



CENTRAL WESTMORELAND HABITAT HAPPENINGS

*A publication of the Central Westmoreland
Habitat for Humanity Affiliate*

Volume 6 Number 2 Winter 2000

NEW PRESIDENT HAS TOOLS FOR LEADERSHIP

Summer is always a busy time for our family. I love to vacation and the beach is my favorite place for summer fun, relaxation and a chance to slow down. My trip to the ocean is also a time for meditation and reflexion. I always have found the water calming the the surroundings most comforting. I also like to ponder life's greatest decisions while looking at the ocean.

In the past I have gone to the ocean sometimes with a heavy heart over work-related issues or family concerns. This year, "Decision 2000" for me was the nomination for president of Central Westmoreland Habitat for Humanity. I have worked with the fund-raising committee for several years and have helped on numerous committee projects and even chaired the family selection committee. Now, however, I had been asked to serve as president. The ocean always seems to help guide me as I consider such decisions,

but really the guidance always comes from God.

As I looked into the sea I knew that I was brought to this point for a reason. The responsibility seemed great but the need of the people seemed greater. Having helped with family selection decisions I knew very well how many people in our community were in need. The answer became clear.



Now, I set aside a portion of each day for Habitat. Surveys, questionnaires, land decisions, building codes, etc are new to me; I must say I'm learning alot. I'm sure the next two years will be filled with new learning experiences and great friendships as Habitat continues to provide shelter for families in Westmoreland county into the next decade. Thanks to my family and many, many friends as they support me in this amazing adventure in life.

-- Jan Grant

PUTTING UP WALLS; ESTABLISHING BORDERS

The service area of the Central Westmoreland Habitat affiliate has newly been defined to include all of Unity, Hempfield, Mt. Pleasant, Penn and North Huntingdon townships as well as the cities of Greensburg (including South and Southwest), Latrobe and Jeannette, Irwin, Penn and Youngwood boroughs and the communities of Adamsburg, Arona, Hunker, New Stanton and Manor. These borders have been understood over the affiliate's six-year history, but were clearly delineated at the September board meeting



LAND...LOTS OF LAND!

Now that our service area has been more clearly mapped out, we are in search of land on which to begin construction. If you or anyone in your circle of family and friends has property available at a very reasonable price or is able to donate land with water and sewage tap-ins, please call Habitat at 523-0308. Our Site Selection team will be glad to check it out!

BOARD PROVIDES FIRM FOUNDATION

At the July 26, 2000 board of directors meeting new officers were elected. They are:

- President** - Jan Grant
- Vice President** - Charles "Radar" Yandrick
- Treasurer** - Leslie Frusco
- Secretary** - Marilyn Stoll

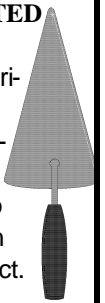
Central Westmoreland has so many wonderful supporters it has become necessary to appoint a corresponding secretary. The **Rev. Sylvia Carlson** now holds that responsibility as well as manages the main data base. Our many thanks are extended to her for her dedicated spirit!!

The board is made up of 17 community volunteers who meet bi-monthly to plan site selection, building techniques, fund-raising activities and family selection. Their time and talent help make Habitat successful. Your support in kind and prayer help these individuals unite

GRANT WRITERS WANTED

We are in need of a few great people who have experience in the grant writing process. CWHFH is partnering with area Lutheran churches and Lions Clubs to acquire additional funding on our next home building project.

Both organizations have challenge grants specifically designated for Habitat housing. If you can help, please call 523-0308.



for the common cause of providing safe, decent housing for others.

The Habitat Board of Directors also includes; **Art Holbrook, Marilyn Mayo, Mike Stramiello, Sue Trafford, Ed Ford, Curt Henry, David Hilinski, Robin Jennings, Scott Ludwick, Michael Salvatore, Marilyn Stoecklein and Mike Walsh.**

A BLUEPRINT FOR FAMILY SELECTION

How are families chosen for a Habitat home?

First, the family needs to be turned down for a conventional mortgage through the bank. **Second**, they must be able to invest 350 hours of "Sweat equity" in work time on their home and **third**, they must be living in substandard housing.

