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Summer 2003

# Helping Hands

Habitat for Humanity Millstone Basin Affiliate, Cranbury, N.J.



## Affiliate Breaks Ground in East Windsor for Next House Behind GMAC Sponsorship, Windsor Nissan Support

Ground was broken in May on Evan Avenue, East Windsor, for what will become the affiliate's sixth house. The house will be the home of Elizabeth Gomez, her daughter Victoria, her son Giovanni Jimenez, and her parents Nelson and Gloria Gomez.

Construction of the Gomez house is being made possible by a grant from Detroit-based GMAC Financial Services. The \$53,000 donation represents the approximate cost of a Habitat house in New Jersey.

Tied to that sponsorship, local support is coming from Maguire Automotive Group, owned by Marcy and Bob Maguire. Employees from Windsor Nissan, in Hightstown, and other dealerships owned by the Maguires, will volunteer for work teams this summer and fall.

Millstone Basin volunteer Thomas Hall, husband of past-president Judy Hall and one of the affiliate's attorneys, was instrumental in this grant money coming to the affiliate.

"It is Tom's dedication to Habitat, his vision and his persistence that made this become reality," said Glenn Fannick, acting president of the affiliate. "We are truly blessed to have supporters like Tom."

East Windsor Mayor Janice Mironov attended the Ground Breaking and spoke about how Habitat's work

in East Windsor is representative of the way people in East Windsor come together.

GMAC, its parent company General Motors Corp., and its subsidiaries have helped Habitat for Humanity International build houses in 17 states and four Canadian provinces - including one in Burlington County and one in Bucks County.

Supporting Habitat for Humanity "not only makes good community sense to us, but good business sense as well," says James E. Farmer, vice president, GMAC Merchandising, Advertising and Communications, of the agreement that initially encompasses more than three dozen house builds. "As we build houses with families in need, we provide a foundation where the key aspects of our business-motor-vehicle financing, insurance needs, mortgages-can take root while offering our employee volunteers a tremendous opportunity to give back to their own communities."

The Gomez family, currently living in Plainsboro, are already working on collecting their 500 "sweat equity" hours. This represents the volunteer effort every partner family must contribute to the construction of their house.

## Youth-Sponsored House Being Planned for Next Year

Millstone Basin Area has launched an initiative called Youth United, as a challenge to local young people to build a Habitat for Humanity house in East Windsor. House sponsorship means young people, ages 5-25 will raise awareness of Habitat for Humanity's presence in the community, raise the approximately \$53,000 it costs to build a Habitat house in East Windsor and then actually build the house.

The focus of Youth United is giving young

For the rest of the money, youth will also seek donations in the form of grants from the local business community and houses of worship. After the funds are raised, youth (ages 16-25) will take on the construction of the house during 2004.

### Youth United Rocks to Early Success

Members of the Hightstown United Methodist Youth Group helped our Youth United initiative get off to a strong start by holding an overnight

people a chance to get hands-on experience in volunteering, building community, learning how to work with people of all backgrounds and faiths and supporting the mission of Habitat for Humanity.

Groups of grade school, middle school and high school children are being encouraged to run fund-raisers during 2003. This is a great opportunity for scouts, church youth groups, after-school clubs and other service organizations to take part in an organized effort that will make a real difference. Each group will be given a fund-raising goal of \$500 to \$2,500, depending on its size and age range. The affiliate will then actively support each of these groups in its efforts by lending training, materials, publicity support and the like.

It is anticipated that more than half of the required \$53,000 will be raised through these grass-roots fund-raisers. Groups might decide to run a car wash, 5K run or merchandise sale.

## Family Selection Committee Reviewing for Next Family

The Millstone Basin's Family Selection Committee is in the process of reviewing about three dozen partner-family applications to determine who will be the family chosen for house No. 7. The selection process takes about five months to complete. The first phase, distributing the applications, was completed in May. The current phase, reviewing the applications for completeness, will continue for a few more weeks. This is followed by communicating with the applicants to clarify any missing information and re-reviewing that information.

