Why I Give to Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity

We are often inspired by comments from our donors about why they give to GMHfH and thought we’d share what two donors recently wrote to us:

"We believe strongly that everyone should have their own home, and our donations to Green Mountain Habitat are one way we can help."

"As a young girl living in Brooklyn, N.Y., the oldest of 8 children, always hungry, always living in horrible apartments and moving frequently, I swore someday to have my own home. It took until I was in my 20’s and had 3 children but my dream never faded. The day I moved into my home was like heaven. I think GMHfH is amazing, helping people to realize their dream."

Thank you, donors! You are truly amazing.

How You Can Help

Help us build this year’s homes by donating to Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity!

If you would like to donate to help us to build the remaining homes at Albert’s Way and to begin building at Harrington Village you may donate online at [www.vermonthabitat.org](http://www.vermonthabitat.org) or by sending a check to Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity, 300 Cornerstone Drive, Suite 335, Williston, VT 05495. We are a 501 (c) (3) non-profit and donations to us are tax deductible. You could also consider including GMHfH in your estate planning—this is a wonderful way to leave a legacy to help end substandard housing in our community.

Thank you for helping families achieve their dream of owning a simple, decent and affordable home!

Volunteer Opportunities— We need your help!

- Habitat ReStore Volunteers! Volunteers are needed to help our driver to pick up donations, sort and merchandise donations and staff the store. Go to [restore@vermonthabitat.org](mailto:restore@vermonthabitat.org) for information.
- Administrative Volunteers are always needed to work on a variety of marketing, fundraising, graphic design and other administrative tasks. [www.vermonthabitat.org/get-involved](http://www.vermonthabitat.org/get-involved)
- Volunteer to Build! We need volunteers to help build the single-family homes at Albert’s Way in Charlotte and the duplexes at Harrington Village in Shelburne. Go to [www.vermonthabitat.org/get-involved/build](http://www.vermonthabitat.org/get-involved/build) to register.

Meet the Culvers, Our Newest Partner Family!

Amber and Ira Culver plus their son Noah and Ira’s father Ira will be in their new home at Albert’s Way but the time you read this newsletter! The Culvers have been living in a substandard rental house for years. You might find it difficult to imagine that a rental property in Chittenden County could have frozen pipes all winter, a malfunctioning septic system, single pane windows, no insulation and black mold but those are all challenges that the Culvers have had to deal with.

Imagining having to fill up jugs of water at work in order to be able to cook and wash dishes and brush your teeth. Imagine having to take showers at work or at friends’ homes. Imagine paying for electric and propane heaters in the very cold winter we just had and still not being warm because there is no insulation and the windows are single pane. Imagine knowing that your children are living in a home with black mold and unsafe wiring. Imagine a landlord who, when the refrigerator broke, told the Culvers that they would have to buy a new one.

Amber said, “Our lives were impacted by the unhealthy and unsafe conditions at the rental house. My son and I have asthma, the stairs were unsafe, we didn’t have any water and the wiring was unsafe. It was extremely stressful and discouraging.”

When asked what it would be like when you learned that you had been selected as a Habitat partner family, Amber responded “It was overwhelming to know that we would have a permanent home where we’ll be safe and warm and won’t have to move again. And, since I love to cook, I’ll enjoy having level counters in the kitchen and no plywood floors!”

Ira stated “It’s so peaceful at the Albert’s Way site and we won’t miss living on a busy road. Our son has claimed the lazy susan in the corner cupboard as the spot for his cereal and he can’t wait to have land to play on. My father, who lives with us, will have his own bedroom and won’t have to sleep on the living room couch any more. He has loved helping to build our house with all the volunteers and plans to continue to help build the remaining homes.”

Amber concluded, “The word home means the three important things in our lives: parents, spouse, kids and we will have our own forever space. It gives us such pride that we’ll be homeowners.”

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Why Is Habitat a Solution to the need for Affordable Housing?

You might wonder why our Habitat partner families were living in such substandard rental properties. According to the “Out of Reach 2014” annual report on the affordable housing crisis, large numbers of low income renters cannot afford the cost of living in the cities and towns where they work. On the 25th anniversary of Out of Reach, the report continues to underscore the growing challenges faced by the lowest income renters: increasing rents, stagnating wages, and an extreme shortage of affordable housing.