If a family believes they qualify, they should send a letter of need to: Central Westmoreland Habitat for Humanity, P.O. Box 516, Greensburg, Pa. 15601. Their letter is forwarded to the Family Selection committee and the process begins.

The applying family is sent a letter with the requirements and an application. They have 30 days to fill out the application and return it to Habitat. When this is complete, the application is reviewed. If they meet the standards for income, they enter the second phase of the process, which includes having previous landlords sign that they made payments on time, securing a statement from their employer and submitting their last two years of income tax return statements. All information remains confidential and

helps in the selection process. The applicants must also request a copy of their credit report that they submit to Habitat as well as visit the credit bureau for a counseling session. All of this phase takes up to 90 days to complete.

If they still qualify, they will participate in a home visit with the Family Selection committee to verify substandard housing. Finally the family story is brought to the board of directors for discussion and approval.

As you can see, it is a lengthy process with much thought and prayer. Once selected and the work begins, the family is right there with the volunteer work crew building their home.

The usual mortgage through Habitat is for 30 years with monthly on-time payments required. This is not a free gift as many people believe. It takes hard work and determination just to get selected as a home owner and the wait once selected can be one to five years based on the waiting list and the number of families in line.

Nothing happens fast but the outcome of patience is a safe, decent place to live. We help build family character as we build homes.

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**SECOND ANNUAL
CABIN FEVER
PARTY
February 3
8 p.m.**

**DiSalvo's
Station, Latrobe
Tickets: \$25
Call 523-0308
for tickets.**

BUILDING BLOCKS

The important friendship that Habitat has with area churches cannot be overstated. With the wonderful support of our church families we are able to continue our mission. We wish to thank the following area churches for their generous support:

Contributors since our last newsletter deadline in May.

* **Denotes regular monthly contributors**

CHURCHES

Charter Oak United Methodist Church, Greensburg

Tyrone Presbyterian Church, Dawson*

Christ Episcopal Church, Greensburg

First Christian Church, Greensburg

First Reformed United Church of Christ, Greensburg

Greensburg Church of the Brethren, Greensburg

Hilltop United Methodist Church, Madison

Missionary Society, Sewickley Presbyterian Church, West Newton

New Stanton United Methodist Church, New Stanton

St. John's United Church of Christ, Greensburg

St. Paul United Church of Christ, Pleasant Unity

Third United Church of Christ, South Greensburg

Trinity United Church of Christ, Greensburg

Women of Christ Episcopal Church, Greensburg

Women's Association, Reunion Presbyterian Church, Mt. Pleasant

MAJOR GIFTS

The Menasha Corporation Foundation, Yukon

Hilltop United Methodist Church, Madison

INDIVIDUALS

Dr. and Mrs. Michael Sahlaney

Henry and Mary Gabb

Florence Mars*

Sue Trafford

Helen Beatty*

Jean Blice

Bonnie Wilson

Mr. and Mrs. Steven Jones

Karin McKay

Carolyn Baldwin

Jean George

Anna Jane Gorton

Dolores Shearer

Mr. and Mrs. Jules Vanderscott

Dr. and Mrs. Lawrence Freedberg

Carolyn S. Falcon

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Peluso

Cecelia McCorkle

Ms. Dorothy Ardisson

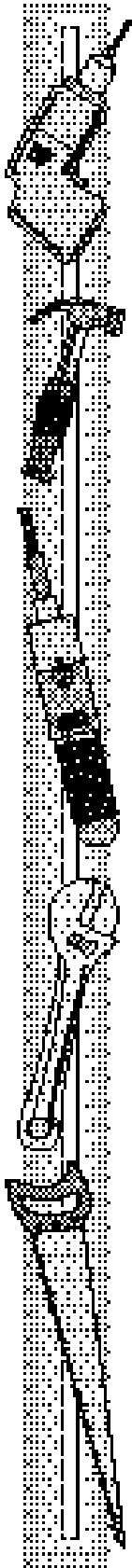
Cliff and Grace Howard

When making a contribution, please make your check payable to:
**Central
Westmoreland
Habitat for
Humanity.**

**YOUR GIFT IS
100 PERCENT
TAX-DEDUCTIBLE.**

Our new address:
CWHFW,
P.O. Box 516,
Greensburg, Pa.
15601

Bless these houses ...



