

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: pvhabitat.org/ways-to-volunteer
- » **3rd Saturday of the month, 9:00am, new volunteer orientation**, online, sign up at pvhabitat.org/ways-to-volunteer
- » **3rd Sunday of the month, 12-4pm, Women Build**, Greenfield and Northampton build sites, sign up at pvhabitat.org/ways-to-volunteer/womenbuild/
- » **Saturday, Sept. 13, 10:30am**
Info session for Westhampton Rd. applicants, Lilly Library, Florence. To RSVP: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScpo5RoVypsqhXQNQJVVfy8aynVhVqYhwN5Gu86fijtj-oMPw/viewform>
- » **Monday, Sept 29, 6pm PVHH annual meeting**, Esselon Café, Hadley
- » **Tuesday, Sept. 30, 7pm**
Info session for Westhampton Rd. applicants on Zoom. To register: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_8JcYg1NjQL-ATJLqGihTaww#registration
- » **Thursday, Oct. 16, 7pm**
Info session for Westhampton Rd. applicants, on Zoom. To register: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_BxBvqaGsQIwviXbO88CnZg#registration
- » **Tuesday, Oct. 21**
Homeownership applications due for Westhampton Road cottage
- » **Late Oct., date TBD Rural Rally Roundtable**
- » **Saturday, Dec. 6 - Dec 13 Gingerbread Build**, build at home



The Carter Legacy Lives On in 2025 Rural Rally

Highlighting Affordable Housing Needs in Rural Communities

Although Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter are no longer with us, their legacy remains a driving force in Habitat's work. In order to elevate awareness around the need for more affordable housing in rural America, Habitat International is spearheading its first-ever Rural Rally as part of the annual Jimmy & Rosalynn Carter Work Project, with home builds and rehabs in more than 60 rural communities during the last week of October alongside the project's signature large-scale build in Austin, Texas.

Hampshire and Franklin Counties contain within them some of the state's most rural areas. A study by the Pew Charitable Trust identifies impediments specific to rural homeownership that have only increased in the last five years and the need for advocacy to reverse this trend. Pioneer Valley Habitat makes small and steady advances in some of the identified

"Together, I'm convinced that you and I together and all those who work with us can bring a new and a better life to rural America. I'm dedicated to it. With your help we will not fail."

- President Jimmy Carter, Small Community and Rural Development Policy Remarks

Investment in new and existing housing is a critical need in rural towns, where a mismatch exists between current housing stock and current needs. A lack of housing production, old housing stock, changing demographics (smaller households and an aging population), and competition with short-term rentals and second homes in some areas, has led to a shortage of decent, affordable housing that meets the needs of residents.

There are more low-income households than low-cost units available, leading many to pay more than they can afford.

- Franklin Regional Council of Governments, Franklin County Regional Housing Plan 2024

need areas – including offering smaller mortgage packages for lower income households and working with banks to consider creative lending strategies – as we add to the sustainable housing stock in this region. But the need is great and growing and requires a groundswell of understanding and effort to

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Donate your car.



(877) 277-4344
carsforhomes.org

Summer into fall means outside clean up, moving things along that you're no longer using. Wouldn't you love to see that old car (motorcycle/van/boat) in the driveway recycled into the walls, the windows, the front door of a family's dream home? Consider donating your unwanted vehicle to Habitat, it's EASY.

Go to pvhabitat.org/donate/cars-for-homes to learn more.

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New Homeowners in Greenfield & Northampton

There was much cause for celebration during the summer of 2025, when two families finished, closed on and moved into their new homes in Greenfield and Northampton.

Not only did we hear from many who supported each of these projects with their time and their treasure, participants at both events were treated to the talents of the homes' future occupants. A Greenfield homeowner played selections on flute for those assembled at their

home dedication while attendees were treated to a delicious cake made by their partner, and one of the Northampton heads of household prepared a feast of foods traditional to her culture for attendees at her family's event.

Congratulations to these two new homeowners households!



Letter from the Director

Dear Habitat Community,

I feel very fortunate to live in western Massachusetts in community with my neighbors. Neighbors are a funny thing, we mostly don't get to pick them. We choose a house or a region and take a chance. Sometimes those neighbors become lifelong friends, sometimes just a person you smile and wave at now and then.

Habitat homeowners are no different – picked in a lottery after a long application – they take a chance on putting down roots. Taking on the highs and lows of homeownership surrounded by neighbors not of their choosing.

For our most recent build in Greenfield, a bit of Habitat magic seemed to be in the air: our newly selected homebuyer, Hannah, already rents in her future neighborhood. A place that she wanted to stay in long term, in part because of her neighbors. People who in 2020 after lockdowns decided to get to know their neighbors and hold a block party. Neighbors who have been gracious and welcoming to the ongoing Habitat construction and the return of this building lot to homeownership after the previous blighted home was torn down.

