

Finding the Joy

FROM THE EFFECTS of Covid-19 around the world to the conversations surrounding race and justice to a national election unlike any other, 2020 has been a year of great challenge.

Locally, our mission of serving individuals and families with safe, decent, affordable housing was severely impacted. For most of the year, volunteering on build sites and in the ReStore has been suspended. A downturned economy created a decline in financial support. Volunteers and donors are the heartbeat of Habitat. The temporary closing of the ReStore, whose sales help fund the mission, created more challenges. Finally, the necessary decision to cancel the annual Pig Roast fundraiser along with the Golden Hammer awards rounded out the year.

This year has highlighted a truth that has been a reality for years — our country and our communities are in an affordable housing crisis. As health guidelines tell people they are Safer at Home, many are struggling to afford to keep the roof over their heads. Or they are spending more time in homes where repairs are greatly needed. So where is the joy in this?

Despite the challenges, local families are still experiencing positive transformation. Three families cut the ribbons on their new Habitat homes this year. Three more received repairs through the Brush With Kindness program, with plans to increase that greatly this next year as it expands



** Pictures of unmasked groups were either taken pre-Covid or are of people in the same household.*

into more counties. In addition, four new partner families were selected for homeownership and are now working hard in the pre-build phase. All of them have already completed their homeowner education classes and are ready for more volunteer opportunities to be available as safety allows.

While the housing need remains great, we find joy in knowing together we can play a part in the solutions. So, we celebrate our Habitat partner families as they build their own better tomorrows.

And, with humble gratitude, we thank all who helped make the mission possible this year — those who were able to volunteer at various times, those who came together on Zoom calls to keep planning and working, and those who were able to give financially. We anticipate the year

ahead as we continue uniting in the joyful blessing of loving our neighbors through shelter.

MISSION

Seeking to put God's love into action, Habitat for Humanity brings people together to build homes, communities, and hope.

Meet Betty

BETTY BEGAN 2020 with great difficulty. First she lost her father, whom she had helped care for in the home they shared in Cartersville. Then, a short time later, she received a call she would never forget. While at work over an hour away, she picked up her phone and heard her then eleven-year-old son tell her the house was on fire. He then called 911.

After learning he was safe, she sped home to find the home a total loss despite the efforts of the local fire department. Later the 911 dispatcher told her she had never experienced such a call, a child speaking with such calmness and courage. He had simply said, "I need someone to come save my house."

Her nearby family immediately took them in, creating a crowded situation



for them all. After learning about Habitat from a friend at church, Betty applied and began praying.

Working in healthcare in a physical rehabilitation hospital during Covid sometimes makes for long, difficult

days. But Betty loves being a friendly face for her patients. She often works twelve-hour shifts as she also navigates the new realities of school for her son. Due to a lack of reliable internet, you will often find them parked in front of the school using the internet there.

Now she can add one more thing to her hectic schedule — preparing to build her new home. She remembers the exact date and time, July 10 at 9:24AM, when she received a call telling her she has been selected as a partner family. "God answered my prayer. It felt like a mountain was moved." From tragedy to triumph, 2021 is shaping up to be a much better year.

Meet Wendy

LIVING IN A FARMVILLE apartment complex for many years, Wendy always dreamed of having her own home. When her second child was born, she determined to finally make that dream a reality, desiring her children to see her accomplish so large a goal. After seeing Habitat posts on social media, she decided to apply. She didn't think she would be selected, but prayed and left it in the hands of God.

In the meantime, Wendy continued helping her children navigate the new school realities due to Covid. She is proud of her daughter, now a senior, who wants to go to college to study social work. Commending the school system on how it has positively handled all the



changes, she noted that her energetic son is happy to see his teachers again.

Beyond her role as mom, Wendy has worked for almost 10 years at Southside Community Hospital. She does housekeeping in the labor and delivery area, happy to be in a place where the nurses and directors view her as an important part of the team.

True to that spirit, Wendy remembers the day she received the call from Habitat. Taking a break from work, she answered the phone and began crying. The nurses started crying with her when they learned she had been approved. Her coworkers are excited in hopes they will be able to volunteer on her build and help Wendy make her lifelong dream a reality.