If you were present at our fifth house blessing on Sunday, Aug. 20, you would have seen the tears of joy on the faces of Nadene and her children as the words of the prophet Isaiah were read, "They shall build houses and inhabit them... they shall not build and another inhabit...they shall long enjoy the work of their hands." What a privilege to seek God's blessing this house and on this family. God cares that people have decent shelter for their families. It was so wonderful to see this brand new house packed to the rafters with all of the people who came for the house blessing - volunteer construction workers of all ages and levels of experience, family members, board members, donors, community leaders and people representing many different churches.

Every Saturday for almost a year, Nadene worked along with the work crew. She has done sheet metal work - and shoveled gravel - and nailed studs into place - and hung drywall - and stained wood trim - to mention only a few of the skills that she learned on this project. This moment of house blessing was what we all had been working toward, together. She put in her 350 hours of what we call "sweat equity" in building this house. What a wonderful feeling of accomplishment, to know that another family has a simple, well-built house that they now call home.

House blessings always find us reflecting on the work we have been able to do because so many people help us with monetary support and the energy to build.

Our first project on Maple Avenue in Greensbrug was a perfect beginning to the Central Westmoreland chapter. We remodeled a house that was donated. It took about two years and presented new challenge almost daily...a great learning experience. Upon completion in 1995, Megan and her two children had a fine three-bedroom house. The cost to Megan was about \$19,000. As she pays her mortgage her children are growing up. Christopher is in 3rd

Grade and Mandy just graduated from high school.

Project Two was the Tom and Tammy Yeager house in Marguerite. After purchasing the land and working steadily for eight months, the Yeagers moved in time for Christmas 1996. The cost for their four-bedroom house was \$39,152.

Their three children are all in the Latrobe schools.

Project Three was the Linda Sue house in Hostetter. We were able to purchase a nice corner lot, but had to remove the house that had stood vacant for many years. The donation of heavy equipment made the demolition possible in short order. The two-bedroom ranch house was blessed in January 1999. The cost was \$35,802. Linda Sue has since used her talents to build a big porch, cover the block with stones from the yard, and maintain her corner lot beautifully.

Project Four was a unique one for us. We were offered a modular home that was in fine condition for \$11,000. Barb was given the choice of putting that home on the lot we had purchased in Marguerite or building a house on it. She chose the modular home. It was moved and placed on a full basement. Her delayed House Blessing was held in December 1999. Her mortgage is \$41,419. Barb's two children live a block away from the Yeager family and attend the Latrobe schools.

Nadene, our first new century homeowner has a mortgage of about \$35,000. Her two-story, three-bedroom house was built on donated property - a grand and generous gift. Her two children are doing very well in their new school - McKee Elementary in Jeannette.

We are blessed to be able to renovate and build affordable houses for families who could not otherwise own a home. We are blessed to have the support of the community. We are blessed to have five homeowners whose monthly payments go right to our building funds - and we are blessed to have a Board of Directors working diligently to find the land we need to begin Project Six.

Blessings on us all.

*Bless this house
oh Lord, we pray.
Make it safe by night and day.*

*Bless these walls
so firm and stout,
Keeping want and trouble out.*

*Bless the roof and chimney
tall. Let thy peace lie overall.
Bless the hearth ablazing
there. With smoke ascending
like a prayer.*

*Bless the folks that dwell
within. Keep them safe
and free from sin.*

*Bless us all that we may be
fit, oh Lord, to dwell
with thee*

*Bless us all that one day we
may dwell, oh Lord, with thee.*

**Central Westmoreland Habitat for Humanity
P.O. Box 516
Greensburg, PA 15601-0516**

**Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No 169
Greensburg, PA
15601**

MISSION

**"Central Westmoreland Habitat for Humanity,
an affiliate of Habitat for Humanity International,
uses volunteer and community labor
in partnership with selected families
to build decent, affordable housing."**

VISION

**"Central Westmoreland Habitat for Humanity
will become synonymous with decent,
affordable housing in our service area."**

