

# Building Faith

## In Columbus



Issue 1 - February, 2009

### Soon to be Habitat Homeowner Mr. Barry – thankful and hopeful.

Mr. Mamadou Barry is looking forward to hanging pictures of family and friends on the walls of his new home. Mr. Barry's future Habitat home is located in Franklinton at 220 Stevens Avenue and will also be home to his three children Isshita, Mariana, and Alpha. The Barry family will be settled into their home in time for the family to enjoy summer in their new neighborhood.



Mr. Barry immigrated to America from West Africa in 1998 and is currently employed at Gempak. Every Habitat family is required to invest between 200-250 hours of "sweat equity" into their home, and Mr. Barry has been very dedicated in doing his part for his own home. Sweat Equity includes community service, educational classes designed to increase the success of Habitat homeowners and construction hours on their own home and the homes of other Habitat partner families.

Mr. Barry's home is the result of many wonderful volunteers and organizations, all working together. Northwest Adopt-a-House (established in 1990), Ohio Capital Corporation and Cobalt are co-sponsors of the home, and Federal Home Loan Bank of Cincinnati and the City of Columbus – Department of Development have provided grants funds for the build.



The home could not have been build without the help of so many amazing individual volunteers as well. "I'm always amazed that everyone brings so much food!" Mr. Barry exclaims, wishing that he could email volunteers to personally thank them for their work. Since there are so many parties involved, he would just like to extend a very big "Thank You!" for everything that Habitat for Humanity and its volunteers have done for his family.

*Written by Kyle Hildebrandt, Habitat Volunteer*

[www.habitatcolumbus.org](http://www.habitatcolumbus.org)

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## CEO Corner

“Begin to weave and God will provide the thread...” In this hustle and bustle world in which we live and work, it’s sometimes difficult to stay focused on this simple phrase. And, yet, when we think back in our lives, how many times has that thread appeared, seemingly out of nowhere, once we’ve begun to weave?

At HFH-Greater Columbus, the thread of building houses is wood and nails. Our Adopt-A-House groups over these last 21 years have demonstrated time after time, year upon year, that faith has been the seed enabling success in fundraising, in generating volunteers, and ensuring quality construction by experienced house and crew leads. All the effort, of course, has ultimately led to that life-defining moment for a partner family when the keys are presented during the house....no, “home” dedication ceremony.

During these difficult economic times it is human nature to worry more about how our family members and loved ones will be affected. Worry can displace faith if we’re not careful, and when that occurs, we feel as though it’s up to us to wrest control of the situation. Taken to extremes, worry becomes excessive and faith is all but displaced in our lives. And it seems the harder we wrestle with life’s challenges, the less effective we are, and mental exhaustion becomes the only fruit of our exertion. However, when we let ourselves be led by God’s light, solutions always seem to surface, and in the most amazing and unexpected ways. The effort is then productive work, not endless struggle with that which is bigger than what we can handle alone.

Reflecting on God’s word and his evinced love for us, then, it is clear that if we have faith, and work in ways that we feel are in accordance with His will for us on this earth, that which we need will be provided. It has been so for these last two decades at HFH-Greater Columbus, and it is with gratitude that I say “thank you” to all of our AAH groups for shining a light on the pathway of faith, demonstrating house after house that the “thread” will be provided if we keep on building.

**E.J. Thomas, CEO** *Habitat for Humanity-Greater Columbus*

## Ten great ways for Faith-based groups to get involved with HFHGC

- Pray for the volunteers, staff and new homeowners as they work together to change this world!
- Fundraise by hosting a spaghetti dinner, silent auction, benefit concert, or other unique event.
- Commit to prepare food for construction volunteers in our Chuck Wagon program.
- Use Habitat for Humanity’s material for your Sunday School or VBS curriculum
- Volunteer to participate in our wall-raising or dedication ceremonies with prayer.
- Invite a Habitat Staff to be a guest speaker at an event/worship service.
- Encourage your congregation to volunteer as a group or individually in one of the countless ways volunteers work with Habitat.
- Take up a special collection during a worship service.
- Schedule a day for congregation members to volunteer on a construction site or in our ReStore.
- Sponsor or co-sponsor a house.

