Sundays.

We will be moving—watch for pre-move sales and announcement of new location.
The mission of Habitat is not to build just homes, but to build community. In the process, Habitat assists a family and helps them move forward on life’s journey, having the security of living in a home that they own, that they built, and of which they are extremely proud.

We are blessed to live in a very generous, can do community. People roll up their sleeves and go to work to meet the needs. The spirit of our community is special and very much worth celebrating.

When we build close to Bennington, organizations that are there such as Prue Electric, Greater Heights, and, when still in business, Greenbergs, to name a few, have been very supportive. Lon McClintock served as our lawyer on a pro bono basis for 15 years. The Career Development Center has built sheds for us over the years. Our 2015 Jennifer Lane home and the home we will build in Pownal this summer will each receive a CDC shed.

For the past three summers the Vermont Country Store has sent interns and teams of employees to help build. They made an extremely generous financial contribution, enough to build one of the homes on Jennifer Lane. Green Mountain Appraisals donates all appraisals—before and after we build. Each year Orvis sends volunteers and has been making an annual contribution. Last fall their managers from various stores in the U.S. spent an afternoon building with us. Lang-McLaughry sent 11 agents for a build day last September. Lou Midura of Midura Builders sends a crew to shingle the roofs of our homes and has done so for the last ten homes. The South Central Board of Realtors has sent groups to help build, is staffing the Shires ReSale Store on Thursday afternoons, and has made a generous financial contribution.

We know how to build homes. But, when we took on the responsibility for upgrading the town water supply, the town road (Jennifer Lane), and building a septic system sufficient to serve twenty-two homes, we were in uncharted territory. Fortunately for us, Chris Cole of Cole Construction, volunteered to coordinate all of the infrastructure work - an enormous contribution to the community. Lawrence White Construction completed most of the work, including building the community septic system, upgrading the town water supply and getting the road ready for Wilk Paving. This was a huge job, and they took a strong interest in what we were doing for the community and worked with us to keep the overall cost within our budget.

While between 3,000 and 3,500 volunteer hours goes into each home we build, we rely on area contractors to complete the work that is better done by professionals. Peter Van Vleck of Van Vleck Construction has served as the site supervisor for four of the Jennifer Lane homes. Phil Mazzucco of R&S Plumbing has completed the plumbing on our last five homes, and Garrett Williams of Garrett Williams' Brophy Electric Service has done our electrical work. Phil and Garrett coordinate their schedules and always find a way to work around our volunteers days so we can keep working. They keep our cost down and have an eye out for products that can be donated or sold to us at cost. A Safe Place gives us a break on the cost to store our building supplies and tools when not in use. r.k.Miles supplies all of our building materials. The staff at Miles help us purchase materials that are appropriate for our homes, will have lasting value and enable us to build a quality and energy efficient home at an affordable price.

It takes a village to build a Habitat home.

National Contributors to Bennington Area Habitat

- Dow Chemical Company—donates rigid board insulation
- Hunter Douglas—donates blinds for windows
- Schneider Electric—donates circuit breakers and panel boxes for
- Valspar—donates paint
- Whirlpool—donates a basic refrigerator and stove
- Yale—donates locks and door fixtures
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**Businesses & Organizations**

- Art Carlucci & Son, Inc.
- Bank of Bennington
- Bistro Henry
- Brown Enterprises
- Cummings & Dailey LLP
- Designs for Living
- Doxxee Roofing
- Dow Chemical Company
- Embroiderers’ Guild of America
- Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston
- Ferguson Waterworks
- Garrett Williams’ Brophy Electric Service
- Glenn Sherman & Sons, Inc.
- Green Mountain Appraisals
- Heritage Family Federal Credit Union
- Hunter Douglas
- Mance Engineering Partners
- Manchester and the Mountains Chamber of Commerce
- Manchester Carpet Care
- Merchants Bank-Manchester Branch
- Midura Building Company
- Morgan Stanley
- Orvis Co. Inc.
- r.k. Miles Lumber Co
- RMS Plumbing and Heating
- Schneider Electric
- Shaw’s Supermarket
- Sonny’s Blue Benn Diner, Inc.
- South Central VT Board of Realtors
- Stewart's Shops
- Stroffolen Drywall
- The Pharmacy Inc.
- Valley Concrete & Construction Inc.
- Valley View Construction
- Valspar
- The Vermont Country Store
- Whalen, Hand & Gilmour
- PLC
- Whirlpool Corporation
- Yale Locks

