



Pioneer Valley

# Habitat for Humanity®

## Winter Newsletter 2025

Volume 23, Issue 1

Winter 2025

Working with our many partners, Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity builds strength, stability and self-reliance through affordable homeownership in Hampshire and Franklin Counties. We are an affiliate of Habitat for Humanity International, an ecumenical organization that envisions a world where everyone has a decent place to live.

### Looking Forward:

- » **1st Wednesday of the month, 6:30pm, new volunteer orientation**, online, sign up here
  - » **3rd Saturday of the month, 9:00am, New volunteer orientation**, online, sign up here
  - » **3rd Sunday of the month, 12-4pm - Women Build**, Woodland Drive site, sign up here
  - » **Sunday, April 13, 11am-3pm Scrabble Tournament at the American Legion Hall, Florence.** The Northampton Scrabble Club's annual fundraiser for PVHH. Open to all Scrabble lovers!
  - » **TBD**  
**Deadline for homeownership applications** will be announced later this spring
  - » **Wednesday, May 21, 6pm FEAST for Habitat**, rK Miles warehouse, Hatfield
  - » **Summer TBD, wallraising ceremonies** for homes in Greenfield and Northampton
- Learn more at [pvhabitat.org](http://pvhabitat.org)**

## What Will We “Cram into 100 Years”? Tribute to Jimmy Carter

After President Jimmy Carter passed away at the end of December 2024, Habitat International executive director Jonathan Reckford, sent a letter to affiliates the world over. Below is an excerpt from his letter.

*“Over the past several days, our nation and the world have come together to remember and celebrate the extraordinary life of President Jimmy Carter...He certainly made his life count over the past century, serving as a Navy nuclear engineer, Georgia state senator, Georgia governor and the United States’ 39th president. Following his political career, he continued his life of service as a Sunday school teacher, election monitor, disease eradicator, Nobel Peace Prize laureate, and, of course, Habitat home builder. As his grandson Jason Carter reflected, ‘It’s amazing what you can cram into 100 years.’*



“I have one life and one chance to make it count for something... My faith demands that I do whatever I can, wherever I am, whenever I can, for as long as I can with whatever I have to try to make a difference.”

**- Jimmy Carter, echoing the words of religious leader John Wesley**

*President and Mrs. Carter first worked with Habitat in March 1984 in Americus, Georgia... Later that year, they led a group of volunteers to New York City to renovate a six-story apartment building in what became the first Jimmy & Rosalynn Carter Work Project. The Carters — who were named [Habitat for Humanity’s] inaugural Habitat Humanitarians — led the project for more than 30 years and really helped put Habitat on the map. Though they retired from public life in 2020, the Carter Work Project continues and has brought together over 108,100 volunteers who have built, renovated or repaired more than 4,447 homes in 14 countries. The Carters’ selfless dedication to service has directly helped thousands of people achieve decent housing and inspired action to help millions more.”*



After the passing of President Carter, Pioneer Valley Habitat erected a memorial doorway honoring the president’s contributions to the work of Habitat, his work to open the door to affordable

Donate your car.



(877) 277-4344  
[carsforhomes.org](http://carsforhomes.org)

Taking out the recycling? Maybe it's time to recycle that old car you're no longer using? You could decide, as dozens of owners of used vehicles do each year, "I think I'll donate my vehicle to Habitat!" It's easy, as easy as making a call and waiting for a truck to come take your vehicle away. And your unwanted vehicle could turn into the walls, the windows, the front door of a family's dream home.

**Go to [pvhabitat.org/donate/cars-for-homes](http://pvhabitat.org/donate/cars-for-homes) to learn more.**



## PVHH Board

Mariah Kurtz, President  
Darcy Johnson, Vice President  
Muthoni Magua, Treasurer  
Kathy Caputo, Clerk  
MaryAnne Kuroczko, Asst Clerk  
Zan Bross  
Tom Crossman  
Peter Graham  
Jim Hickey  
Darcy Johnson  
Seth Lawrence-Slavas  
Ashley Layne  
William Levine  
Rob Steinberg  
Holly Young

## PVHH Staff

Julie Choi, Construction Coordinator  
Jess Flohr, Operations Manager  
Amy Landry, Director of Resource Development  
D'ahnee Lorenzo, Community Engagement Coordinator  
Megan McDonough, Executive Director

## Intern

Manuela Klenner

## Graphics Support

Beth Graham  
Anastasia Honny

## Office Volunteers

Kenneth Carpenter  
Lyn Heady  
Lucia Spiro

# Three Families Finish Building and Buy Their New Homes



As the winter winds blew across the western Massachusetts fields and we experienced one of the snowiest New England winters in a long time, three families were cozily tucked into their new solar-powered, energy-efficient homes, enjoying the comfort of the new surroundings they helped build. In September, long before the first flurries arrived, Tim and Sara, Giovanna, and Greishka became first time homeowners, signing their papers and moving with their eight children into the three houses completed on Burts Pit Road. Congratulations to these three families on their new homes!



## Letter from the Director

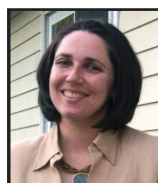
Dear Habitat Community,

The core value of Habitat for Humanity the world over is that *Everyone deserves a decent place to live*. I'm writing today to affirm Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity's commitment to this value – that the foundation of our work includes is the belief that housing is a human right and we will do our part on that path towards justice.