With the demand for rental housing growing, the U.S. vacancy rate fell to 4.1% in the fourth quarter of 2013. And Chittenden County is less than 1%, which means that there aren’t many apartments available and those that are affordable are often not in good condition. The rate is the lowest since 2001’s third quarter. Landlords continued to raise rents in reaction to this trend, with an average price increase of 3.2% over 2013. Rent increases surpass the average inflation rate and translate to higher cost burdens and housing instability for millions of Americans.

Finding a decent, affordable home is a challenge for all renters, but the poorest working households have very few options. Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity is committed to providing a “hand up” to qualified families by building simple, decent and affordable homes. We are able to build new, energy-efficient homes for approximately $140,000, something that no builder or other non-profit is able to do. How are we able to build that? We have been building Habitat houses in Chittenden County for 30 years, we depend on 400 local volunteers per home and some donated materials to keep the costs affordable for low-income working families. Thanks to our donors and volunteers, families are able to leave substandard housing, build or improve credit and provide a stable, healthy environment for their children. Amber and Ira Culver said “Thank you to all the local donors and volunteers who made our home a reality!”

Our 30th Anniversary Serving Chittenden County: Thank you, donors and volunteers!

Without the ongoing generosity of our donors and volunteers we, quite simply, wouldn’t be able to build affordable homes. You might imagine that we, as a Habitat for Humanity local affiliate, receive funding from Habitat International but this is not true. We must raise all of the money needed each year to end substandard rental housing, one Habitat home at a time. Thank you for your donations and making our work possible.

What are we building this year?

Our house building plans are in place and, as soon as Mother Nature makes it possible, we will begin building. This year will be a challenge because we are building in two different locations. We will be building the final two houses at Albert’s Way in Charlotte and we will be starting the first of two duplexes at Harrington Village in Shelburne. The two families have been selected for Albert’s Way and will be starting their sweat equity hours helping to build their homes.

The Harrington Village project is a mixed-generation neighborhood of 42 family apartments, 36 senior apartments and the four perpetually affordable homes which we will build. If you are interested in volunteering, please see our www.vermonthabitat.org website for information.

Lights, Camera, Action!

We have just produced a video and would love to show it to you. The impact of becoming a Habitat homeowner is literally life-changing for a family and we invite you to learn from some of our partner families about what it has meant to them. You’ll also get to hear from several wonderful volunteers who give of their time to make it possible, along with our donors, for low-income working families in our community to have a simple, decent, energy efficient and perpetually affordable home.

To watch our new video, simply go to our website at www.vermonthabitat.org, and click on the link in the Welcome message or go to this URL on YouTube: www.youtube.com/watch?v=V4cOJ7jIgE&feature=youtu.be. If you would like to have us show the Green Mountain Habitat video to your business, church or organization please call Catherine at 872-8726.

E-Mail News

If you would like to receive occasional e-mail updates from us please go to our www.vermonthabitat.org website and click on the link in the Welcome message on the homepage. We send messages out once a month and alert you to volunteer opportunities, updates on the house builds, information about the Williston ReStore and more.

Save the Date!

Cheese Traders and Wine Sellers on Williston Road in South Burlington has selected us to be their non-profit partner at their annual sale from Monday, June 2-Sunday, June 8, from 10 am to 7 pm each day. They are providing us with a table to talk with customers about Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity and the families we serve, and to receive donations, and Cheese Traders will match your donations. Stop by to meet us and to stock up on delicious cheese and wine!

Habitat Williston ReStore Accepts Scrap Metal

The Williston Habitat ReStore now accepts donations of scrap metal including non-working appliances, wire, clean (no oil) metal cans, drums, pipe, aluminum and steel lawn chairs, broken treadmills, weight benches, tire rims without tires and more. Call the store at 857-5296 with questions. We will even take cars and trucks through our Cars for Homes program — go to www.vermonthabitat.org for information.

Buy a chair, help build a house!

Our Williston Habitat ReStore, on Route 2A in Williston, is now open five days a week! Stop by from Tuesday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. or Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. to search our ever-changing donated goods for sale at bargain prices! We have furniture, power tools, cabinetry, appliances, flooring, lights, housewares and much more. When you donate your gently used home items or when you purchase from the ReStore you help to keep materials out of our local landfills AND your purchases help us to build homes here in Chittenden County. We pick up large items and quantities for FREE!