

# Habitat News



HABITAT FOR HUMANITY OF MONROE COUNTY, INDIANA • MARCH 2009 • Vol. 17, No. 1



*Breaking New Ground—*

## A Habitat Neighborhood

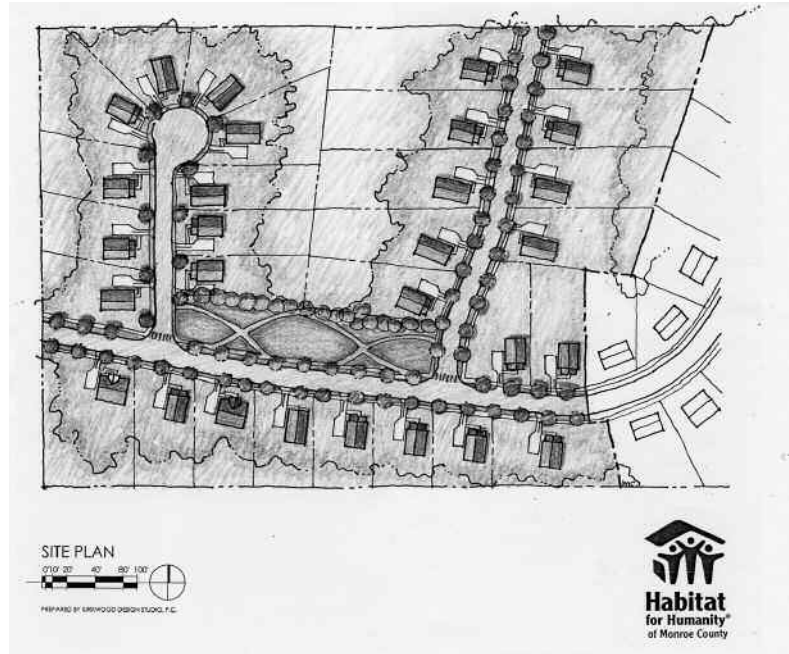
The time has come to break new ground—not just for a new house but for a new neighborhood, Habitat Director Kerry Thomson told almost 600 people gathered at the annual More Than Houses Society Breakfast. She then announced the affiliate's plans to create a Habitat neighborhood on 13 acres of land on Bloomington's southwest side off Leonard Springs Road.

Work has already begun to install the basic infrastructure—roads and utilities—with a goal of mid-summer completion. The first new house slated for construction in the neighborhood will be the annual Women Build, scheduled for May.

Tentatively named Cedar Chase, the new neighborhood will include homes for 29 Monroe County families in need of housing. "Our new neighborhood will be a welcoming place, with front porches where families will share meals, yards with swing sets, garden plots, and a gathering space perfect for a twilight game of hoops," says Thomson. "We've seen what dramatic effects clustering several of our homes in a row can have—families share childcare, help build additions, divide perennials to share with neighbors."

Habitat for Humanity of Monroe County has done its homework for this next big step in the affiliate's efforts to provide affordable housing in our community. Thomson says that the Habitat board, staff, and volunteers have worked tirelessly—studying budgets, consulting with experts, and seeking advice from Habitat supporters. Thomson has tapped into the case studies of Habitat's most successful affiliates: "I've called my colleagues who have had success building neighborhoods around the country, and spent weekends visiting these neighborhoods. We are learning from their successes and growing from their experience."

"Habitat has always been about



*Kirkwood Design's site plan of the new Habitat neighborhood.*

more than building houses—it's about building community," says Thomson. "And now we're literally going to build a community as we create a new neighborhood that will provide a healthy environment for families to grow and prosper."

### Recent Dedications and Upcoming Construction Schedule

**JOIN** us in congratulating new homeowners Nicolas Mendez, Cristina Perez, and Leslie Shepherd-Long. And, if you're interested in volunteering on site or providing food for on-site volunteers for an upcoming build, contact Laura Oberholtzer at (812) 331-4069.

