



**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

SUMMER 2021

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Summer is here and the living is – busy!  
Have you taken a drive north out of Oneonta on route 205 past the growing neighborhood on McFarland Road? Next time you are out and about, slow down as you go by and take a good look at the homes sprouting up there. In April we resumed work on the third house in the neighborhood we are building. The first two houses have families living in them. We hope to have a new family ready to move into the third house this fall. This house has a unique construction. We used insulated concrete form (ICF) to build the basement and main floor walls for the house. That, along with the heat pump technology used, makes the house well insulated and energy efficient for the new homeowners.

On May 12th, we broke ground for a house on lot number four. We will be using the same construction techniques for this house. In addition, a focus for this house will be handicap accessibility. Pictured at right are Jamie Canfield & Nicoles McCoy who hope to be able to purchase this or another Habitat house.

A special challenge facing Habitat this year is the cost and availability of building materials. Due to a number of pandemic-related factors, cost lumber and various building components have increased two to three times this year. The costs of the ICFs have also gone up. Construction delays due to supply line delays also frustrate our efforts. However, our volunteers and suppliers are working hard to keep construction going. Your ongoing support, financial and non-financial, are needed and deeply appreciated.

In the last newsletter I described the joy experienced when a family can finally purchase a Habitat built house. For three families, home ownership came full circle this spring as they paid off their mortgages! It was my deep pleasure to sign the discharge papers on these mortgages as they fulfilled their dream of owning a home of their own (see article on page two).



*Partner family Jamie Canfield (L) and Nicoles McCoy (R) pose with shovels after helping break the ground on lot four at Mc Farland Meadows.*

How can you get involved?

Bring you knowledge, skills, and enthusiasm to join us in working to eliminate substandard housing in Otsego County. We need you on our working committees and/or on the building site. Donations are also always accepted to help us with building expenses.

—

Mary Ann Dowdell, HFHOC Board President

## RV CARE-A-VANNERS COMING

Short-term Volunteers Expected

In September we will welcome a special group of Habitat volunteers. RV Care-A-Vanners travel around the United States to assist local chapters with their builds. We will welcome a group of nine who will assist with installation of sheetrock in our build on lot four at McFarland Meadows

The RV Care-A-Vanner program is offered by Habitat for Humanity International and is open to any volunteers who are able to travel the country by recreational vehicle. Several groups are deployed to assist affiliates all over the country and Canada each year. These volunteers come equipped with building skills, their own basic tools, and a strong sense of teamwork.

We are looking forward to hosting the Care-A-Vanners September 26 through October 3!

## MEMORIAL BENCH INSTALLED

Anonymous Donor Helps Remember Late Site Supervisor

A bench in memory of our late site-supervisor Terry O'Hara was donated and installed in front of lot two at McFarland Meadows. Terry oversaw the construction of lots one and two at McFarland Meadows and was dedicated to ensuring the homes we built were safe and comfortable for partner families. The bench will be available to families at McFarland Meadows to enjoy.



## THREE FAMILIES PAY OFF MORTGAGES

Partner Families Fulfill Dreams

Over the past six months three partner families have reached the exciting milestone of paying off their Habitat for Humanity mortgages.

**Congratulations to the Tewolde/Halie, Allen, and Stewart families!**

The families were recognized during the July board meeting. Kbra Tewolde was joined by her oldest son, Fray Halie. Kbra raised her six children in her home in the City of Oneonta. Dennis Allen represented his father Sam Allen, who was at work, at the meeting. Sam made his final mortgage payment in March on the home where he raised Dennis and his sister Autumn in the Town of Oneonta. In February, Pamela Stewart's family made the last payment on her home in Hartwick where she raised her three children.

Having partner families complete their mortgage obligations is a great cause for celebration and integral to our mission of helping families in our county have safe, affordable housing.



*Kbra Tewolde and her oldest son, Fray Halie are pictured with Dennis Fowler, Emery and Nancy Herman who helped build their home.*

## BUILDING UPDATE

### Progress Continues at McFarland Meadows

We began building again in April and put the finishing touches on the house on lot three at McFarland Meadows. Luckily, we had completed all of the exterior work back in the fall and we were able to focus on finishing touches through the spring. Lot three will be ready for the our next partner family to move in on as soon as they have arranged the mortgage and closing date.

We broke ground on lot four in May with our newest partner family, Jamie Canfield & Nicoles McCoy.

For lot four we once again used insulated concrete forms (ICF) to build the foundation. This is our second build using this technique and our building crew is getting good! See the photos below.

As of June 1 we are able to welcome new volunteers back to the worksite. If you're interested, you can join us on Thursdays or Saturdays from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., though you do not have to stay for the entire time. If you're interested in signing up to volunteer, please email Marge Pietraface, our volunteer coordinator, at [marjoirie.pietraface@oneonta.edu](mailto:marjoirie.pietraface@oneonta.edu).



*Installing the foundation using ICF forms at lot four on McFar.and Rd. .*



*Installing outlets and appliances at lot three on McFar.and Rd. .*



## NEW BOARD MEMBERS

### Meet A Member!

Since September 2020, we have welcomed four new members to our Board of Directors; Jerry Blechman, Victoria Brown, Barb Dorsey, and Amy Losee.

#### Meet A Board Member: Jerry Blechman

Jerry Blechman is a retired professor and department Chair from SUNY-Oneonta's Earth and Atmospheric Sciences department. He has been a great addition not only to the board, but as a regular at our build site. Jerry lives in Oneonta and got involved in Habitat because, as he puts it,

"I have lived in rental housing, sometimes with great landlords who maintained their properties well, but at other times with absentee landlords who did not. That was hard. Together with my wife Amy, we had the financial resources to buy our own home but many folks, through no fault of theirs, do not. Habitat does a great service by making it possible for families to buy a house who may not be able to on their own. That also improves the society in which we live, since home-ownership produces residents who have an interest in the community. Everyone wins and, by the way, building houses is fun!"



## HABITAT HAPPENINGS

SUMMER 2021

### APPLICATIONS OPEN

#### Seeking New Partner Families

We are seeking applicants for potential partner families who are interested in our help to become home owners. Anyone who has lived or worked in Otsego County for the past year and who currently lives in unsafe, unsanitary, overcrowded, temporary, or unaffordable housing is encouraged to apply. Partner families should have a sustainable income, but may be unable to secure a conventional mortgage. A willingness to work with Habitat by volunteering time (sweat equity) is also required.

**The application for interested families is open until August 16, 2021.**

The applications and additional information can be obtained on the Habitat for Humanity Otsego County website ([habitatotsego.org](http://habitatotsego.org)), calling the office at 607-432-7874, by emailing [habitatotsego@gmail.com](mailto:habitatotsego@gmail.com), or via a written request to 403B Chestnut St., Oneonta NY 13820.

Families who are selected to partner with HFHOC will be assisted in completing the steps in purchasing a home, including the application for a low-interest mortgage.

Local volunteers provide the majority of labor, so our homes are sold to partner families at extremely attractive prices! 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 house to be built.

HFHOC's Homeowner Support Committee act as mentors throughout the entire process.

An Information Session/Open House for those considering applying will be held on August 5, 2021 at 7 P.M. at the recently completed Habitat home on McFarland Road.