



Habitat
for Humanity®
of Otsego County

HABITAT
HAPPENINGS

607-432-7874

OUR SEASONAL NEWSLETTER
403-B Chestnut Street, Oneonta, NY 13820

HabitatOtsego.org

BUILDING SIMPLE, DECENT HOMES SINCE 1989

SPRING 2019

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Spring flowers are starting to tentatively poke their heads above the ground! We are coming out of the long winter and looking forward to warmer, mild weather. As you can see on pages 2 and 3, we have been busy at McFarland Meadow despite the weather this winter.

Our **annual leadership retreat** was snowed out in January, but we were finally able to hold it March 2nd. A team from Habitat for Humanity New York State joined us for the day. We partnered with them in applying for a three-year USDA Rural Community Development Initiative (RCDI) grant. The purpose of this grant is to help Habitat chapters build their organizational capacity. During December, our leadership team completed an assessment survey to identify our organizational strengths and challenges. The NYS team summarized the assessment results and trends and helped us start to develop capacity building goals for the three-year grant period. These goals will help us to meet our challenges and strengthen the organization. Work has begun on year-one goals to increase our volunteer base, recognize our volunteers, increase awareness of HFHOC in the community.

As you may have noticed from reading our masthead, this year **HFHOC is celebrating our 30th anniversary!** Therefore, one of the things we will be doing this year to increase awareness of HFHOC in the community is a community celebration of our anniversary. HFHOC was first organized as the Northern Susquehanna Habitat for Humanity chapter

in 1989. The chapter's initial project was rehabbing a roof on a home in Unadilla. The very first house was built on Reynold's St. in Oneonta in 1990-1991. During those first years, members participated in work camps in South Carolina with students and travelled to Honduras to build Habitat houses after Hurricane Hugo. Members of NSHFH were instrumental in getting new affiliates started in Delaware County, Broome County and Chenango County, as well as campus chapters on both the Hartwick and SUNY Oneonta campuses. In April 1996, NSHFH became Habitat for Humanity of Otsego County. As such, this spring we will be breaking ground for our **35th house!**

What are we doing this summer? In addition to the anniversary celebration, we will be working to complete the house (# 33) in Middlefield as well as the first house (#34) in the McFarland Meadow development. We will also begin building the second house (#35) in McFarland Meadows. So, you can see, we need lots of volunteers – **come join in our work building simple, decent affordable homes.**

None of this would not be possible without many, many volunteer hours. We want to thank all of those who have worked on the building site, helped provide lunches for the Saturday work crews and who help to keep the organization going behind the scenes. **Thanks to all of you!**

Mary Ann Dowdell, HFHOC Board President

HOW HOUSING AFFECTS CHILD DEVELOPMENT

A message from habitat.org

Growing up in a decent, affordable home can have a powerful effect on children. Studies draw a straight line between the quality, location and affordability of housing and a child's ability to thrive. On the other hand, low-quality housing — often accompanied by pests, poor ventilation, lack of heat and other detrimental factors — has been strongly linked to physical health problems for children.

In addition, the stress that parents experience due to living in poor conditions can translate into emotional and behavioral problems in their children. Children whose families who are forced to move frequently in search of better, more affordable living situations often struggle. And parents paying too much for a place to live often must deplete financial resources that otherwise could be invested in their children's health, education and futures.

“By building and restoring safe, clean and healthy housing, Habitat works to eliminate children's experiences of substandard housing, thereby supporting their growth and development.” says Boston College's Rebekah Levine Coley and Tufts University's Tama Leventha.

Surveys of families with safe, stable and affordable housing show fewer health problems, improved school performance, less psychological stress and more self-assured parents. Wherever Habitat for Humanity works, strong and secure homes contribute to strong and secure families.



Stable housing is foundational to children's growth and well-being.

BUILDING PROJECT UPDATE

Up on the rooftop!