**Faith Communities**

- Christ Our Savior Parish
- Congregational Church, UCC - North Bennington
- Federated Church of East Arlington
- First Baptist Church of Bennington
- First Congregational Church – Manchester
- First Congregational Church – Manchester Needleworck Group
- Missionary Alliance Church
- Sandgate United Methodist Church
- Second Congregational Church
- Shaftsbury United Methodist Church: The Cooperative Parish of Bennington & Shaftsbury-Circle One Group
- Shaftsbury United Methodist Church: The Cooperative Parish of Bennington & Shaftsbury-Men’s Fellowship
- St John the Baptist Catholic Church
- St. Luke's Episcopal Church
- Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Bennington
- United Church of Dorset and East Rupert

**Foundations and Trusts**

- Alecyn Foundation
- Berkshire Bank Foundation
- Duckworth Charitable Foundation
- James H and Irene M Hunter Charitable Trust
- Lennox Family Charitable Foundation Trust
- Merchants Bank Foundation
- Nichols Foundation
- Wayne & Deborah Granquist Fund of the Vermont Community Foundation

**State Agencies**

- Efficiency Vermont
- Vermont Housing & Conservation Board

**Voted Town Appropriations**

- Town of Arlington
- Town of Dorset
- Town of Manchester
- Town of Rupert
- Town of Shaftsbury
- Town of Winhall

**2014 Global Village Team**

- Steve Acton
- Linda Berger
- Martin Burgess
- Gary Haberlan
- Dave Levy
- Tea Tevy

- David McAneny
- Adrienne Ruffler
- Kevin Serling
- Jacob Woronoff
- Michael Woronoff
- Elvin Yavuz
Memorial and Honorary Gifts

**Given by** | **In honor of**
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Joshua Courtney | Christ
William Dent | UCC of Dorset in celebration of Christmas
Charles Hoyt | Bill Hoyt
David Haley | Brian Maroney
Matthew Lerman & Barbara Zapin | JoAnne & Jon Kronheim’s wedding
Richard & Katherine Malley | Harry Chandler & John Davies
Stanley & Loretta Reisman | Jolyn J. Kramberg’s birthday
David Steffen | Tom Steffen’s birthday
Vermont Kitchen Supply | Julie Hoyt
Thomas Weakley | John Davies

**Given by** | **In loving memory of**
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Richard & Deborah Cutler | Douglas Brunina
Davey Oil, Inc. | Douglas Brunina
The Eriole Family | Douglas Brunina
Anthony Murtaugh | Douglas Brunina
Carolyn Eddington | Douglas Brunina
Susan & James Altland | Lucas Giorgi
Betty Levesque | Lucas Giorgi
John & Carolyn Reed | Noble Levesque Sr.
r.k. Miles Lumber Co. | Vincent Lijoi
John & Marie Davies | Neal Houston
John & Marie Davies | William A. Wadsworth

Dine at Bistro Henry on Mother’s Day and Support Bennington Habitat

For the 10th consecutive year, Bistro Henry will contribute $10 to Habitat for each person dining at their Mothers’ Day Brunch.

We are most appreciative of Henry and Dina’s continuing support of Habitat and encourage you to make the day special for the women in your life.

Don’t let Mothers’ Day sneak up on you—make your reservation now!

**Mothers’ Day Three Course Brunch**

The first course will consist of Main Crabcakes, Fresh Fruit, Lobster Bisque, Asparagus Vinaigrette, Mussels with White wine and Shallots, Potato Leek Soup, Mixed Greens and Grilled Chorizo.