#### **HOUSE #85**

Homeowners: **Nicolas Mendez and Cristina Perez**  
Sponsor: **Interfaith Build** (Dedicated: 9/14/08)

#### **HOUSE #86**

Homeowner: **Leslie Shepherd-Long**  
Sponsors: **Bloomington High School North/  
IU Habitat** (Dedicated: 12/13/08)

#### **HOUSE #87**

Homeowners: **Rodney and Shannon Chapman**  
Sponsors: **JPMorgan Chase/Habitat homeowner mortgages** (Dedicated: 4/4/09)

#### **HOUSE #88**

Homeowners: **Adam Sommer and Janna Arthur**  
Sponsors: **BA Homes and friends**

#### **HOUSE #89**

Homeowners: **Esau Juarez Morales and  
Monica Osorio-Zarza**  
Sponsor: **Habitat ReStore**

#### **HOUSE #90**

Homeowner: **Maria Cortes**  
Sponsor: **Thrivent Build**

#### **HOUSE #91**

Homeowner: **Janna Castillo**  
Sponsor: **Women Build**

## Volunteer Groups

Baha'i Community  
 Beth Shalom Congregation  
 BKD Accounting  
 Bloomington High School North  
 Bloomington Islamic Center  
 Bloomington Monthly Meeting of Friends  
 Duke Energy  
 First United Methodist Church  
 Indiana University Habitat for Humanity  
 Indiana University Kelley and Wells Scholars  
 Indiana University Multi-Cultural Association  
 Indiana University Muslim Student Union  
 Indiana University Student Foundation—Junior Class  
 Ivy Tech Community College—Students of Doug Mattick  
 Saint Paul Catholic Church  
 Saint Thomas Lutheran Church  
 Trinity Episcopal Church  
 Unitarian Universalist Church



## Annual “Just Desserts” Event Honors Volunteer Award Winners

Despite the frigid January temperatures, the affiliate’s “Just Desserts” volunteer appreciation evening on January 15 went off without a hitch. Please join us in congratulating those who served us so well in 2008: (from left) *Volunteer of the Year*: Sean Fick; *Homeowners’ Choice*: Tom Feeney; *Leaving a Legacy*: Barb Bichelmeyer and Chris Geary.

## Build Homes and Awareness with a Habitat License Plate



**H**elp us spread the word about our housing movement while you are on the move! Getting an Indiana Habitat license plate just became a lot easier. You need no forms ahead of time; just go to the Bureau of Motor Vehicles office near you and tell them you’d like a Habitat plate. Or you can renew online and select “Habitat.” The plate will cost you \$40; of that fee, \$25 will be invested in Habitat’s work right here in Indiana! The financial support is really just the beginning—everywhere you drive, you’ll be raising awareness of Habitat’s efforts to provide decent, affordable housing. Please do your part—we need to ensure that at least 5,000 plates are sold in the next three years or we’ll lose the privilege of having them. Get a Habitat plate, and tell someone else to do the same!

## 2009 Cover Indiana Bicycle Tour

The 2009 Cover Indiana Bicycle Tour will take place during the week of May 11–17! This year’s route will have overnight stays in Crawfordsville, Terre Haute, Linton, Bedford, Bloomington, and Plainfield. You can do the full seven-day tour or opt to be a Day-Rider. Registration forms are available at the Habitat for Humanity of Monroe County office. If you call 812-331-4069 or send an e-mail to [office@monroe-countyhabitat.org](mailto:office@monroe-countyhabitat.org) with your address, we’ll be happy to mail it to you!

**Registration must be received by April 14, 2009!**

Registration amounts are as follows:

- 1 day – \$50
- 2 days – \$100
- 3 days – \$150
- 4 or more days – \$250\*

*\*Additional minimum of \$350 must be raised by each rider. You can designate an affiliate of your choice, Habitat for Humanity of Indiana, or be “adopted” by an affiliate to help with fundraising efforts. There is no minimum required for riders doing fewer than four days.*

# Think Globally, Build Globally — My Experience in El Salvador

BY ADRIAN STARNES, HABITAT FOR HUMANITY  
CONSTRUCTION ASSISTANT

**A** group of nine of us from the Bloomington area recently had the opportunity to follow our affiliate's tith to El Salvador. We went to build a Habitat home for a family in need, but the rewards and lessons we took away far surpass any help we may have been to the job site.