In the fall, we were struggling to shingle the roof on the new house at McFarland meadows. We called Tim Whitehead, owner of T.W. Contracting early last November and asked if he could come and give us some pointers on how to shingle the valleys. Tim graciously agreed, but wouldn't you know that every workday after that it either rained, snowed, or was too cold for us to get up on the roof. Just before Christmas, Tim showed up one Saturday and said he and his crew would do the roof the next Friday if the temp was at least 40 degrees and the snow was melted off it.

The snow was off the roof the next week, and come Friday there was Tim! He had half the roof done by 11 a.m. and when we called to check in at 1:30 p.m. he said he was home in his recliner! What a great Christmas present! Thank you Tim!

WHEELCHAIR RAMP DONATED

HFHOC gratefully thanks the family of Michael Mongillo for the generous gift of a complete commercial wheelchair ramp system. It will be used by our Home Accessibility and Safety Small Projects (HASP) Program to help a deserving community member in the future. Born and raised in Oneonta, Mr. Mongillo enlisted in the Navy and served in the Pacific in WWII. He returned to Oneonta, married and raised a family, and enjoyed a 38-year career working for the D&H Railroad. He is remembered as a man that never missed an opportunity to help family, friends or neighbors. His family is pleased to make this donation to our community in his memory.



BUILDING PROJECT UPDATE CONTINUED

We can see the finish line!

Our first Partner Family Home to be built at McFarland Meadows is approaching the finish line. Our volunteers and partner families have been working hard, and it is about to pay off!

However, there have been a fair share of difficulties along the way. First, we got started late as we had to wait for permits, etc. from the Town of Oneonta. Second, we decided to try something new with the heating system, geothermal, and that proved to be more time consuming to install, though we have learned a lot about this alternative heat source! Finally, the weather has not cooperated giving us snow, wind, and rain, making getting all of the outside work done more problematic.

Spring is here and we are excited to finish up our first house on this property and get working on their first neighbor's house!



Above, partner family members Brad Conforti and his daughter at the build site. Below: House number 1 at McFarland Meadows is almost complete!



APPLICATIONS OPEN FOR NEW PARTNER FAMILIES

Seeking prospective partner families! Habitat for Humanity Otsego County works in partnership with local families to build decent and affordable housing for those who qualify. It is our belief that all people should be able to live in decent affordable housing.

Selected partner families are assisted in completing the requirements applying for low-interest mortgages designed for low to moderate income families. Because volunteers (including the partner families) provide the majority of labor, our homes can be sold to our partner families at attractive prices! Owning a home can become a reality!

It takes about two years from the time an applicant is accepted, to the home's completion. This allows time for partner families to prepare for homeownership and to complete required homeownership education, as well as time for a home to be built. Our Homeowner Support Committee act as mentors throughout the entire process. Partner with HFHOC for your future!

The application is open April 1 - June 1. We will be hosting an information session for interested families on **April 27, 2019 at 4:45 p.m. at our McFarland Meadows site.** Please call or email for additional information about the meeting or to get a copy of the application.

Reach us at hfhoc@gmail.com or 607-432-7874.



HABITAT HAPPENINGS

SPRING 2019

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES ABOUND!

Habitat for Humanity of Otsego County (HFHOC) relies on our amazing volunteers to carry out our goal of eliminating substandard housing in the county.

Do you know anyone looking to become more involved in our community? HFHOC is the perfect organization for families, professionals, retirees, and anyone looking to pay it forward.



We have jobs for everyone including:

- Organizing events to raise funds for HFHOC and increase awareness of the work of our affiliate.
- Helping to coordinate efforts at the worksite. This involves ordering materials, organizing volunteers, government partnerships for permits, etc. This volunteer need not be a contractor or retired contractor but should have good organizational and planning skills.
- Helping with ongoing publicity efforts.
- Serving on the various committees of HFHOC and/or serving on the Board of Directors.

If you are interested in volunteering with Habitat for HFHOC, please reach out to Marjorie Pietraface at 607-432-1385 or email marjorie.pietraface@oneonta.edu.