The second course will be Poached Eggs Benedict, Asparagus, roasted Pepper and Vermont Goat Cheese Omelette, Vermont Ham and Cheddar Omelette, Poached Eggs Argyle, Steak and Eggs Diable, Crepes fill with Seafood in a Lobster Tomato Cream, Dina’s Brioche French Toast with Fresh Fruit and Bacon, Crispy Soft shell Crabs with Champagne Butter—$10 supplement, Sliced Leg of Lamb with Garlic Potatoes and Red Wine Jus, Grilled chicken Salad with Roasted Red Peppers and Walnuts, Grilled Salmon with Ratatouille and Cous Cous, Smoked Salmon with a Bagel and all the Fixins, Merlot Braised Lamb Shank with Balsamic Onions—$10 supplement.

**Sumptuous Dessert Buffet** will be presented by Dina.

Three Courses $29.95  Kids $19.95  Service and Beverages not Included
Volunteer Spotlight—Jim Hand and Stuart Hoskins

Happy was the day when Stu stopped by for the first time last fall. He had just retired as a builder and wanted to know if we needed any help. It took about five minutes that first day to learn that Stu knew how to build. Not only does he know how to build, but he has a great personality, goes about his work quietly, and works well with whomever is working with us. We held our collective breath. We hoped so much that Stu would come back often.

Since that first day, Stu has become a member of our core builders group. He has helped almost every Wednesday and Saturday since his first day. There is no job too small or too complicated that he can’t do. This winter Stu and Oliver (Durand) became known as our Winter Warriors. They worked together to build the deck in the back of the house and the wheelchair ramp in the front of the house. They usually had to shovel snow to get to their work, and most of the time they worked in sub-freezing weather. We are most fortunate that Stu decided to join our Core Building team!

Stu Hoskins doesn’t let the cold and snow keep him from Habitat’s work.

Over the years Jim has helped us in several different ways. He helped from time-to-time with building. Anyone who knows Jim, understands that he is passionate about finding ways to conserve energy and reduce greenhouse gases. Jim, and his sons, Jamie and Thomas, served on the design team and contributed their expertise to help us design highly energy efficient homes for Jennifer Lane.

This fall we were all taken by surprise when we learned that Hand Motors had been sold. We thought (and hoped) that now, the time might be right for Jim to become more involved with Habitat. This January, Jim became a member of our Core Builders team. Jim came every Wednesday and Saturday this winter.

In addition to helping to build, Jim’s knowledge of building energy-efficient homes in cold climates is sure to be helpful to us as we continue to learn all we can to make our homes affordable for our families to heat and light.

Jim has become a regular at our Wednesday and Saturday builds.

Volunteers are Needed!

Bennington Area Habitat is soon to begin construction of two homes. One on Jennifer Lane in Manchester and one in Pownal.

We need your help at our build sites. If you can measure, cut or pound nails, we need you. If you can paint, staple or clean up, we need you. If baking is your thing, our builders love goodies at break time!

Beyond the need for volunteers at the build-site, there is a strong need for help that has nothing to do with construction, but has everything to do with building a strong organization. Look over the descriptions of committees on page 30 and see if there is committee work that might appeal to you.

Our Shires ReSale Store has grown beyond expectations. If you would like to help at the store—see page 27 for how to get in touch with us!

Come build with us!
Contact Habitat at 802-367-1000
### Our Incredible 2014 Construction Volunteers

Bennington Area Habitat is blessed with many dedicated and talented “core-builders” who spend many of their Wednesdays or Saturdays building with us. We are inspired and most grateful to these incredible people.

