

YOU HELPED THESE FAMILIES!

"I don't feel safe in our current home"

Can you imagine living in a home without a furnace or sheetrock and with mold and mice? Sadly, Misty, Blake and their two children, ages 9 and 15 are living in those horrible conditions. The owner of the house ripped out the furnace but then didn't replace it so the family depends on two pellet stoves for heat, both with questionable piping to outside. The wallboard and many interior walls were ripped out as part of a renovation, but the owner moved out of state without replacing them. In fact, the owner went into bankruptcy and the house is now in foreclosure and Misty and Blake received an eviction notice. The daily stress and feelings of insecurity are unimaginable.

Kristy, the 9 year old daughter, said she doesn't feel safe in the house and their son, Chad, worries that the house will fall down around them. Misty and Blake have tried many times to remove the mold with bleach but it hasn't worked.

Misty works full time as a Licensed Nursing Assistant, first at a nursing home and now doing home care helping seniors to stay in their own homes. Blake works full time for Lowell Moving & Storage, owned by an earlier Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity partner homeowner! They only have 1 car so it's a juggling act to get to their jobs.

Facing eviction, even from such a deplorable home, has been very stressful for the family and when they learned that they had been approved to become homeowners for the Essex Triplex they were overjoyed! "The new home will mean stability, health and safety for our family" said Misty, and we'll all have a bedroom, rather than sleeping in the kitchen by the pellet stove."

Blake continued, "We will be so grateful to have a safe, permanent home for our kids to grow up in, where we can all develop friendships in our new community."



Misty doing Sweat Equity work in her family's future home



The family on the stoop of their soon-to-be home.

"If there is a will, there will be a way"

Dilip and Mongali Rai have been through years of misery but never gave up hope.

"If there is a will, there will be a way. Growing up in a refugee camp, living there for 20 years, there was no hope of owning a home" Mongali said "I want to salute the philosophy of Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity's "hand up", because that is making it possible for my husband and I to help build a home for our two young children. We are both custodians, doing maintenance for two local companies, and buying a home on the open market isn't possible."

Dilip shared that the apartment complex where they currently live has crime and it isn't safe for their young son, who is 5 years old, has a speech impediment and is bullied. "Kids have spit in his face and broken a window in our apartment with a rock. We first applied for a Habitat home several years ago and have reapplied each year and are so grateful that we were selected! It will change our lives.



Dilip, daughter Aaral, son Aaron and Mongali

BUILDING HOMES IN THE FUTURE

We recently learned that a longtime supporter of Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity and the families we serve passed away and left a bequest to help build future homes in his will. It is always overwhelming to know that a donor shares our vision of a world where everyone has a safe place to live, not only by supporting the current needs but also in the future.

If you would like to add a bequest in your will, we thank you. Here is the simple legalize to do so:

"I (name) of (city, state, zip code) give, devise and bequeath to Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity, Tax ID 22-2558923, (written amount or percentage) for use at Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity in Williston, VT.

DO YOU KNOW?

You, the donors who dramatically improve the lives of Habitat partner families with your financial support, are greatly appreciated by the families and the Board and staff of Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity. We wonder if you might also be able to help with any of the following:

1. Do you know of building lots for sale in Chittenden County? We are looking for lots to build homes on next year. Please contact David Mullin, Executive Director, at 872-8726 or by email at dmullin@vermonthabitat.org if you do.
2. Do you know of churches, civic organizations or businesses where we might give a presentation about the need for affordable and decent homes for low-income working families? Please contact Catherine Stevens, Advancement Director, at 872-8726 or by email at cstevens@vermonthabitat.org if you do.
3. Do you have suggestions on how articles you'd like to see in future newsletters and/or how we can do a better job of communicating with you about how your donations help families? Please contact Catherine Stevens, Advancement Director, at 872-8726 or by email at cstevens@vermonthabitat.org if you do.

Thank you!

“A home for me and my three sons is a dream come true”

Brinkley and his sons Kellby, Jared and Tobias currently live in a very expensive 2-bedroom apartment in Burlington and they can't wait to move into their new Green Mountain Habitat home in the triplex in Essex Junction. As you might imagine, they each have different things they are looking forward to.

Brinkley, who works full time at Lake Champlain Chocolates, is anxious for an affordable and safe home for his family in a nice location where they'll be able to walk to many places including Tobias' school. "The luxury of having 1 1/2 bathrooms will be amazing. I used to dream of building my own home and being able to do my Sweat Equity hours will make that dream come true. Owning an affordable home will be a game changer and provide stability for my family."