Meet Tameka

WORKING AS A MEDICINE tech at a senior care facility, Tameka has a unique perspective on this year. She is thankful that the residents and staff have remained safe, thanks to the great efforts of all where she works.

Upon going home, her labors of love continue. Because they live in a rural area, internet connectivity is a major issue. Tameka recalls some evenings, after leaving work at 10:00 PM and picking up her children from her relative's house, she often has to go by the public library and sit in the parking lot to download their assignments.

On top of this, her family faces challenges at home, as she rents a place



in considerable disrepair. Her situation is strikingly similar to that of her grandmother, who lived in comparable

circumstances — but who eventually became a Habitat homeowner through another affiliate. Tameka recalls as a teenager volunteering to build on her grandmother's home.

Last year, Tameka's mother encouraged her to reach out to Habitat to see if she could follow the same path. Success! After learning she was accepted into the program, she has been eager to put her skills to work.

Tameka and her children strive to keep their current home as nice as possible. She says the children do a good job of pointing out things that need fixing. They then go to Lowe's and do their best to make simple repairs. Soon those trips will be a thing of the past.

Meet Katrice

KATRICE WAS FAMILIAR with the Habitat application process, having applied once before. Although her application was not approved then, she took it as an opportunity to prepare for the future. She did the hard work of paying down some debts and working on her credit. In the process, she has been teaching her girls valuable life lessons regarding financial decisions and credit. When she received the call that she had been approved, she needed to sit down in order to take it all in.

Katrice's current living situation is located in a nice rural setting but is in need of repair. More importantly, it simply does not provide enough room for three growing girls. She notes with a chuckle, "Sometimes we feel like sardines in a can!" One benefit of where she lives is plenty of family close by, especially helpful as she navigates the demands of a full-time job with helping



her daughters succeed in school that continues to be fully virtual.

Working with post-operative patients at the hospital, she takes pride in treating people with the same level of dignity and care she would want for

herself. Katrice's positive attitude and perseverance have made possible this opportunity for her family. "I want to do something wonderful for my children. I want them to know I have worked hard to put them somewhere nice."

Prince Edward

PRIOR TO SCHOOLS GOING VIRTUAL earlier this year, some young Eagles of Prince Edward County Public Schools completed a unique learning project. Thanks to materials generously donated by Rock River Homes, elementary age students put math and science skills to the test by building a playhouse shed along with a wooden playset. They then donated their finished products to Habitat to be sold with the proceeds used to help build homes.

Prior to the pandemic, members of Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority spent the day building as part of Longwood's Martin Luther King, Jr. Day service opportunities. Volunteers from Hampden-Sydney College also spent days on the build site. And recently members of the Rotary Club of Farmville took their service on the road, helping to finish the landscaping on a Charlotte County home.



Plans are underway for the groundbreaking on the next Farmville home. Rosa and her daughter are excited for the lot to be cleared and construction to begin. With the many challenges of this year, we are grateful for the continued support of local individuals, churches, businesses, and organizations, including support from Prince Edward County, the Walter J. Payne Foundation, and the United Way of Prince Edward.



Buckingham

DESPITE NEEDING TO FINISH construction just as volunteers were no longer an option, Doreen was able to cut the ribbon on her new Dillwyn home in early spring. While home dedications are normally crowded celebrations, Doreen commemorated the moment with only a few close family and friends due to safety protocols.

Later, a video of her cutting the ribbon, along with footage from throughout the build, was available for all to see. The video included messages of congratulations from volunteers who had previously worked on the home. Doreen worked hard on her journey and endured much during her build, but she persevered and now has the joy of a comfortable, safe place to come home to every evening.

Just prior to Covid shutdowns, an amazing group of ladies gathered for two days of volunteering on Doreen's



home as part of Habitat's Women Build, sponsored by Lowe's. The group accomplished a tremendous amount in a short period, led by skilled local builder Charlotte Green, owner of Green Properties. In addition, the work in Buckingham is made possible by generous local supporters, including long-time partners Kyanite Mining Corporation and the Melvin C. Draft Foundation.