#### 105+ hours
- Keld Alstrup
- Nancy Cilio
- John Cilio
- James Dickson
- Harriett Durand
- Oliver Durand
- Frederick Hilliard
- Stuart Hoskins
- Richard Malley
- Carl Mohlenhoff
- Joseph Ninesling
- Charlie Stewart
- James White
- Olavi Wirikki

#### 30-72 hours
- Steve Acton
- Billy Bazyk
- Linda Berger
- Martin Burgess
- Gary Haberlan
- Eric Henzie
- Fred Kerner
- Dave Levy
- Tea Levy
- Katherine Malley
- David Malley

#### 11-29 hours
- Madison Barrett
- Amanda Begin
- Mari Bennett
- Jack Besemer
- Shania Brown
- Emily Burke
- Peter Chase
- Brian DeCesare
- Wade Devlin-Scherer
- Emma Faucher
- Shannon Gordon
- Terri Hathaway
- Shawn Hazleton
- Stan Jankowski
- Ethan Jones
- Monica Knorr
- Randy Lewis
- Colleen Kunz
- Dave Low
- Levi Maynard
- Scott McClesney
- Sally McManus
- Kelly Mills
- Theresa O’Callaghan
- Jeffrey Rose
- Dennis Schneider
- Todd Smith
- Louis Spafford
- Melissa Trainor
- Barth Vander Els

### Homeowner Partners
- Russ and Lyndsey Van Vleck
- Janet Benson

### Site Supervisor
- Peter Van Vleck
- Curt Merrow

### Construction Volunteers

- Cindy Waters
- Kyle Cullen
- Jacky Ray Crandall Jr.
- Shannon McGibney Howlett
- Bill Hoyt
- Danielle Davidson
- Rob Hunter
- Matthew DeCesare
- Daniel Jackson
- Chris DeFalice
- Tyler Jager
- Rev. Jordan Dickinson
- Jack Elder
- Andrea Kaplan
- Jacky Jordan
- Jacky Jordan
- Rebecca Engard
- Reed Kennedy
- Emma Finfer
- Hannah Kilmartin
- Michael Finnegarn
- Michelle Kraknan
- Bob Fish
- Courtney Leggett
- Nicole Folino
- Jim Lendway
- Leah Fowler
- Abby Liell
- Jody Frederick
- Craig Llewellyn
- Gage French
- Erica Longtin
- Leandro Duque Garcia
- Ben Malley
- Suzy Gedney
- James Maselli
- Dr. James Gray
- Veronica Mayer
- Steve Grzyb
- Frank Maytle
- Alyson Grzyb
- Brittany Mayna
- David Halligan
- Lisa McDonald
- Diane Hammond
- Scott McEnaney
- Jim Hand
- Kathie McHenry
- Dean Hanson
- Michael McKinney
- Ben Harris
- Randy McMunn
- Chris Heitz
- Amanda Merrow
- Samantha Citron
- Steven Hemkens
- Breannon Meuse
- Rev. Kathy Clark
- Glennis Henderson
- Zachary Monforte
- Keith Colbath
- Robert Henning
- Kathryn Montovan
- Jim Comar
- Raebeth Hitchcock
- BreAnna Morse
- Brenda Cooper
- Sarah Holcomb
- Michael Munch
- Roy Cooper
- Kaitlin Horan
- Catherine Murleny
### Construction Volunteers — continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jeanine Myer</th>
<th>Yvette Toledano</th>
<th>The United Church of Dorset and East Rupert</th>
<th>Henry &amp; Virginia Heger</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jim Nagle</td>
<td>Leah Van Buren</td>
<td>St. Joseph’s College</td>
<td>Bill &amp; Julie Hoyt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Nicholson</td>
<td>Rebecca Van Burken</td>
<td>Stratton Mountain School</td>
<td>Elinor Katz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Norman</td>
<td>Cassandra Van Dyne</td>
<td>The Vermont Country Store</td>
<td>Monica Knorr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carol O’Connor</td>
<td>Nancy Yasse-Hansell</td>
<td>Yale Alumni Day of Service</td>
<td>Ellen Leeds</td>
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<tr>
<td>Debra Pagan</td>
<td>Jim Wallace</td>
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<td>Randy Lewis</td>
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<td>Dalton Parker</td>
<td>Sean Warner</td>
<td></td>
<td>Jess Lynn</td>
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<td>Ty Patton</td>
<td>Brenna Warren</td>
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<td>Stan &amp; Micki Lisman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kathleen Pellegrino</td>
<td>Ronald Weber</td>
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<td>Amy Maier</td>
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<tr>
<td>Erin Pelletier</td>
<td>Brett Weber</td>
<td></td>
<td>Joseph McCusker</td>
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<tr>
<td>Simon Perkins</td>
<td>Nate Williams</td>
<td></td>
<td>Linda McGinnis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Andrew Pierce</td>
<td>Shaun Williams</td>
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<td>Curtis Merrow</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monika Plante</td>
<td>Susan Wirkki</td>
<td></td>
<td>Carl Mohlenhoff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kurt Poddick</td>
<td>Karen Worcester</td>
<td></td>
<td>Trudy Myers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barbara Price</td>
<td>Sam Wyman</td>
<td></td>
<td>Jim Nagle</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mike Rancourt</td>
<td>Emily Zars</td>
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<td>David Nichols</td>
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<td>Genelle Rankin</td>
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<td>Nancy Norris</td>
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<td>Lynn Rawson</td>
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<td>Harry Nutting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nina Richmond</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Valerie Oakland</td>
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<td>Marjorie Robinson</td>
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<td>Barbara Owens</td>
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<tr>
<td>Myheka Roper</td>
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<td>Jon &amp; Elizabeth Prial</td>
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<tr>
<td>Craig Rose</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jane Radocchia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kathry Ross</td>
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<td>Cathy Rano</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michelle Rossman</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Rhonda Ruggles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stefanie Rozell</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tim Saunders</td>
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<tr>
<td>Matt Rubino</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sandra Sheppard</td>
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<tr>
<td>Caitlin Ryan</td>
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<td>Steven Sinding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rick Sargent</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Warren Smith</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meghan Sawtelle</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Harry &amp; Sandy Stein</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MacKenzie Scholander</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Charlie &amp; Ruth Stewart</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nicole Scribner</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Diana Talcott</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kaycee Severance</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Rebecca VanBurken</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sydney Shaffer</td>
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<td>Jim White</td>
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<tr>
<td>Allen Shores</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Joe &amp; Norma Will</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katelyn Siras</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sarah Witter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nancy Jean Steffen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cheryl Young</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheryl Stillson</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Michele Zide</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