At that point, those families who the committee determines meet the income requirements (between 25% and 50% of the median income of the county) and are willing to partner (volunteer 500 hours to the affiliate) will move on to the next phase - the home visit.

The home visit is a vital step, giving the family a chance to meet a couple of committee members and further discuss the program. It also gives the

"Rock-a-Thon" March 29. The event raised \$950 for the Youth United fund.

The Rock-a-Thon involved senior high-school students rocking from 8 p.m. to 8 a.m. - in rocking chairs. They raised money by having their parents and others sponsor them for the night.

Members of the youth group came up with the idea after being challenged to be creative with the type of fund-raiser they took on.

"We exceeded our monetary goal," said Diane Forer, youth group leader. "We thought we might raise \$100. But, the youth really worked hard to get sponsors from friends and family and our church family supported us in a tremendous way. A special communion offering was dedicated to Youth United. The youth are very enthusiastic about helping with HFH and are actively pursuing other ideas for raising money," Forer said.

committee members the opportunity to see the family's current housing situation to see if it meets Habitat's definition of inadequate housing.

In the next phase, the committee discusses all those candidate families who are still being considered and takes one, two or three suggestions to the board of directors.

At the end of the process, the Family Selection Committee will recommend a family to the Board of Directors for approval. The process has been designed so that the board, which makes the final decision on partner families, does not know the name, race, religion or marital status of the candidate families.

The committee is comprised of seven volunteers who generally meet two or three times a week.

The selection process for family No. 6, the Gomez family, took five months to complete. The Gomezes were selected from about one dozen families who submitted applications.

## WWPHS South National Honor Society Challenged To Be 'Leaders of Today'

*The following are excerpts from a speech HFH Millstone Basin President Glenn Fannick recently gave at the induction ceremony of the West Windsor Plainsboro H.S. South National Honor Society.*

Good evening:

OK, so you're all pretty smart. I know you know that. That's why we're here. But what good is it to be smart if you don't do something with the gift you've been given?

For the seniors, in the next few months as you graduate and continue your education, you're going to hear about how you are the leaders of tomorrow. For the juniors, you'll all be hearing this as you start your senior year and head out to meet with college recruiters. But for all of you I guarantee more than one person will stand at the front of a room like this and tell you - "You are the leaders of tomorrow." And you know what? That's absolutely true. But I'm not going to tell you that. I'm here tonight to tell you that you're the leaders of today.

I remember attending my NHS induction ceremony. Do I remember what the guest speakers said? Not really. But that's my point. I'm sure they were well intentioned but I think it didn't stick with me because they didn't strike a cord. They didn't inspire me to take my intelligence and potential leadership abilities and turn them into action.

This is National Student Leadership Week. And the motto is "Who says you can't change the world?" I think that's a great thought. ...

I was on a conference call today with other habitat for Humanity affiliate presidents in the Northeast. We were talking about a program called Youth United. This is a program in which youth ages 5-25 raise the money for a habitat house and then actually build the house.

Well we're doing that right here in East Windsor. And the money you raised is one of the first parts of the \$53,000 we will need to build a youth-sponsored house next year. ...

This group of NHS students can leave a legacy to your school. I'm challenging you right now to take your interest in habitat for Humanity and turn it into greatness. This is a call to action to start an official HFH Campus Chapter here at WWPBS South.

For you departing seniors I'm sure you're going to have some free time this summer to get the ball rolling -- start a buzz -- lay the ground work for the future. And for you returning juniors you have a whole year. My challenge to you is to have a Campus Chapter in place by the end of next year.

"Who says you can't change the world?" Not me. I hope not you.

## In Brief

### **Building Work Groups Forming**

If your group is interested in helping build the next house, someone from your group should send an email to: [habitatmba@aol.com](mailto:habitatmba@aol.com) or a letter to: HFH Millstone Basin, Box 178, Cranbury, NJ 08512.

