



*Serving All of Bergen County
November 2015 E-Newsletter*



Superstorm Sandy: Three Years Later

by Nicole Murray

October 29th marked the 3rd anniversary of Hurricane Sandy. Whether you experienced little to no damage or your home and belongings were destroyed, you have a story to tell. Although many towns only experienced loss of power, some towns in Bergen County were hit hard by the storm. Many experienced the destruction of their homes, where their memories and possessions were ripped away from them. Today, the damage that Superstorm Sandy left upon NJ residents is still existent.

In keeping with Habitat Bergen's mission to provide safe and decent, affordable housing, the affiliate launched its Sandy Restoration program in February 2013 to help repair, rebuild and restore the homes devastated by Sandy. Over two and half years later the affiliate has completed 58 critical home repairs with the final two repair projects nearing completion, making a total of 60 completed critical home repairs. The Sandy Restoration program will be completed by close of 2015.

We are proud to have served the Bergen County community and could not have done it without the help of our volunteers. The Sandy Restoration program saw 2,227 volunteers who donated a total of 34,199 hours. Our affiliate is grateful for the overwhelming support of our dedicated volunteers and generous donors who have committed to helping our partner families through this difficult time.

Construction Corner

By Nicole Murray

Bergenfield:

Habitat Bergen has obtained approvals to construct a single family, 3-bedroom home and has received the required stream encroachment permit waiver from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. Construction is projected to begin in 2016.

Washington Township:

The Township has approved the transfer of the former VFW building to Habitat Bergen for the purpose of providing low affordable income homes for veterans and seniors. In collaboration with the Township, Habitat Bergen plans to construct two duplex homes, with four units available for sale to low-moderate income veterans and seniors of Bergen County. This project is still in the early planning stages, with construction anticipated to begin in 2016.

Volunteers: The Backbone of Habitat Bergen

By Nicole Murray

Thank you to the volunteer teams that have recently volunteered on our Sandy Restoration job sites. You have contributed to the success of this program and it is because of your volunteer and financial support, that Habitat Bergen is able to carry out its mission in Bergen County! Visit our [Facebook](#) page for photos from these team builds.



Samsung Gives Back

By Nicole Murray

In the U.S. alone, approximately 1,600 Samsung employees participated in the company's Bi-annual Day of Service, in which Samsung partnered with 53 non-profit organizations. Habitat Bergen was fortunate to receive the help of 15 Samsung employees volunteering on its construction sites and seven Samsung employees volunteering in the office.

Samsung's construction volunteers were divided into two teams, one team worked in Hackensack while the other team worked in Little Ferry. The volunteers completed light carpentry and spackling, bringing these homes one step closer to completion.

Samsung's office volunteers had a very unique project. These seven volunteers helped assemble Tricky Tray baskets for our annual Casino Night. As the photo shows these enthusiastic volunteers paid lots of attention to detail and truly had an eye for design! More photos are posted [here](#).



Building with Habitat Bergen is "Real Simple"

By Nicole Murray

Habitat Bergen welcomed volunteers from Time Inc.'s Real Simple Magazine to its Moonachie and Hackensack job sites as part of their [RS4GOOD](#) program. In celebration of their 15th anniversary, Real Simple partnered with four charities, ASPCA, God's Love We Deliver, Habitat Bergen and Young Women's Leadership Network.

The team split into two smaller groups, one group working in Moonachie and one group working in Hackensack, but all with one goal: to rebuild homes damaged by Superstorm Sandy. Volunteer tasks included light carpentry, spackling, sanding and priming.

Habitat Bergen is grateful to Real Simple for celebrating their 15th anniversary with us! We are also thankful for the partnership we have with [California Pizza Kitchen of Paramus](#), who generously donated lunch for the volunteers. More photos are posted [here](#).



Mercedes-Benz Builds 10 Playhouses in a Single Day

By Nicole Murray

A rainy day didn't stop more than 100 Mercedes-Benz employees from building 10 children's playhouses and 20 birdhouses with Habitat Bergen as part of Mercedes Gives Back. Through Habitat Bergen's Playhouse Program, the Mercedes-Benz volunteers spent the day cutting, hammering and nailing pieces of the playhouse together, all to bring smiles to local children. Volunteers were split into teams, each contributing a piece to the playhouse as a whole, whether it was to build roof, a wall, a floor or painting. In addition to the playhouses, the volunteers built twenty birdhouses, which will be decorated and auctioned off at Habitat Bergen's future events.