Charlotte

STELLA AND HER FAMILY realized a dream come true as they snipped the red bow and walked into their new home in Drakes Branch. During the small gathering of family at another virtual home dedication, one of her



Charlotte Committee volunteers help with landscaping

daughters exclaimed with full emotion, “Thank God! We have a home.”

This home features key accessibility items, such as a zero-entry tiled shower. Although volunteers were basically eliminated from this build, Stella and



the family spent hours after the construction manager left each day, making sure everything was tidy and spotless for the next day. The build did benefit from the hard work of Randolph Henry High School carpentry students, who had previously built the walls for the home at the school.

In addition to Stella’s new home, a homeowner in Brookneal received needed repairs through the Brush With Kindness program. This allows for households in need of minor, exterior repairs to preserve the health, safety, and longevity of their home. A porch was repaired, giving peace of mind for the owner as he enters and exits. In addition, new exterior doors and storm doors were installed on the front and back, greatly improving safety and energy efficiency. Minor repairs can make a major improvement.

Cumberland

WITH THE BUILD FINISHING prior to March, many family and friends shared the joy with Tarika and her children at the home dedication ceremony. Everyone enjoyed refreshments and laughter as they toured the new home. This build had a dedicated group of local Cumberland volunteers who all became bonded with one another and Tarika during this build. These newfound friendships are one of the hallmarks of Habitat and underscore how powerful it can be when people unite in loving their neighbors.

All of our Habitat partner families have unique and beautiful stories, each to be celebrated. We are proud that Tarika’s story and her hard work have been recognized in an exciting way, as her story has been selected by Habitat



for Humanity International as part of an upcoming social media campaign. In addition, a graduation video Tarika and her daughter made was included in a nationally seen Habitat video.



Nelson

AS PIEDMONT HABITAT accepted the invitation from the former Nelson County Habitat to assume services in the county, there was an agreement to launch a new program. Brush With Kindness makes affordable repairs possible for homeowners. They pay for the costs of materials only, adjusted to a sliding scale based on number in the household and income. After the work is completed, the homeowner makes payments over 24 months, with no interest.

Although the launch of this new offering was severely hampered by Covid, it is beginning to gain attention. Recently a minor porch repair was completed in Schuyler, allowing for safer access. In addition, a home in Massies Mill had repairs done on the front and rear porches. With this, leaks were remedied where the old porch roofs attached to the home. Finally, another repair is almost underway at a home in Piney River.

As this program becomes better known, there will be much work to be



done. To that end, a committee made of local residents now meets monthly with Habitat staff. This work is only possible thanks to local dedicated volunteers and support of organizations such as Nelson County Community Fund, the Community Foundation of Central Blue Ridge, and local individuals, churches, and businesses.



Nottoway

ALTHOUGH NOTTOWAY ENJOYED a Habitat presence in the past, it has been many years. Piedmont Habitat is excited to take on its newest county, as services are being expanded to our nearby neighbors. A vibrant local committee has formed and meets monthly to plan the rollout of Habitat programs.

At first, the main focus will be repairs, with the launch of the Brush With Kindness program in early 2021. The committee has worked hard and already has garnered support from local churches. In addition, Boy Scout Troop 6504, faced with the cancellation of much of their programming this past year, looked for a way to continue their tradition of serving



the community. When approached about the opportunity to support their neighbors in need of repairs, they made a generous donation. We eagerly anticipate partnering with our new Nottoway neighbors.

If you would like to be a part in the success of these new efforts in Nelson and Nottoway, please contact Russell Dove at russell@piedmonthabitat.org.

ReStore

THE ReSTORE is a home improvement center where gently used items are donated and then sold, with the proceeds helping to fund the mission of safe, decent, affordable housing. You will find a wide variety of items including furniture, home goods, appliances, building materials, exercise equipment, paint, a large selection of books, and much more.

While customers have enjoyed the new larger location next to the Farmville Food Lion, the great deals were temporarily put on hold as the store had to close for nearly three months due to Covid concerns. One silver lining during that time was the addition of online shopping, which many customers took advantage of. Although the ReStore E-Store was closed once the store reopened, due to customers' positive feedback, plans are underway to reintroduce that as an option in addition to shopping in person.