Jared, in his second year at UVM's Honor College likes how modern and efficient the new home will be. He has a full scholarship at the Honor College with a double major in physics and statistics and plans to pursue a PHD in Quantum Physics!

Brinkley said "Just having a place to call our own and with 3 bedrooms instead of 2 will be wonderful" said Kellby.

Youngest son Tobias is looking forward to trees to climb in the backyard.

"I've been looking at houses but couldn't come close to affording them. We're so fortunate to become part of the Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity family. The new home in Essex will let us become part of the community and able to just say "hi" to people who walk by the front porch will be so nice."



Kellby, Tobias, Brinkley & Jared on the front porch of their new home

“Home ownership wasn't even a dream for my son and me”



Dawn and her 12 year old son Taylor have been through a lot. Several years ago, their apartment burned due to a fire caused by an upstairs tenant, and a friend offered them a place to stay. She has been paying rent and utilities to the friend but it's been very stressful as the friend has said they need to find another place to live. Dawn works full time but doesn't earn enough to even think about buying a home until she learned about Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity and the carriage house in Essex. Green Mountain Habitat, as you know, tore down a house which burned and has been building a new triplex for three families. On the property was a small 2 bedroom apartment over a garage, just right for a mom and her son!

"It will be a bright future for us, having our own home, because we have dealt with a great deal of stress. I feel like my son will grow and prosper in a safe environment—we're still in shock that we were selected to become homeowners!" Dawn said. She went on to explain that her son has been very depressed with their current living situation. "The trailer park has kids who get into trouble and Taylor is afraid to go outside to play. But in our future home he'll have his own room, there will be nice children to make friends with and he'll do better in school. And I'll feel much more secure about our future."



Thank you for making it possible for families to achieve the dream of a home of their own! These Habitat built homes wouldn't be possible without YOU!

VOLUNTEERING WEEKLY TO HELP BUILD HOMES

“The partner family had no construction experience but was willing to do whatever needed to be done”

Bill Livingstone retired five years ago and wanted to do something to give back to others who weren't as fortunate. He discovered that Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity builds homes for families locally, so he went to our website and signed up to work at the Albert's Way neighborhood in Charlotte in May, 2014 and has been volunteering ever since.

Like many Vermonters, Bill bought an old house years ago and wanted to do improvements. He hired a local builder to help and ended up working on his crew for a while to gain experience as well. After gaining all that experience, he decided that helping to build homes for local low-income families was something that he had the experience to do. "It's one thing to make a mistake on your own home" Bill chuckled, "but you sure don't want to make a mistake on someone else's home!"

"I met Mike Welch (a GMHfH construction supervisor) at the Charlotte project and we just hit it off so I signed up to volunteer the next year at the Harrington Village homes in Shelburne. Mike is so good to work with and puts people at ease, whether they have any building experience or not. It's a real skill to have 4 or 5 people show up on site every day and have to train and organize them, and then do it all over again the next day. Once Mike saw what I could do, he would have me take 1 or 2 of that day's volunteers to work on a specific task and he would work with the others."

Bill helped to build the home in Richmond in 2016 for the McSweeney family and in 2017 worked with Mike a day or two each week building the Elmwood Avenue house in Burlington for the Pradhan family.

"Lal and Muna Pradhan are very hard workers", said Bill, "and although they had no experience they would do whatever Mike asked. One day Muna, who had never been on scaffolding before, didn't hesitate when Mike asked her to do some work on the scaffolding. I was very impressed with them. They are very hardworking people, with several jobs, raising their kids and willing to do whatever it takes to help their family become more secure. It's been very rewarding to help families, who aren't as fortunate as me, to become homeowners."



Bill Livingstone supervising volunteers at the 2015 Women Build in Shelburne

“We feel there is love built into the walls of our new home!”



A Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity home dedication is always a joyous event for a family leaving unsafe housing behind and moving into their new home. On January 20th, Lal and Muna Pradhan, their two young sons and Lal's father Tara, welcomed family and friends, volunteers and donors to celebrate, with delicious food made by Muna.

Lal said that they are overcome with all of the people who helped to make their home possible and that they truly feel that there is love built into the walls of our new home.

Welcome home!

WHAT YOU ARE HELPING TO BUILD THIS YEAR!

- The Essex project will be completed by the time you read this newsletter and 4 families will be packing up to move into their new homes.
- We will be building a duplex and a single family home in Burlington and will be renovating another home to make it energy efficient and safe.

