



THE MCSWEENEY FAMILY MOVES INTO THEIR FOREVER HOME IN RICHMOND

THANK YOU FOR MAKING THE DREAM OF HOMEOWNERSHIP POSSIBLE FOR FAMILIES IN OUR COMMUNITY.

Please send in your donation in the enclosed envelope to GMHFH, 300 Cornerstone Drive, Suite 335, Williston, VT 05495, or on our secure website www.vermonthabitat.org

Does your employer match employee donations? – Some employers match employee donations to non-profits. If your company does that, please be sure to enclose the appropriate form when you send us your donation so that we can submit it to your employer for their matching contribution. Thank you!

Leave a Legacy – Please consider helping families in the future by leaving a gift to Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity in your will or estate plans. Thank you!

Suggestions, Please! –If you have suggestions of articles you would like to see in our next newsletter, or questions you would like to ask, please contact Catherine Stevens at cstevens@vermonthabitat.org.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

The Green Mountain Habitat 2017 build season is underway! Visit our online build schedule, accessible on the volunteer section of our webpage, to sign up and stay up-to-date on our job site needs! Contact Allison at volunteer@vermonthabitat.org with any specific questions, or to schedule a group build day.

Interested in helping out at your local Habitat ReStore? Contact Allison at volunteer@vermonthabitat.org to learn more and schedule your orientation. Groups welcome! Please go to <https://vermonthabitat.org/volunteer-opportunities> to sign up.

Join a committee or the Board of Directors. Contact David Mullin at dmullin@vermonthabitat.org or 872-8726 for information.

Imagine living in an apartment, with paper-thin walls, no GFIs, a breaker box next to water and non-working smoke detectors in the two bedrooms. The bathroom was a former closet with holes so big you could see down into the cellar, which had water in it. The couple used lots of spray foam insulation to try to block drafts from the cellar, windows and holes in the walls and covered the opening to the second floor bedrooms in an attempt to keep the small living area warmer. Even though their apartment was very small, the furnace kicked on constantly due to the poor insulation, yet they were still cold.

That was the “home” for James and Katie McSweeney and their three young daughters for 4 long years. Their oldest daughter Nina, 5, has cerebral palsy and other physical disabilities and is in a wheelchair or a walker as well as on a feeding tube. The apartment had no ramp, so not only did they have to carry her inside, but also upstairs to bed. The apartment didn’t have much storage so they had to leave her wheelchair on the porch where it was damaged by weather.

The McSweeneys also have daughters Chanelle, 3 and Kinsley, 9 months. James has been an assistant manager at Domino’s Pizza since 2012 and Katie stays at home to provide full-time care to Nina as well as Chanelle and Kinsley. The family is so excited about moving into their new home in Richmond for many reasons. First of all, the home is one-story and there is enough space for Nina to easily get around with her walker and she doesn’t need to be

carried upstairs to go to bed as she did in their apartment. The house is extremely energy efficient and in the two weeks that they’ve been in the house (at the writing of this article) Katie said “the heat doesn’t need to come on very often and we’re nice and warm! We know that our energy bills will be lower, even though the house is bigger than our apartment. And, we have a bathtub in our new home which makes it much easier to bathe all of our girls rather than the tiny shower in our apartment. James and his father are going to build a ramp to the house in the spring so that Nina will be able to get in and out of the house on her own in her wheelchair.

The McSweeney home is on a very quiet street and there is a yard where the girls can play. James said “The new wiring in the house and smoke detectors have greatly reduced my stress. I used to lie awake in our apartment worried that there would be a fire. Now I can rest easily.” He went on to say, “Owning a home is a wonderful opportunity for us and I’m looking forward to learning how to take care of our house, rather than waiting for a landlord who didn’t fix things. We also don’t have to worry that our apartment would be sold out from under us – this will be our forever home for Katie and me and our daughters.”

Katie added “We want to help build homes for other families and to give back. We are hardworking and striving individuals and look forward to being part of a community. We are so thankful that there are kind-hearted people in this world who work to help others.”

WE EXIST TO HELP PEOPLE ACHIEVE THEIR GOAL OF BECOMING HOMEOWNERS

With a twinkle in her eye, Jane Stickney spoke of the joy that her GMHfH Family Support committee feels when they help a “partner family” through the process of becoming Habitat homeowners.

“We exist,” Jane said, “to make life better for other people. And, if we can help them achieve their ultimate goal of owning their own home, that is rewarding to us.”

Jane’s professional career ties into her volunteer work on many levels. She taught English at South Burlington High School, the Lyndon Institute and Mount Mansfield Union High School and then became a guidance counselor at MMUHS. Her love of teaching, encouraging and helping students to learn and make good decisions was the perfect “training” for her work on the Family Support committee.

Jane is a member of the Green Mountain Habitat Board of Directors as well as chairperson of the Family Support committee. Joining her on the committee are Gail Vogt, Ruth Magill, Sandy Gillim, Dot Slack and Sarah Orndorff, and Sarah is also a GMH partner family who recently paid off her Habitat mortgage after only 11 years! Jane said that having a partner family on the committee is extremely helpful and brings a different perspective to their work.

As soon as the Family Selection committee chooses a new partner family, and the family is ratified by the Board, they are assigned a Family Support person to work with them immediately, through the building process and for at least a year after the family closes on their new home.



Some of the tasks include working with the family to keep their sweat equity log up to date so that the required hours are completed, what decisions do they need to make around their new home, what are homeowners insurance and property taxes, how to set up a budget and lots more.