The note should include the following: the number of likely workers; the ages of any who are under 18; whether they are interested in any work days other than Saturdays; contact information (email, address, phone number) for the team leader; and whether any of the team members are skilled in any facet of home construction. Work on the site generally takes place Saturdays from about 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Workers should bring to the site, if possible, protective gear (work gloves and heavy shoes) and favorite hand tools or power tools.

### **Board Members, Committee Volunteers Sought**

The affiliate's Board of Directors is looking to increase in size. Board members usually make a commitment of about 10 hours a month -- including attendance at a monthly board meeting, usually the second Thursday of the month, and at monthly committee meetings, held on weekday evenings. Anyone interested in becoming a board member should call Acting-President Glenn Fannick at 973-771-0666.

### **Doing the Dirty, Unglamorous Work**

Special Thanks to members Boy Scouts Troop #5700, sponsored by East Windsor Veterans of Foreign Wars, for their work this spring in helping to clear the lot on Evan Avenue where the affiliate will be building the Gomez house

### **Pancake Breakfast Continues Tradition**

The annual Habitat for Humanity Pancake Breakfast was again held at St. Anthony of Padua Church in Highstown in February. The event raised approximately \$5,500 for the affiliate.

### **Thank You to Volunteers a Success**

Millstone Basin's first holiday Volunteer Thank-You party was held in early January at Princeton Alliance Church in Plainsboro. It was an opportunity for many of the affiliate's volunteers to relax and enjoy each other's company and celebrate the year's successes. The night was also an opportunity for the Board of Directors to thank each of those who contributed dozens of hours of their time to the organization. The Board of Directors would like to thank Panera in Princeton and Genuardi's Family Markets in East Windsor for their donations of food for the party.

### **Tithing Report for 2002**

### **Leadership Team Recaps Year, Looks Forward**

More than two dozen leaders of the affiliate met at First Presbyterian Church of Cranbury in early June to review the affiliate's successes and needs through the eyes of each committee chair. All members of the Board of Directors and the standing committees are considered members of the Leadership Team. The group's goals are to discuss the affiliate's medium-term goals and make recommendations on the best steps to take. Each committee chair presented "the state of their committee" to the group, listing the committee's strengths and needs. Discussion then followed to work through possible solutions to the needs. Several trends emerged by the end of the 90-minute session. The affiliate leaders see a need for more committee volunteers, a permanent office with storage and meeting space, better communication among committees, and training for new volunteers.

All Habitat affiliates are encouraged by Habitat for Humanity International to donate 10% of their revenue from fund-raisers, donations and grants toward building efforts somewhere else in the world. To do our part in this long-standing global outreach, in 2002 Millstone Basin affiliate sent two donations to Habitat affiliates in Guatemala and Kyrgyzstan. Each donation was for \$1,300. Our affiliate has been supporting these two international affiliates for several years. During that time, in which we've built five houses in New Jersey, our donations have funded the construction of the equivalent of several houses overseas. Guatemala HFH is one of the largest affiliates in the world. Habitat Kyrgyzstan in Central Asia, is a relatively new affiliate. For more on Habitat Kyrgyzstan, visit <http://www.habitat.elcat.kg>.

### **Support Needed for Land Acquisition**

The affiliate is planning to build three houses in the next couple of years on the remaining vacant land it owns in East Windsor. However, when those three houses are built, we will need more land in order to continue our mission. With land costs in our area being high, we are setting up a land acquisition fund to ensure we have the money we need to continue to build in 2005 and beyond.

One source of revenue for us is from the monthly mortgage payments of our current partner families, but the remainder comes from the generosity of local residents and companies. Those wishing to donate by check can mail their tax-deductible donation to: HFH Millstone Basin Area, Box 178, Cranbury, NJ 08512. If you wish your donation to be ear-marked for the land-acquisition fund, you can note that on your check.

This site is run by Habitat for Humanity Millstone Basin Area.

Questions about [Habitat for Humanity International](#) can be sent to [public\\_info@habitat.org](mailto:public_info@habitat.org) or or 121 Habitat Street, Americus, GA, 31709, USA; (912)924-6935.