Since the store reopened, strict guidelines have been in place for the safety of the community. In addition to



the usual masks and distancing, the store now closes an hour earlier each day to allow for thorough end-of-the-day cleaning.

While Santa Mail has been a popular celebration at the ReStore the past few years, it is unfortunately not possible this year. However, the festivities continue as the ReStore is proud to serve as a drop-off location for the Marine Corps Toys for Tots program.

In another way of serving the community, a new recycling program



has started inside the store. Look for the new containers for aluminum cans only and take a moment to read the sign telling how Every Can Counts and can turn into building supplies.

To keep up with all the great inventory and deals at the ReStore, follow along on Facebook at Piedmont Habitat for Humanity ReStore and on Instagram at piedmont_habitat_restore.

30 Years

ON DECEMBER 18, 2020, Piedmont Habitat for Humanity turns 30! Started as the Farmville Area Habitat for Humanity, the mission focused on Farmville and Prince Edward before expanding into Buckingham County. Following the addition of the ReStore in 2009, the service area has continued to grow, first to Charlotte, then Cumberland, and most recently Nelson and Nottoway.

Please stay tuned throughout this next year as we celebrate both the Habitat families we have been blessed to work with and all the supporters who have made the mission of safe, decent, affordable housing a reality.



Throwback Thursday



Piedmont Habitat for Humanity®

During the groundbreaking ceremony for the first Habitat for Humanity home in the Town of Dillwyn and the beginning of Buckingham's partnership with Farmville Area Habitat for Humanity, twelve-year-old Vincent Ross, who will reside in the home with his grandmother Mary Etta Ross, shared from Ephesians 2:19-22 and Luke 6:47-49. With Vincent are Jayne Johnson, executive director of Farmville Area Habitat for Humanity; and Don Romaine, FAHH construction site supervisor.

No Place Like Home

Habitat For Humanity Breaks Ground In Dillwyn

Welcome to the Team

THIS YEAR Piedmont Habitat welcomed one new member to the Board of Directors. Sheri Almond is the Director of Curriculum and Instruction for Cumberland County



Public Schools. Prior to working in Cumberland, she served in a variety of school systems in Virginia and North Carolina for twenty-eight years. She has been an active member of the Piedmont Habitat Cumberland Committee for the last four years, serving as both the Vice-Chairperson and Secretary of that group. Sheri

regularly volunteers on the build site, assists with fundraising, helps with community events, and has served as a valuable connection between the school and Habitat. She not only helps build homes locally, but has assisted in the construction of homes for families in Mexico while on mission trips.

Habitat also welcomed one new staff member this year. Russell Dove joined the team in the role of Community Outreach, with the initial



goal of organizing Habitat's work in the newer counties of Nelson and Nottoway. This position was made possible by grant funding from Habitat Virginia, the state support organization that serves local Habitat affiliates. Russell brings a long and outstanding record of service to the community, having served with the Longwood University Police and most recently as the Director of Public Safety and Chief of Police for Central Virginia Community College. In addition, he served as both Board Member and Chair of the Prince Edward County Public School Board for more than a decade. During his time of School Board service and his prior public service through law enforcement and volunteer emergency medical services, he has earned a long list of accolades for outstanding performance and meritorious service.

Jayne Johnson, Executive Director of Piedmont Habitat, joined with other staff members in participating in the Healthcare Heroes parade held earlier this year outside Centra Southside Community Hospital in Farmville.



Thank you to our Board of Directors, who have diligently served throughout this difficult year. In an all too common theme for this year, that meant a lot of Zoom calls!

Did you know ...

... that all Habitat Partner Families have: 1) A demonstrated need for an improved housing solution, 2) The ability to pay an affordable mortgage or affordable repair loan, and 3) Are willing to partner with Habitat in a variety of ways, including future homeowners investing between 200 and 400 hours of sweat-equity, volunteering on their own home and another Habitat home? Your ongoing support makes it possible to continue to serve our neighbors with loving action. Thank you.

The mission is possible only with your help



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