“What I really like about Green Mountain Habitat is that the emphasis is on the partner family, and that you work for what you get. It’s a wonderful opportunity to help a family understand the importance of putting in their sweat equity (GMHfH requires that a couple do 400 hours of sweat equity as part of purchasing their Habitat home) because it reinforces the importance of a good work ethic.”

Jane went on to say, “I get more out of volunteering than what I put in because I meet people I never would have met and who are dealing with issues I couldn’t imagine. It’s so nice to be part of seeing the families achieve their goal of owning their own simple, decent home, and leaving unhealthy housing behind.”

WHY WE BUILD ENERGY EFFICIENT HOMES

Not only is saving energy good for our planet, it’s also really good for the families who purchase GMHfH homes! Before families become Habitat homeowners they must be living in unsafe and substandard housing and that often includes things like: little or no insulation; drafty old windows/doors and inefficient appliances. This means that their energy bills are high on top of their rent. We believe that if we properly insulate and air seal the homes we build, install efficient on demand boilers for heat and hot water, the best cost efficient windows/doors and exterior sheathing it’s a “win, win” for the family. First, their monthly energy bills will be much lower and the family will also be warmer in the winter and cooler in the summer.

How are we able to achieve this without spending lots of money? We work closely with Efficiency Vermont throughout the building process to make the best decisions to achieve the lowest possible costs, on each house. We also work with local suppliers of materials and services to receive their best costs.

Karen Bushey, AIA, LEED AP BD+C, CPCH, Residential Energy Consultant for the Vermont Energy Investment

Corporation explained it this way:

“The certifications that were received on GMHfH homes included Efficiency Vermont Certified, base tier; Energy Star; and Indoor Air Plus.

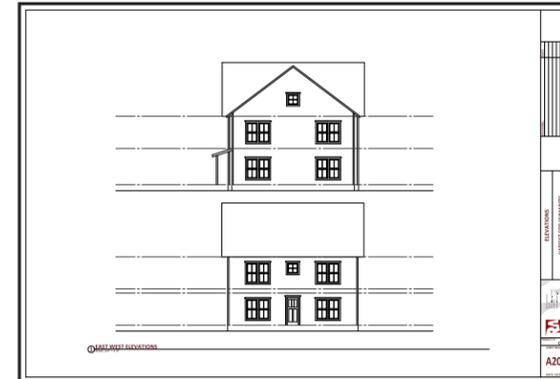
In addition, the HERS (Home Energy Rating System) for the homes have been consistently low (better), which indicates that the homes are above and beyond what is required.”



Foam boards being installed under the basement slab for a R-15 rating.

WHAT ARE YOUR DONATIONS BUILDING IN 2017?

Thanks to your support we will be building a single family home in Burlington and a triplex in Essex Junction along with rehabbing an existing carriage house. If you’d like to volunteer on a build site please go to our website volunteer page and sign up starting in the spring.



UPDATE FROM FAMILY:

Robin McClelland, a Habitat homeowner since 2007 proudly shared with me that her daughter Mahalia is attending the Maine College of Art. Congratulations, Mahalia!

THANK YOU!

YOU improve the lives of local families when you donate to Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity. Each family has been living with lots of stress about high rent, unsafe conditions, cold rooms and no hope of improving their situation no matter how hard they work. The children are moved from bad apartment to bad apartment leaving schools and friends behind.

Your amazing donation changes that! When each family becomes a Habitat Partner Family the parents start building equity in their home, have more disposable income because they pay less on energy, no longer worry about the health of their family in an unsafe or overcrowded apartment, they become part of their new community and their children do better in school.



YOUR LEGACY CAN HELP CREATE A WORLD IN WHICH EVERYONE HAS A DECENT PLACE TO LIVE

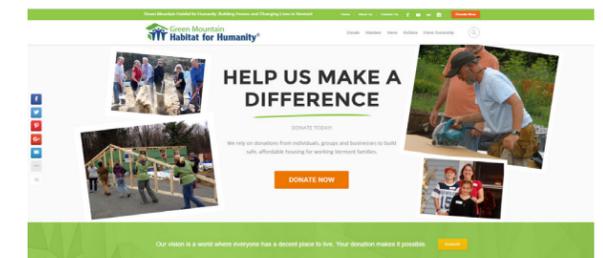
Some people might say that vision is unrealistic but you have demonstrated that you believe, with us, that it is possible. One Habitat home at a time. Two very generous people left bequests to Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity in 2016 and those bequests made it possible to build almost an entire home for a local family! What a kind and helpful act and one that will have an impact for many years to come.

If you would like to leave a gift in your will or trust it is very easy to do with the following words: “I give, devise and bequeath to Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity of Williston, VT the sum of ____ (or a percentage of your estate, etc.)” Our federal non-profit Tax ID # is 22-2558923.

On behalf of the future Habitat families, thank you.

HELP US TO REACH MORE PEOPLE

If you would like us to speak to your company, civic group or church, we would be grateful for the opportunity. Contact David at dmullin@vermonthabitat.org or Catherine at cstevens@vermonthabitat.org and we’ll schedule a time.



If you would like more information about the homes your donations build and the families who are helped, please visit our new website at www.vermonthabitat.org and our new Facebook page.

DOES GREEN MOUNTAIN HABITAT FOR HUMANITY FUNDRAISE BY PHONE?

We recently heard from a wonderful donor who was confused because he had received a phone call from a Vermont cell phone, asking for a donation to Habitat for Humanity. He at first assumed it was from us but when he asked if that was the case the caller said “no, I’m calling for Habitat for Humanity in Georgia.” Habitat International is the international non-profit with whom we partner as an affiliate and they build. If you donate to Habitat International, your donations will build homes in other countries. If you donate to GMHfH, your donations will be used to build homes in Chittenden County, VT