



Habitat Happenings May 19, 2016

Home is Where Our Story Begins By Pamela Nall

Can you imagine a world where everyone has a decent place to live? Habitat can, which is why since 1976 Habitat for Humanity International has helped 6.8 million people find strength, stability and self-reliance through safe, decent and affordable shelter. Habitat Bergen was founded in 1994, and while we have made great strides in providing affordable housing to low-income families and restored 80 homes severely affected by SuperStorm Sandy, there is still more work to be done. With a population of approximately 938,000 people, Bergen County has six of the most affluent towns in the state which makes it hard to believe that 3.5% of the population is homeless.

Habitat Bergen strives to be part of the housing solution. We believe that a decent place to live and an affordable mortgage creates a situation where homeowners can save more, invest in education, pursue opportunity and have more financial stability. A Habitat home is an equalizing force for a family. Better, affordable living conditions lead to improved health, stronger childhood development and the opportunity to make forward-looking choices.



We do more than build; Habitat homeowners receive financial education, help build their home and pay an affordable mortgage.

There is still work to be done and we need your help. Every helping hand, every donation, every time you talk about the need for affordable housing makes a difference. To get involved visit our [Volunteer Calendar](#). *What will you build?*

5K Race to Build By Pamela Nall



There wasn't a cloud in the bright blue sky as runners and walkers lined up at the start line of Habitat Bergen's 4th Annual 5K Race to Build at Overpeck County Park on Saturday, April 16th. Some had a look of determination in their eyes, looking to place first in their age group, while others were looking to enjoy a walk with family or friends. Looking into the crowd you could spot a sea of blue shirts representing the Samsung team, a sea of green shirts representing the Columbia Bank team as well as a sea of navy blue shirts representing the Fort Lee Police Department. The teams all enjoyed cheering each other on and occasionally teasing each other on their finishing times. The beauty of the 5K is that it brings together all different people from the community, all looking to enjoy a morning outdoors while supporting our mission to provide affordable housing in Bergen County. We were honored to have Chairman of the Freeholders, Steven Tanelli, participate in our event.

Congratulations to Brendan Conway, the Top Overall Male, Nancy Sietsma, the Top Overall Female and Sachiko Kawamura, the winner of the Female 70 - 99 age group! Race participants enjoyed breakfast donations from Inserra Supermarkets, Whole Foods Market and Teaneck Hot Bagels and a post-race sweet treat from the Ben & Jerry's ice cream truck. Special thank you to SUEZ who made sure our race participants were hydrated, our sponsors, table vendors, the Ridgefield Park Volunteer Ambulance Team and the Parks Department for helping to make the event a success.

The 5K Race to Build was featured in [The Bergen Record!](#) Photos from the 5K can be viewed [here](#).

National Women Build Week Media Day

By Angela King

Thank you for another inspiring Saturday commemorating National Women Build Week! We spent the day breaking stereotypes and framing walls!

On Saturday, May 7th, we were joined by our future Bergenfield homeowner



Carlos Pimentel, a team of volunteers from Becton Dickinson (BD) and SUEZ, keynote speaker Lorien Barlow (Director/Producer of feature documentary [Hard Hatted Woman](#)), guest speakers NJ Assemblywomen Valerie Vainieri Huttle and Marlene Caride, Mayor of Bergenfield Norman Schmelz, Freeholder Thomas Sullivan, Bergenfield Council President Chris Tully, and Habitat Bergen Board Member Doreen Winn, to celebrate our 2nd Annual National Women Build Week Media Day.

Photos from the day can be viewed [here](#).



Playhouse Builds: A Year in Review

By Angela King

"A house is made of walls and beams. A home is made of love and dreams." - Amish Saying

With the start of our Playhouse Build Program, Habitat Bergen has built and donated 15 playhouses to various children's organizations and deserving Bergen County families over the past year. In partnership with corporate teams like Mercedes-Benz, SUEZ, Ameriprise Financial and Samsung, we have donated children's playhouses to a number of community partners, including:

Bergen Family Center, Montvale Free Evangelical Church, Children's Aid and Family Services, Josephine's Garden, Kidz University II, Bergenfield Day Care, and Center for Hope & Safety.

Is your team interested in building a playhouse with us, or do you know a deserving family or organization who may be able to benefit from a playhouse donation? Contact [Angela King](#) for more information.

Here is a [video](#) of the kids at Bergen Family Center receiving their surprise playhouse!



"We keep a small table in the playhouse and our two girls like to eat dinner in it when the weather is nice. They bring out their chairs and feel very special eating in their own little space."

- Allyson G. and family, Habitat Bergen Playhouse recipient

Volunteer Spotlight: Meet Abby

By Pamela Nall



Like most people, Abby Bennett enjoys watching Drew and Jonathan Scott on The Property Brothers. For Abby, The Property Brothers were a motivation to learn construction skills so she could be "handy" around the house. What better way to learn construction skills than to volunteer with Habitat, which Abby did for the first time last September on our SuperStorm Sandy construction worksite. Feeling exhilarated after a great day of volunteering and learning how to paint, Abby realized she had "the bug", the "volunteer bug" that is. As she was looking through our social media sites to find out what other volunteer opportunities we had available, Abby discovered that there was an opening on Habitat Bergen's Global Village Trip to Taos, NM. Even she couldn't believe how unexpected the situation was and she immediately applied, and within 24 hours Abby had filled the last spot on the 12 person volunteer team. After an inspiring week of volunteering in Taos, NM Abby boarded her plane to come home. Feeling fulfilled, grateful and humbled by her week of service, Abby sat down in her seat on the plane only to look up and find that The Property Brothers were on her flight! Abby felt it was the affirmation she needed to confirm her choice to volunteer with Habitat was in fact the right one.

Abby is an advocate, sharing her volunteer stories with family and friends thereby teaching more people about the need for affordable housing. She is one of the

affiliate's most diverse and committed volunteers. It's very possible you will find Abby at any one of our many events - gift wrapping, the 5k, shopping or dining at our community night partner events, the gala and securing gift card donations for special events. She's part of the volunteer team that will be traveling to Flathead Valley, Montana this October to volunteer with their affiliate for the week. Having someone like Abby be part of the Habitat Bergen family is priceless.

Thank you to the sponsors, donors and volunteers who faithfully give to Habitat Bergen. We could not accomplish the work that we do without you.

Travel with a Purpose

By Pamela Nall

Have you ever wanted to volunteer while also traveling to a beautiful part of the U.S.? Then we have the trip for you! Join Habitat Bergen as we travel to Flathead Valley, Montana on our Volunteer Service Trip on October 9-16, 2016.

Our team of 12 will be volunteering with Habitat for Humanity of Flathead Valley for the week to help them build a subdivision with five affordable housing units. We will also take time to visit Glacier National Park and other local sights. You'll finish the week feeling inspired and thankful.



Contact Habitat Bergen's Team Leader, [Pamela Nall](#) for more information or to apply. **Hurry, only five spots are still available!**

*"Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on earth."
- Muhammad Ali*

**You have the power to make a difference
Join Habitat Bergen at one of our upcoming events:**

[Invitational Golf Tournament, September 19th](#)
[Casino Night, October 5th](#)
[NYC Marathon, November 6th](#)

STAY CONNECTED:

