GREAT NEWS – The Button family will soon have a new home thanks to you!

Betty Button with her grandchildren Kylie and Scott, Jr

“I’m in awe that so many people are helping to build our home and that the volunteers work so hard.” That’s the reaction that Betty Button, has about the process for her future house being built on Railroad Street in Milton. “I had never done construction before and was nervous about whether I would be able to do a good job on my “sweat equity” hours but it’s been fun! I’ve learned how to cut with a hand saw, how to tape windows and use spray insulation so far.”

Betty is an inspirational woman. She raised her son and daughter by herself and is now the legal guardian of her son’s two children, Scott Jr. who is 10 and Kylie who is 8. She works full time at the UVM Medical Center as a medical assistant, has a scrapbooking business and somehow finds time to collect food for the local food shelf and toys for Toys for Tots! As if that weren’t enough, Betty recently had her long hair cut and donated to an organization which makes wigs for people with cancer and alopecia. Inspired by her grandmother, young Kylie is now growing her hair long so that she can donate it.

One of the requirements to become a Habitat Partner Family is that the family must be currently living in unsafe and/or overcrowded conditions and that is certainly the case with the Button family who lives in a 45 year old mobile home. The two-bedroom mobile home has mold, the siding has pulled away from the walls and mice have eaten the insulation. In addition, the trailer is sinking which has caused the exterior siding to bow away from the walls. Their heating bills last winter were over $2000 and they were still cold.

When Betty found out about Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity, and the information meeting for the Milton house, she became excited about the opportunity to move her family into a safe and decent home. “The process went so quickly and as soon as the Family Selection committee contacted me with questions, I responded immediately! The kids and I anxiously awaited the decision and when I was told that we would become a Habitat homeowner, I burst into tears. We are so grateful for this opportunity to leave very unsafe conditions and move into our own affordable and energy-efficient home.”

“Things are very exciting about having their own rooms. At first they were nervous about changing schools but now they can’t wait to meet their new teachers and to make new friends. Also, they’ll have a yard to play in.”

Betty continued, “There are so many things that I’m looking forward to in addition to lower energy bills. Everything will be new! There will be lots more kitchen cupboard space and a space for my washer and dryer. The heating system will keep us warm in the winter. Helping to build our house is so much fun and moving in will be amazing!”

The Button family with volunteer construction crew members, Grant Pealer and Gill Rodes.
Volunteer Spotlight:
Building Habitat homes in VT and s around the world

It was a hot, sticky day in Anniston, Alabama in 2003 when Mica DeAngelis and Barry Mansfield worked on their first Habitat home as part of a Jimmy & Rosalynn Carter Work Project. Each year since 1984, former President Carter and his wife, Rosalynn, give a week of their time to help Habitat affiliates around the world improve and build homes. The Jimmy & Rosalynn Carter Work Project helps raise awareness of the critical need for simple, decent and affordable housing for low-income families. Barry and Mica were hooked on their first day.

Mica said “Barry had just retired as a college administrator at UVM and I could take two months off from my position with CCV, and we wanted to do something helpful with our retirement. So we thought we’d help build a house for a family. We’ve been very lucky and wanted to give back.”

Now both retired, they spend their winters traveling to Habitat sites around the U.S. in an Airstream trailer with other members of the “RV Care-A-Vanners,” a volunteer program for anyone who travels in a recreational vehicle, wants to build Habitat houses and has fun doing it. Mica estimates that they have worked on 100 Habitat homes in 10 states including Hawaii. Their favorite builds are working with college students during spring break.

In 2005, after Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans and many areas of the Gulf Coast from Florida to Texas, Mica and Barry headed to New Orleans, for their first of five trips there, staying in special camp grounds set up for volunteers by Habitat. Barry worked on at least three homebuilding sites in Chittenden County and has also been a site supervisor for our Women Build event. And Mica volunteers at the Green Mountain Habitat ReStore in Williston one day a week. She said, “We are (Habitat) mission-driven, and we know that whether I help customers buy a couch at the ReStore or Barry helps build houses, we’re helping families. When you work with the families to build their homes you really understand the impact that having a Green Mountain Habitat home will have on them, especially on their children.”