El Salvador is a beautiful land! My limited research uncovered natural disasters, violent civil war, and economic and housing problems, so my first glimpse of volcanic slopes came as a pleasant surprise. But as we made our way by bus to San Vicente, it wasn't long before we witnessed street vendors, laborers, armed guards, and poverty staring back at us. The mountainous beauty of the Salvadoran landscape could not disguise the difficult living conditions for these people.

Our local affiliate sends 10 percent of undesignated funds annually to El Salvador to help construct new homes.

With close to seven million people in an area smaller than Massachusetts, El Salvador is the most densely populated country in Central America. We went from breathtaking coastal scenes to trash-filled streets to explore the local culture before starting our work week: attending a baby shower for a current Habitat homeowner, sampling big agricultural exports like sugar cane and coffee beans, admiring the traditional arts of pottery and weaving, and relaxing on a beach. These experiences revealed a culture worth preserving and improving.

After meeting homeowner-to-be Juana and her three beautiful children, we were excited to learn the basics of building a Habitat home Salvadoran style. Our goal was to turn the family's tiny stick structure into 350 square feet of concrete blocks reinforced with iron rebar. The building methods and procedures are different from those in the States, but we persevered. We made frequent trips downhill, returning with water jugs on our heads, out of breath, and soaked from spilling water. Some of us spoke Español very well, and others, Spanglish. Hand gestures, facial expressions, and the word "no!" quickly became the official language of the build.

We learned new skills and made significant progress on the home, but the structure was not the only thing taking shape. We formed meaningful relationships both with the masons and with Juana's family. Neighborhood children, who were on break from school during our visit, played catch and listened to our stories. To thank us for our time and dedication to the program, the Habitat El Salvador staff held a closing celebration in our honor. They rely heavily on international participation to do this work.

I'll never forget our build in El Salvador, the world we saw, and the people we met. You too should take advantage of future opportunities to journey down to El Salvador! Such trips are the most tangible way that we can stay connected to Habitat's global mission to eliminate substandard housing.

*You can read the unedited version of Adrian's story online at [www.monroecounty-habitat.org](http://www.monroecounty-habitat.org)*



(1) A view of Chichontepec, a two-tiered volcano in San Vicente. (2) Our team at the end of a rewarding work week. We'll never forget these children and the experience of building in El Salvador. (3) Fetching water—this must have been before the journey back up to the job site, because they look way too happy. (4) By the end of the week, the house was ready for a roof.





## Lights and Cabinets and Pews, Oh My!

Need vintage theatre seats or upholstered church pews for your home? Have deck boards or furniture you have no need for anymore? ReStore, an outlet that supports your local Habitat for Humanity, needs your help! Whether you have interest in buying or donating household items, ReStore is a successful organization that benefits a great cause. ReStore depends on donations from the public to sell at low prices to help fund Habitat projects.

Among current items available for purchase are vintage theatre seats from the 1930s era, sold four in a set, and upholstered church pews, perfect for a mud room or porch seating. Also available, but in demand, are 20-foot composite decking boards in redwood stain, oak kitchen cabinets, various couches and tables, and interior French doors. ReStore also always has a vast assortment of doors, windows, lights, and hardware readily available for purchase.



Please visit the ReStore location at 300 West Eleventh Street, behind the Upland Brewery, Monday through Friday, 10:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., or Saturday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., to buy or donate household items. With your help, Habitat can successfully complete projects to better the lives of others as well as help the environment by recycling used household materials.