Habitat for Humanity was dreamed up by Millard Fuller and others at a racially integrated farm in south Georgia in the 1950s. It was a time of segregation and overt racism, but Millard and others at Koinonia Farm knew that doing the right thing during hard times was the only choice. They held firm to the belief that that loving our neighbors was not just an empty platitude but a call to action, even as that brought the wrath of people who thought otherwise upon their community.

Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity will continue its work to create a welcoming environment on our job sites, in our workplace and for our future homeowners. We endeavor to create Dr. Martin Luther King's Beloved Community where poverty, hunger, and homelessness will not be tolerated because human decency will not allow it.

Thank you for being a part of this community by volunteering your time, donating your resources and amplifying this message. There is a lot of work to do in the years ahead and I am grateful to have a community to build a better future with.



In gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Megan McDonough'.

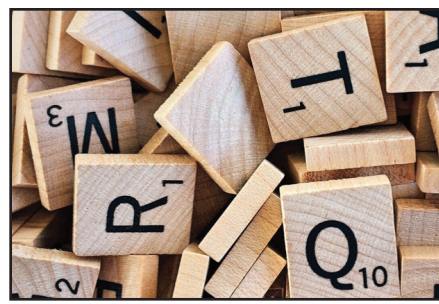
Megan McDonough,  
Executive Director

"The bond of our common humanity is stronger than the divisiveness of our fears and prejudices."

- Jimmy Carter

## Jimmy Carter *continued*

homeownership for thousands of people alongside First Lady Rosalynn Carter. The public was invited to visit and write tribute messages on the doorframe during its weeklong installation in front of the Unitarian Society in Northampton. At a commemorative service on a blustery below-zero day in January, hearty community members listened to the words of PVHH executive director Megan McDonough and Unitarian minister Eric Cherry, who reminded us that the Carters were “disruptors of injustice” and onlookers were exhorted to continue in the spirit of the Carters to work toward a world where everyone has a decent place to call home. Jimmy Carter was not the founder of Habitat for Humanity, but he and Rosalynn have left a huge Habitat legacy, humble yet powerful for us to carry forward into the future.



## Northampton Scrabble Club's annual fundraiser to benefit Pioneer Valley Habitat on National Scrabble Day

Once again, aficionados and amateurs alike in the world of wooden-tiled crossed words are invited to join the Northampton Scrabble Club's annual tournament to be held at the American Legion Hall in Florence on Sunday, April 13, 11am-3pm. Expect camaraderie and competition while you support the Club's efforts to spread Scrabble joy while raising funds for Pioneer Valley Habitat, the Northampton Survival Center and Cancer Connection. Whether you win or not, you are supporting a win-win event.

“Playing bop is like playing Scrabble with all the vowels missing.”

- Duke Ellington

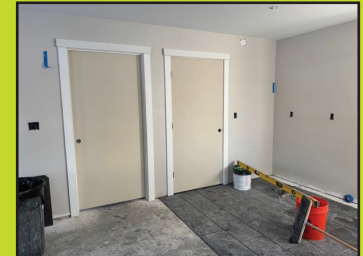
## The Fun Doesn't Stop with Scrabble... FEAST for Habitat Wednesday May 21st, 6-8pm at rk Miles, Hatfield

You just never know what the chefs from our fabulous local restaurants are going to serve up at this year's FEAST. Remember last year's entrée winner, Smithsonian Cafe's crab roll with broccoli slaw? And your mouth is probably still watering from the memory of Whately Inn's steak tips, Waxwing's gourmet spreads and patés and Fitzwilly's crazy alfredo. Who tried the winning bread pudding from Gombo and the creative margarita bar selections from Mesa Verde? No matter where your palate finds the greatest pleasure, you will find something to delight it at the FEAST for Habitat while you check out the auction items, enjoy some music and mingle with your old Habitat friends and meet new friends. Don't miss the best party of the Spring! Registration opens in early April, to register go to <https://pvhabitat.org/feast-2025>.



### What's happening on the build site?

**Petty Plain Rd., Greenfield**  
Volunteers are making progress installing doors and floors. Upcoming tasks include installing baseboards. Join volunteers on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays.



### Woodland Dr, Northampton

Starting to install window and exterior door trim, interior doors, painting interior trim, walls and doors, and more. Volunteer shifts on Tuesdays and Thursdays, we need you!



You may be lucky enough to work alongside one of the future homeowners the day you're out volunteering on site. The paths they've traveled to Habitat are extraordinary and inspiring. Read the stories of the families currently building their homes and of those who have gone before at <https://www.pvhabitat.org/homeowner-stories/>.

“I love building our own home – we get to make our footprints on our future home before we're in the door.”

- Tim, current homeowner on his experience building his Habitat house

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

## Megan McDonough Recognized as One of Business West's Women of Impact



Nominated by Aelan Tierney of Kuhn Riddle Architects, Pioneer Valley Habitat's executive director Megan McDonough received accolades for her powerful, effective work in the realm of affordable homeownership at a ceremony in December at the Springfield Sheraton. Megan was one of eight women to receive a Business West Women of Impact award this year. "Over [the] years, we have been witness to Megan's unwavering passion and commitment to developing affordable, sustainable homes," wrote Tierney, a Woman of Impact awardee herself, in her nomination. "Her work has empowered many women and families of marginalized racial identities to achieve the first step in building generational wealth through affordable home ownership." The Pioneer Valley Habitat community is grateful to Megan for her thoughtful, changemaker leadership.



**Get Involved!**

Visit our website to  
sign up and volunteer!



Pioneer Valley  
**Habitat for Humanity**<sup>®</sup>



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