Thank you, Habitat, for being a good neighbor.



With gratitude,

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

Megan McDonough,
Executive Director

"Was it right then, that she understood the neighbors before me and their desperation to grow another world? Was it right then, that I asked her her name?"

- **Andrea Gibson** "Neighbors"

The Carter Legacy *continued*

change the housing outlook for our neighbors with low to moderate incomes.

During the final week of October, Pioneer Valley Habitat will convene a gathering at our Greenfield construction site to shine a light on the housing and homeownership needs in our rural communities and share ideas for next steps. After building a picnic table for the future owner of the Habitat home, the group will have a roundtable discussion about rural housing initiatives. The discussion will be livestreamed and recorded, available for viewing on youtube.

Could Your Land Provide the Foundation for a Family's Future?

Pioneer Valley Habitat has been the fortunate beneficiary of gifts of land from municipalities, individuals, organizations. These donations allow us to use our resources for other parts of the process of building and keeping homes affordable. Maybe you have a parcel, or a corner of a property, or know of a piece of land that is just right for a Habitat home? Contact executive director Megan McDonough at megan@pvhabitat.org if you have some land our Site Squad might come review for homebuilding possibilities.

Lathrop Community

If you are holding a paper copy of this newsletter, you can thank some dozens of volunteers from The Lathrop Community of Northampton. Every six months for the last ten years, a group has gathered in the Community Room to prepare the PVHH newsletter for bulk mail. And while Covid prevented coming together for a couple of years, it did not stop the Lathrop volunteers from getting the job done in a different, distanced way. While they do this wonderful act of service for PVHH, they are quick to tell us why taking this job seriously is a gift to them.



"I love the camaraderie and the feeling of doing something concrete (however small that may be) for a cause I believe in strongly." - Nancy



"Habitat is an inviting and positive word. Humanity is at the very apex of good stuff. But I know that not every element of humanity has a good habitat, so making the two words fit together in real life is most satisfying work." - Peter

"We are glad to help an organization that does such important and lasting work for our community." - Gary and Rowena

"We work on the mailings because we can't wield a hammer or saw anymore. Not that we ever did. But we do admire their work." - Judy and Bob

"It makes us happy to be an active part of this great effort to provide affordable housing for those in our community. We can no longer carry beams, wield hammers on roofs, or climb ladders while carrying pieces of siding, but we are good at stuffing envelopes, attaching address labels, and affixing little round stickies to newsletters....and we enjoy doing it." - Carol and Alex

Thank you, Lathrop friends!



Lucky 13 – the 13th Annual Gingerbread Build is Coming

Pioneer Valley Habitat's annual Gingerbread Build contest will open Saturday the 6th of December, when teams will pick up their kits and have until midnight Thursday the 11th to unleash their countertop construction creativity on their contest entry. Discerning celebrity judges will then debate, decide and declare

winners in each of several categories the afternoon of Saturday, December 13th.

Check back in the fall for more information at www.pvhabitat.org/events/gingerbread-build/.

What's happening on the build site?

Birch St., Greenfield

Framing is done, roof trusses are in place. Come help us get everything buttoned up for winter and the inside work started!



Westhampton Rd, Northampton

Coming soon! This late addition to our construction lineup will be in full swing soon. Check back later in the fall for more details.

****Deadline for homeownership applications for this site is Tues. Oct 21, 2025.**

Equal Housing Opportunity – pvhabitat.org/apply.



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 pvhabitat.org/homeowner-stories/.

"I can't believe I get to do this. It's really satisfying, there's something so amazing about building your own house."

- Hannah, future homeowner

Wish List

- Centrally located warehouse space in Hampshire or Franklin Counties
- Lightweight portable projector
- Standing desk for staff
- Electric teakettles for construction sites



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Pioneer Valley Habitat Rides 4 Food, 25 Strong!



“Food and shelter, they go hand in hand,” says Habitat volunteer and board member Bill Levine of his passionate participation annually in the Western Mass Food Bank’s Will Bike 4 Food Fundraiser. This year – his fourth – Bill has assembled an impressive 25-member team of riders from among the Habitat faithful: volunteers, committee, board and staff members, funders and stakeholders.

If you’d like to know more and support the efforts of Bill and his team to raise \$25,000 for the Western Mass FoodBank, go to foodbankwma.org/site/TR/Events/General?team_id=3672&pg=team&fr_id=1150



Get Involved!

Check out the list of committee volunteer opportunities on the PVHH website at www.pvhabitat.org/ways-to-volunteer. Could you see yourself contributing in one of those areas? We need you!



140 Pine St. Rooms 3 & 4, Florence, MA | (413) 586-5430 | www.pvhabitat.org