## *In Partnership*

# Thrivent Builds Thriving Communities

**A** struggling economy hasn't slowed down Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, a member-owned financial services company that helps its members and their surrounding communities to lead better lives in nicer, safer homes. Through Thrivent Builds, the company has completed nearly 50 homes in four years in the Indiana region, which includes Indiana, Kentucky, and Cincinnati, Ohio. Thrivent has clearly empowered many families to leave poverty and substandard housing behind for good.

About two decades ago, Thrivent partnered with Habitat for Humanity International (HFHI). In 2006, the company formed a three-year alliance worth \$125 million with HFHI. Our own affiliate will participate in a Thrivent Build in Bloomington later this year with Thrivent members and Lutheran congregations in the area.

Larry Moore, who serves as the Indiana region's Habitat coordinator and business manager, first volunteered with Habitat 15 years ago when he was living in Texas. "Most people have these flowery stories of how they got involved," he says. "I was watching [the television show] *Home Improvement*, and they had an episode about Habitat. It seemed like

a really cool and interesting organization, so I decided to get involved."

Like Moore, many of our own volunteers working on the Thrivent Build are from Lutheran congregations or the campus ministry. "What I have seen in the short amount of time we've been working with the people down there [in Monroe County] is a really high level of energy," says Moore. "That energy is great because it results in families getting out of substandard housing and giving them every opportunity for success."

**If you would like to volunteer for the upcoming build, contact Laura Oberholtzer at (812) 331-4069.**

## Ways to Give to Habitat

**GROCERY SHOPPING:** Giving to Habitat is as simple as buying your groceries. Three grocery chains have programs in place that allow you to contribute 5% of your total bill to Habitat. For Kroger shoppers the program is now easier than ever. Sign up for a prepaid card and use it to pay



for groceries, and when your account balance starts to run low, just take it to the customer service counter to recharge it. If you shop at Marsh or Bloomingfoods, you can sign up to get prepaid gift cards mailed to you each month. Simply send a check to Habitat each month, and we'll send you the prepaid gift cards to pay your grocery bills.

**CANS FOR HABITAT:** Bring your aluminum cans to Habitat, and we'll turn them into cash for homes. Call the office at 331-4069 or send an e-mail to office@monroecountyhabitat.org for the drop-off location nearest to you or to arrange for a pick-up. You can also take your scrap metal to JB Salvage or Bloomington Iron & Metal and tell them to give the money to Habitat.



**CANS FOR HABITAT**  
Aluminum Cans Build Habitat for Humanity Homes

**GOODSEARCH:** We all have to use search engines, so why not give to Habitat while you search? Go to **www.goodsearch.com** next time you need something on the Internet. The drop-down menu will allow you to give to Habitat for Humanity of Monroe County each time you search the Internet with the GoodSearch engine. You can even add it as a toolbar on your home page!

**INDIANA UNIVERSITY 5K RUN/WALK:** Lace up those running shoes for the 10th annual IU Habitat for Humanity 5k Road Run/Walk on March 28, 2009. Visit the IU chapter's Web site at [www.indiana.edu/~habitat](http://www.indiana.edu/~habitat) for more information.

Clip and Save



300 W. 11th St.

331-2660 • [restore@monroecountyhabitat.org](mailto:restore@monroecountyhabitat.org)

### Hours

Mon. – Fri.: 10:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Sat.: 11 a.m. – 4 p.m.

## Spread the Word to Potential Homeowners

Informational meetings for potential homeowners:

- Tuesday, April 7, 6 p.m.
- Saturday, May 2, 10 a.m.
- Tuesday, June 2, 6 p.m.
- Saturday, July 11, 10 a.m.
- Tuesday, Aug. 4, 6 p.m.
- Saturday, Sept. 12, 10 a.m.
- Tuesday, Oct. 6, 6 p.m.
- Saturday, Nov. 7, 10 a.m.
- Tuesday, Dec. 1, 6 p.m.