The volunteer initiative was supported by local organizations such as Callahan's, United Water and Johnny on the Spot. More photos are posted [here](#).



Homes Come in All Shapes and Sizes

by Pamela Nall

Habitat Bergen's Playhouse Program is a unique Team Building opportunity that provides children in the community with a place to call their own. Through the program, volunteers work together to construct usable and durable children's playhouses, which are then donated to community charities that serve children or directly to families through various service agencies. Groups can donate their house(s) to the charity of their choice or ask Habitat Bergen to coordinate through our regular charity partners.

Sponsoring groups can choose to build playhouses over a half day or a full day, onsite at the team's location with site supervision provided by Habitat Bergen. The playhouses are constructed by fabricating and assembling the sides, door, windows, trim, and roofs. Each Playhouse build can accommodate about 8-10 volunteers. Habitat Bergen's staff takes care of the pickup and delivery to a pre-selected family with photos taken at the time of delivery, based on the execution of a photography waiver and consent form. Social media promotion, press release, and photography are provided by Habitat Bergen, subject to your team's approval. Interested in a Playhouse Team Build or know of a family or community charity in need? If so, contact Angela King, Director of Volunteers at angelak@habitatbergen.org.

Travel with a Purpose

by Pamela Nall

I am proud to be Habitat Bergen's first Global Village Trip Team Leader. Having participated in four trips as a volunteer it was a dream and dare I say, on my "bucket list," to be able to lead a trip. Dreams do come true, and in October I had the honor of leading a team of volunteers from the area to Taos, NM where we worked side-by-side with the Habitat for Humanity of Taos (HFHT) staff and future homeowner, Vera Romero, to build her and her 14-year old daughter, Jewels, a new home. We chose Taos because we wanted to make an impact and felt our help could do the greatest good for this affiliate. With 300+ nonprofits in the area, local volunteers are hard to come by which makes the 24-26 volunteer teams that visit their site annually essential to HFHT's ability to build homes. The HFHT team - Cynthia, Mark, Drew and Michele - were warm and welcoming. HFHT's current new home construction project is a two- bedroom, 940 square foot home that's targeted for completion in the summer of 2016.



Diversity was one of the themes this week! The team volunteered on the new construction site, 2 rehab homes and at the ReStore. HFHT builds adobe brick homes, which is very different from the east coast style of building and gave the volunteers the opportunity to learn many new skills. Our team installed bond beam (so the roof can be put on before the first snow fall in November), dug dirt trenches, packed and staked out Vera's sidewalk and dug out dirt path for her future driveway. A final highlight on the last day involved learning how to hand mix and pour wheel barrels of cement for Vera's front doorstep. We were shocked at how small an area a barrel of cement would fill! If you work hard you also have to play hard! So we took a day to trade in our tools for local culture which included a visit to the Taos Pueblo, a designated UNESCO world heritage site.

Our team had the opportunity to meet Vera when she provided us with lunch and shared her story. The opportunity to meet the future homeowner is always a magical moment because you are witnessing the Habitat mission and model first hand. The team signed the beams in her future home with our wishes of blessings. While the beams will eventually be covered, the heartfelt sentiments will permeate the walls of the home forever. It sounds cliché, but you do get more than you give when you participate on a Global Village trip. As a first time team leader I was amazed at how the experience overwhelmed me with feelings of gratitude. My team's effort and energy was an inspiration and reminds me of this quote by Desmond Tutu, "Do your little bit of good where you are; it's those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world."

Photos from the Taos trip are posted [here](#).



Habitat Bergen is Back to Wrap!

By Nicole Murray

The affiliate is back to wrap this holiday season beginning in mid-December! Due to the success and popularity of this annual fundraiser at The Outlets of Bergen Town Center, Habitat Bergen has added an additional gift wrapping location, The Shops at Riverside.



Starting December 11th, Habitat Bergen's volunteers will be available to wrap shoppers' holiday gifts outside of Whole Foods and Home Goods at The Outlets of Bergen Town Center. Beginning December 16th, shoppers will have the opportunity to get their gifts wrapped in front of Pottery Barn on the first floor at The Shops at Riverside.

Volunteer Shifts are still available! Volunteers must be 16 or older and available for 3-4 hour shifts. Visit our [Volunteer Calendar](#) or contact our Director of Volunteers, Angela King, at AngelaK@habitatbergen.org with any questions.



Save the Date for #GivingTuesday

By Nicole Murray

BLACK FRIDAY. CYBER MONDAY.