South Central Vermont Board of Realtors

The South Central Vermont Board of Realtors has been actively involved in helping us with the last three builds. Groups helped to build the Carmouche-Shum, Van Vleck, and Benson homes. Members of the board presented Habitat board member Keld Alstrup and Dick Malley with a generous contribution. We are most grateful to the South Central Vermont Board of Realtors for their keen interest in Habitat’s work in Bennington County.

### Pictured left to right

**Keld Alstrup, Bennington Area Habitat Board of Directors,**  
**Annie Bessette, TPW Real Estate, Outreach Coordinator of South Central Vermont Board of Realtors,**  
**Dwayne Coneeny, Guaranteed Rate Mortgage**  
**Julie Citron, RE/MAX Four Seasons, President, South Central Vermont Board of Realtors,**  
**Dick Malley, Executive Director, Bennington Area Habitat.**
## Committees

**Building Committee**  
*Responsible for developing and monitoring all aspects of our construction schedule. Works closely with each family to determine the final home design.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cliff Beebe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Curt Merrow</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Cilio</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carl Mohlenhoff</td>
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<td>John Davies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charlie Stewart</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fred Hilliard</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peter Van Vleck</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stu Hoskins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olavi Wirkki-Chair</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Homebuyer Selection and Support Committee**  
*Responsible for finding and selecting families for our homes and for providing support partners for Habitat homeowners.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Keld Alstrup</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monica Knorr</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nancy Cilio</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mary-Ann Mento</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kate Coss</td>
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<tr>
<td>Robin Mowrey</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sandi Hedman-Chair</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chris and Gretchen Lima</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loretta and Stan Reisman</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Shires ReSale Store Committee**  
*Oversees the procurement and preparation of merchandise for sale in our Shires ReSale Store.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dick Bailey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosalie Fox</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monica Knorr</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amy Maier</td>
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<tr>
<td>Richard Malley</td>
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<tr>
<td>David Nichols</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ruth Stewart</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cheryl Young</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Community Relations Committee**  
*Creates greater awareness of Habitat’s mission through outreach and presentations to groups, newsletters, press releases, and events.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elise Anton-Co-Chair</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ruth Banghart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marie and Ray Ferrarin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric Green-Website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandi Hedman-Co-Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grigs Markham-Website</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ruth Stewart-E-Newsletter</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Finance Committee**  
*Monitors all our expenses. Prepares the annual budget and works with each committee to ensure that we make the best use of funds.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Harry Chandler</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monica Knorr</td>
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<tr>
<td>Richard Malley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathy Mosenthal-Chair</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brenna Warren</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angela Webster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sue Wilborn</td>
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</table>