Meetings are held at the Habitat office, 213 E. Kirkwood in Bloomington. Please phone the office at 331-4069 to confirm the date and time of the meeting. Interested families should phone to request an application and get a list of documents to bring. *Please include this information in your organization's newsletter!*

# BA Homes and New Homeowners Pass along Goodwill

Adam Sommer, 29, and Janna Arthur, 25, are a lucky couple who work and live together and still enjoy each other's company at the end of the day. They met while working at the Community Kitchen in Bloomington. Arthur was born in a sub-standard, one-bedroom house without plumbing, and now she lives with Sommer and two dogs in a small aluminum shed on her sister's property. Three space heaters help to keep them warm. "We're happy pretty much anywhere as long as we're together," Arthur says. "But, we are so excited to move into a real home!"

Sommer and Arthur will purchase their dream home from



Habitat this March. Building Associates, or BA Homes, is the home sponsor. Funding and materials for the home have been graciously donated by the company's colleagues and friends, including contractors, suppliers, and Jack Thompson and Matt Chitwood.

BA Homes, owned and founded by Jack Thompson, first became involved with Habitat as a co-sponsor for a Builders' Blitz home in 2007. In 2008, Thompson treated his employees to a Bahamian vacation purchased at a Habitat fundraising auction. It's hard to believe that Thompson once thought Habitat was "a give-away program—not for hard-working, well-deserving people." Now Thompson encourages everyone he knows to go to Habitat's annual More Than Houses Society Breakfast and get involved.

By March, the Arthur–Sommer home will rise like an Easter lily. Martha Shedd of BA Homes says, "Working with Janna and Adam is so amazing! They are my two favorite human beings." Shedd, who recites the motto of BA Homes ("Nothing is too big or too small!"), can't imagine a better partnership. After all, Arthur and Sommer will work amicably in any conditions. Then, too, the young couple fully intends to work hard to pass their good fortune along to others who need it. "When we own our home," says Sommer, "we'll be able to help more people and worry about ourselves less."

## The Top Five Myths about Habitat Homes, Homeowners, and the Monroe County Affiliate

**Myth 1: A typical Habitat homeowner (or "partner family") is jobless and has a ton of kids. Fact:** There is no "typical" partner family. Habitat homeowners can be partnered or single; with or without children; of any or no faith; of any ethnic or racial background; and of any age. They must, however, have a steady income.

**Myth 2: Habitat's Christian roots guarantee preferential treatment to those who share the same belief system. Fact:** The organization is indeed Christian, but its mission is to behave in a Christian manner and house those in need. An applicant's faith does not in any way influence the application process.

**Myth 3: Habitat homeowners have never been turned down by a bank for poor credit. Fact:** Habitat is not a government agency. It is more forgiving of those with poor credit and considers applications from those who have been turned down by banks in the past.

**Myth 4: The affiliate gives cheap houses to those in need. Fact:** Habitat is not a give-away program. Homeowners buy their homes for about \$65,000—the cost of materials.

**Myth 5: Buying a Habitat home through the Monroe County affiliate is too time-intensive for partners. Fact:** Right now, a partner family waits about two years for a new home. During that time, each adult who is 18 or older completes 250 hours of sweat equity—up to 50 hours of which can be donated by a friend or family member. Partner families can complete their sweat equity in many ways, such as helping the affiliate stuff envelopes, building on work sites, babysitting the children of partners, cashiering at the ReStore, etc.

## Family News Flash

- IU Habitat for Humanity's faculty advisor Randy Arnold and his wife, Kim, welcomed the birth of twin girls, Eve and Lydia, in late November.
- Family Services & Volunteer Coordinator Rebecca Mankowski and her husband, George, became the proud parents of a boy, Adam, on December 11.
- Office Manager Sean Price and his fiancée, Jessica McIntosh, were married on December 31, 2008.