Mica loves helping customers find treasures at the Green Mountain Habitat ReStore

Mica and Barry also continued their volunteer efforts with the Jimmy & Rosalynn Carter Work Project including stints in Los Angeles, Thailand, New Jersey (after 2014’s Tropical Storm Sandy) and this fall they are heading to Pokhara, Nepal for a seven day build from November 1-6. Mica stated that “thousands of volunteers take part in the international projects and can build 80 houses in a week!”

Somehow, in addition to all the US and international volunteer trips they have done, Mica and Barry also help Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity build homes for local families! Barry has worked on at least three homebuilding sites in Chittenden County and has also been a site supervisor for our Women Build event. And Mica volunteers at the Green Mountain Habitat ReStore in Williston one day a week. She said, “We are (Habitat) mission-driven, and we know that whether I help customers buy a couch at the ReStore or Barry helps build houses, we’re helping families. When you work with the families to build their homes you really understand the impact that having a Green Mountain Habitat home will have on them, especially on their children.”

David Carroll, Sales Manager and Treasurer at Rice Lumber Company on Route 7 in Shelburne

Rice Lumber, a local family-owned business, supports the community.

When you drive into Rice Lumber, at 4188 Shelburne Road in Shelburne, you might be surprised by the quantity of materials and buildings. Much more than “just” a source of lumber for building projects, Rice Lumber also provides kitchen and bath design services, tools, millwork as well as a broad variety of lumber.

The term “family-owned” business rings true with the original Rice family starting and owning Rice Lumber for 40 years and the Carroll family owning it for 45 years, an indication of the commitment to customers, employees and the community.

Dennison Rice founded Rice Lumber in 1930 and when he decided to retire in 1970 he asked three of his employees if they’d like to buy him out and they agreed. One of the three men was Wesley Carroll who had worked there since 1954, working in the lumberyard, as a truck driver and then as foreman and dispatcher. Wesley became sole owner in 1985 and his three sons, Jay, Jim and David worked there as well. Today, James is President, David is the Sales Manager/ Treasurer, and Jay is Vice President/Dispatcher and all three believe in giving back to the community.

Rice Lumber began partnering with Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity in 2012 and when asked why, David Carroll responded, “It just made sense and we felt we could help. We have continued the partnership because the Green Mountain Habitat staff and volunteer construction supervisors are great to work with. They know what they are doing, know what they need and are great to work with. The process is easy for us.”

In fact, David said “I would be happy to answer questions from other businesses who are thinking about partnering with Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity and to share how easy it is for a business to work with them!” Our thanks to Rice Lumber for helping to make it possible for local families to leave unsafe apartments and move into their simple, decent Habitat house, built with materials from Rice Lumber.

Arkanglo Dau and Ayat Ding are delighted to be homeowners in the Albert's Way neighborhood. “We enjoy the house very much because our children are safe here and have a place to play. We used to live in a bad part of Burlington and were always worried about our children there. And our monthly expenses in our new home are less than what we paid in rent for a very small apartment.” Arkanglo said.

The annual Women Build event is an opportunity for women, no matter whether they have building experience or not, to help build affordable homes for families. This year’s event surpassed our expectations with 60 volunteers showing up at Harrington Village on May 2. The volunteers built a sidewalk, built window frames, painted walls, installed siding, prepped the ground for seeding and thoroughly enjoyed themselves working side-by-side with two partner families. Steph Gorin, news anchor for WPTZ-TV said “I was part of a 50 women crew helping to build a home for a family that needed one. I met new people, learned new skills and did something kind for strangers.”

How 60 Women and a Few Men Helped to Build Homes!