**Design Committee**  
*Responsible for designing the homes we build on Jennifer Lane—homes that are attractive, highly-efficient, affordable, easy to maintain, fit into the existing neighborhood and are suitable for volunteers to build.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bill Badger</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cliff Beebe-Chair</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alan Benoit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greg Boshart</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ramsay Gourd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Larry Kolloff</td>
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<tr>
<td>John LaVecchia</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Resource Development Committee**  
*Responsible for coordinating all fundraising activities. To realize our goal of building two homes a year, we need to raise a minimum of $350,000 annually in cash contributions, materials, and services to cover general operating expenses and construction.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Harry Chandler</td>
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<td>Bill Hoyt</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monica Knorr</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ellen Leeds</td>
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<tr>
<td>Richard Malley</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nicole Scribner</td>
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</table>

**Site Committee**  
*Finds land for new construction and/or properties to be renovated for future Habitat homes in Bennington County. Donated properties are most appreciated, and may be used as a tax deduction.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mari Bennett</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Cilio</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brian DeCesare-Chair</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dave Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Malley</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chris Ponessi-Chair</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barbara Price</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barth Vander Els</td>
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**Win Hoyt Gold Tournament**  
*Works closely with the Manchester and the Mountains Chamber of Commerce to organize and promote the annual Win Hoyt Golf Tournament.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alison Hill</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bill Hoyt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tony Hoyt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Malley</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barbara Price</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Southshire Steering Committee**  
*Develops and oversees plans for procuring land and building in the Southshire.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mari Bennett</td>
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<tr>
<td>David Low</td>
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<tr>
<td>Curt Merrow</td>
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<td>Chris Ponessi</td>
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<td>Jane Radocchia</td>
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<td>Alicia Romac</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barth Vander Els</td>
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**Advisory Board**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Member</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John Davies-Chair</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reverend Dr. James Gray</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reverend Mary Lee-Clark</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brian Maroney</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lon McClintock</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mary Morrissey</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charles Waters</td>
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**Volunteer Coordinator**

*Coordinates groups that wish to participate in a volunteer work day.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member</th>
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<tr>
<td>John Cilio</td>
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</table>
If I give to Habitat for Humanity International
will my contribution be used to build homes in my area of Vermont?

- The simplest way to be sure your contribution is used in our area is to contribute directly to Bennington Area Habitat for Humanity and designate your gift for use in the local community. (Bennington Area Habitat tithes ten percent of unrestricted donations to Habitat International)

- If you contribute to Habitat for Humanity International and want your gift to be used locally, you need to designate this when you make your contribution. Indicate you want your donation to go to Bennington Area Habitat for Humanity.

I would like to help build homes for families in Bennington County.
Please accept my donation of $________

Name__________________________________________________________________________
Address________________________________________________________________________
City, State & Zip_________________________________________________________________
Please send me the E-Newsletter once a month_____________________________________  

Make checks payable to Bennington Area Habitat for Humanity and mail to PO Box 1159, Manchester, Vermont 05254

Consider Leaving a Legacy

The support we receive annually from our community is tremendous, yet to our knowledge, many of the people who year after year help our affiliate to grow have not yet considered providing for our continued success through a bequest.

A common misconception is that there is no point in making a bequest unless you have a lot of money to give. This is simply not true! As we are fond of saying, “the only gift too small is the one not given.”