# Women Build Teaches Dedication and Service

By Kate DeWeese, former Bloomington High School North student volunteer for Habitat for Humanity

**Y**ou have to be 16 to build, 18 to use power tools. Millard Fuller, the man who created Habitat for Humanity with his wife more than three decades ago, died earlier this month. Millions of families have benefited from the organization, and millions of volunteers have given a part of themselves to it.

I joined my high school's Habitat for Humanity chapter my sophomore year, and I quickly found that the organization is, for lack of a less cliché phrase, something special. When I turned 16, I was introduced to my first construction site; the only two things I remember about those first build days are the freezing temperatures in which we worked and the realization that hammering used muscles I didn't know I had.

Over the last six years, I've helped build more than 10 houses. Me? Building houses? It might be a scary thought, but it's one of the best things I've done. I made doors, laid siding, hammered up walls and drywall, painted . . . the list could go on and on. We built a house that used straw bales for insulation. We built in the rain and snow and below-freezing temperatures. It was great.

One of the best things about Habitat is meeting and talking with the families who are getting the homes. Each adult family member

has to put in 250 sweat-equity hours, so they were always around and never hesitated to show unbelievable amounts of gratitude to all of us working on their home. Hearing their stories makes those mid-winter builds worth it.

I've not worked with many other service organizations, but I'm willing to bet the feeling is the same. It's like giving up a little part of yourself for something you feel so passionately about. Knowing that you have the ability to do something that drastically changes a family's future is a great feeling. It's easy to give up your Saturdays when you see how happy you're making someone.

I think everyone should have their Habitat, something that they do on a regular basis to help someone else. Sometimes people, especially young people, do get involved, but I think it's for the wrong reasons. Colleges and graduate schools like to see some history of volunteer work. To some, that means joining seven different organizations but for mostly superficial reasons. Listing volunteer work on a resume doesn't mean you're actually making a difference.

Maybe it's just because I'm a serial monogamist, but I was always the kind of girl who stuck to one or two things and poured myself into them. Why do a bunch of things half-hearted when you could do one thing really well?

Anyway, I think most of my best memories are from the four or five (I've lost count) women's builds I've worked on. A friend of mine—we met through Habitat in high school—and I go back home every May to partake in the annual build. Although the rare male makes an appearance, the entire house is built essentially only by women, for women. Take that, male-dominated construction work.

On the women's builds and every build, I'm constantly in awe of the amount of dedication each person shows. I definitely learned a good amount about tools and construction, but Habitat taught me something more important: You can get a lot accomplished by yourself, but the most impressive things are done when each person does his or her small part, and a great thing—a house—results.

So thanks, Millard; you made me a little bit better.

*This column was first published on Feb. 17, 2009, in The Exponent, Purdue University's daily student newspaper.*



## ACT NOW

This May 14–23, be both inspired and inspiring. Join us for the seventh annual Women Build in Monroe County. Space is limited to about 200 volunteer builders, but ways to contribute are limitless. Here's how you can help:

**Be a financial donor.** To build the home, we'll need about \$65,000 for land and materials. Of course you're welcome to build that day as well.

**Be an individual volunteer.** Join us or sponsor another woman as an individual for \$250 per day.

**Be a food donor.** Men, take note! We want your help too. Each day of the build we'll need to supply a morning snack and lunch (main dish, side dish, dessert, and drinks) for volunteers. Please help us by bringing one or more food items for a day. Whatever way you choose to participate in this proud tradition, you'll make a difference.

Contact us at [habitat@monroecountyhabitat.org](mailto:habitat@monroecountyhabitat.org) or (812) 331-4069 if you have questions or want to help. To donate online or chart the build's progress, visit [womenbuild.kintera.org/faf/home](http://womenbuild.kintera.org/faf/home).

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Black Lumber	Energy Efficient Homes Midwest, Inc.	Monroe Bank	Anthony W. Shipp
Bledsoe, Riggert, Guerrettez	Thomas Feeney	O'Charley's	Don Shupe/Otis Spunkmeyer
Mary Blizzard	First Presbyterian Church	Olive Garden	Simpson Strong-Tie
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