#GIVINGTUESDAY

We have a day for giving thanks. We have two for getting deals. Now, we have #GivingTuesday, a global day dedicated to giving back. The Tuesday after Thanksgiving, charities, families, businesses, community centers and students around the world will come together for one common purpose: to celebrate generosity and to give.

Join us this #GivingTuesday, December 1st, at Blue Moon Mexican Café for lunch and/or dinner at their Englewood, Woodcliff Lake or Wyckoff restaurant and 20% of your check will be donated to Habitat Bergen when you present this [flyer](#)! If you unable to dine out on December 1st, but still want to support Habitat Bergen, you can give back on #GivingTuesday by making a secure, online [donation](#).



Please present this card when you dine at the Blue Moon(s) listed above and 20% of your bill (excluding tax and gratuity) will be donated to the organization named above. Seating will be based on first come, first serve. We will not be accepting reservations on these evenings. This offer cannot be combined with any other promotions, offers or coupons. This offer is only valid for the date(s) on the front of this card and only at the location(s) listed above. Please contact restaurants directly to see if your town is in our delivery zones. No customer discount will be given.

WWW.BLUEMOONMEXICANGAFE.COM

You Rolled the Dice and Went Home with Prizes!

by Nicole Murray

Habitat Bergen celebrated its 5th annual Casino Night with friends, volunteers and donors at Seasons in Washington Township. Nearly 200 guests played roulette, poker and other games of chance. Many guests went home with Tricky Tray baskets. One lucky guest went home with a Bloomingdale's shopping spree and another lucky guest won a Porsche for a weekend! Photos from Casino Night are posted on Bergen.com, BC the Mag and Habitat Bergen's [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/HabitatBergen) page.



Thank you to the sponsors who made the event a spectacular success: [Bogota Savings Bank](http://BogotaSavingsBank.com), [ConnectOne Bank](http://ConnectOneBank.com), [Getler & Gomes](http://GetlerGomes.com), [Inserra Supermarkets](http://InserraSupermarkets.com), Christopher Jansen and Patricia McInerney Jansen Family Foundation, [Lakeland Bank](http://LakelandBank.com), [OritaniBank Charitable Foundation](http://OritaniBankCharitableFoundation.com), [PuroClean Mitigation & Restoration Services](http://PuroClean.com) and [United Water](http://UnitedWater.com).



What Makes a Bergen LEADER?

By Nicole Murray

I am about to find out! This past September, I began my first day in the [Bergen LEADS](http://BergenLEADS.com) Class of 2016. Bergen LEADS is an exciting 10-month learning and leadership adventure for individuals who live or work in Bergen County. Throughout the class year, I will attend monthly seminars which will challenge my classmates and I to dissect issues, debate viewpoints and develop solutions to community problems. Each monthly seminar focuses on a particular topic, whether it is government, healthcare, education and more.

While I am only a couple months into the program, I can see the tremendous value of this program. I've had the opportunity to learn from local leaders in government, faith and business. So far, I've visited the Law and Public Safety in Mahwah and networked with my classmates. From now through May, I will continue learning from Bergen County leaders on how best to lead positively and authentically and will apply my knowledge of this through my work at the affiliate.

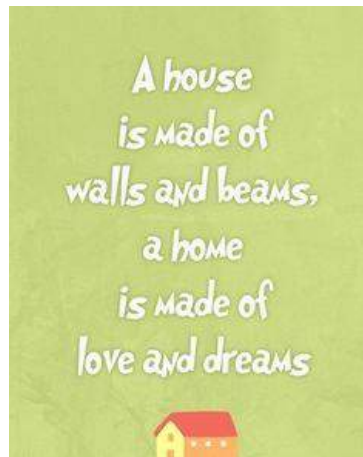
We wish to recognize the following donors for their recent support of our organization



- [Farmers Mutual Fire Insurance Company of Salem County](#) \$1,440
- [Real Simple Magazine](#) \$8,900
- [Robert Wilkens Insurance Agency](#) \$700

Funds will be used to support the remaining Superstorm Sandy critical home repairs, upcoming new construction project of a single-family home in Bergenfield, general operations and program support.

Have you considered remembering Habitat Bergen in your Will? It's a gift that costs nothing now, but will benefit many for generations to come.



Our sincerest gratitude to our sponsors, donors, volunteers and community partners whose contributions have created opportunities for families to thrive.

Stay connected with us online!



**Habitat for Humanity of Bergen County | info@habitatbergen.org
(201) 457-1020 | www.habitatbergen.org**