A second misconception is that making a bequest is expensive and requires a lawyer. Again, not true. Making a beneficiary change on a bank, IRA or insurance account takes a few minutes and does not require a lawyer. A statement that a fixed percentage of the value should go to Habitat is all that is required.

If you are older than 70 ½ and are required to take a distribution from your IRA, you can donate a part of this distribution to BAHfH without having to declare the transfer as income.

A bequest to Bennington Area Habitat for Humanity of a specific amount or percentage of your estate can be accomplished with a simple codicil to your will. The language of the codicil would read: “I give, devise and bequeath to Bennington Area Habitat for Humanity the sum of $____ for the benefit of BAHfH and its general purposes.”

We invite and encourage everyone who supports our mission to consider making a legacy gift to our affiliate. Making a legacy gift is a means through which a committed supporter can continue to make a real and lasting difference for the community and for families in need of a helping hand. Legacy gifts will play a vital role in ensuring the work that we are undertaking today can continue well into the future.

Please contact Dick Malley at 802-367-1000 to discuss the options that are available to you.
Matthew Lerman Exhibit at JK Adams to Benefit Bennington Area Habitat

Manchester, VT based environmental photographer and retired biology professor, Matthew Lerman, will be exhibiting some of his unique images at JK Adams from **May 3 to June 30, 2015**. Lerman’s exhibit, “No More Winter,” will be featuring many of his favorite photographs from his vast gallery. Matt will be donating 10% of his profits to Bennington Area Habitat for Humanity.

Matthew’s photography portrays a bit of the natural beauty in our environment - so that others may be interested to love the land and appreciate the importance of preserving the health of our biosphere. Moreover, he loves showing the attractive side of life—making a rusty Mack truck look cool or resurrecting a dying leaf as a beacon of everlasting beauty.

“The interconnections between humans and the land are vital to the continued survival of life on planet Earth. Biology teaches us how to understand how energy flows and minerals cycle through the biosphere. Looking at a landscape, it’s difficult not to be excited by the biology. My photography attempts to portray some of the biology/natural beauty I see—so that others may be inspired to love the land and appreciate the importance of protecting our forest and farmlands for future generations.”

Find Matthew Lerman Photography at www.LermanPhotography.net

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**Board of Directors**

Monica Knorr, President
Ruth Stewart, Vice President
David Nichols, Secretary
Kathy Mosenthal, Treasurer
Keld Alstrup
Rev. Kathy Clark
Sandi Hedman
Ellen Leeds
David Low
Curt Merrow
Chris Ponesi
Nicolette Scribner
Brenna Warren
Cheryl Young

**Emeritus**

Harry Chandler

**Legal Counsel**

Tom Dailey (Cummings & Daily LLP)
Marilyn Hand (Whalen, Hand & Gilmour PLC)

**Advisory Board**

John Davies—Master Builder
Rev. James Gray
Rev. Mary Lee-Clark
Brian Maroney
Lon McClintock
Mary Morrissey
Charles Waters

**Executive Director**

Richard Malley

**Community Relations Associate**

Mari Bennett

**Administrative Consultant**

Alison Hill

**Bookkeeper**

Marilyn Lewis

**Accountants**

Love, Cody & Company

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**Bennington Area Habitat for Humanity**

PO Box 1159 Manchester, Vermont 05254 · 802-367-1000
www.benningtonareahabitat.com
bennhabitat@yahoo.com

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**Grigs Markham and Eric Green provide invaluable assistance to Dick Malley who manages our website and keeps us up to date on Facebook.**

**Ruth Stewart is our E-newsletter editor.**

**Sandi Hedman designed and edited this newsletter.**

**Express Copy prints our newsletter.**

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Receive our E-newsletter, a monthly e-mail update with the latest news about what our affiliate is doing locally. We promise not to send you more than one e-newsletter a month and we do not share our e-mail lists.

To subscribe, please contact us at bennhabitat@yahoo.com

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**Bennington Area Habitat for Humanity**

Spring 2015