To get started, contact Andrew Smith ([faithrelations@habitat-columbus.org](mailto:faithrelations@habitat-columbus.org) or 614-561-1530)

## Prayer Requests

*Join us in lifting up these concerns to God. We pray for:*

- \* Safety for all staff and volunteers in 2009.
- \* Patience and knowledge for our construction leaders as they embark on building new house models with different techniques than they are accustomed.
- \* The vision to navigate through a potentially rough economic climate.
- \* The award of 4 new AmeriCorps members for the 2009-2010 service year.
- \* Another successful year in 2009!

## Praise Reports

*Join us in thanking God for successes and answered prayers. We thank God for:*

- \* All of the volunteer assistance in construction.
- \* The 14 families that were able to move out of substandard conditions and into their new homes in 2008.
- \* The completion of affiliate's 200th house.
- \* The completion of affiliate's first nine-home subdivision, John G. McCoy Circle.
- \* The donation of two new construction trucks.
- \* The grant award of new box and stake-bed trucks for Habitat's ReStore.
- \* A successful year in 2008!

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## Thrivent Builds Homes ... more than 1,000 dreams come true!

*Join us for a day. Stay in a family's heart forever.*

Since 2005, Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, through its alliance with Habitat for Humanity, has given more than 1,000 families the opportunity to build and own a decent, affordable home. In the process, strong bonds of friendship have been built ... and lives changed.



Thanks to Lutheran congregations, members of Thrivent Financial and other volunteers, those 1,000 families have the increased financial security that comes from affordable homeownership. The impact doesn't end there.

**314 families will be helped in 2009, including 2 families in Central Ohio!**

Thousands of families across the country are faced with a heart-wrenching decision: to provide decent shelter for their children—or provide basic needs like food, electricity and health care. You can help give a better life to a family right here in our area. **Help us build homes and strengthen families. Call Bonnie Reilly at 614-396-4130 to volunteer or visit [www.thriventbuilds.com](http://www.thriventbuilds.com).**

You and other members of the Lutheran Community will work side-by-side with the families to build their homes. No experience is necessary. All you need is a willing heart.

Volunteer for a day and change a life—maybe even your own.

Together, we will build better lives. And a better community.

*Help end poverty housing through Thrivent Builds with Habitat for Humanity, a \$125 million financial, volunteer and advocacy alliance between Thrivent Financial for Lutherans and Habitat for Humanity International®.*

### **Calling all Faith Leaders!**

Habitat for Humanity - Greater Columbus is looking for faith leaders who would be willing to participate in home dedication ceremonies. Duties include: opening prayer, leading the litany of celebration reading, and blessing the home and family. These ceremonies are the culmination of many hours of hard work and many months of anticipation. They are a joy to participate in! Interested faith leaders should contact Shellie Bensman at [sbensman@habitat-columbus.org](mailto:sbensman@habitat-columbus.org) or 614-364-7030.

# Get your Church Involved with Habitat's Recycling Program!

Cans for Habitat is a recycling program that promotes the value of aluminum can recycling. Through Cans for Habitat, aluminum cans are recycled to raise money for Habitat for Humanity to build decent, affordable housing with low-income families in Franklin County.

Cans for Habitat raises money, increases awareness of Habitat within the community, builds lists of donors and gives children a way to become involved with Habitat; all while helping the environment!



## 5 Easy Steps to get involved with Cans for Habitat!

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

1. **Gather aluminum cans.** You can do this personally, or by contacting churches, business, schools, etc. and asking to pick-up their cans for them in support of Habitat for Humanity-Greater Columbus.
  2. **Set up a pick-up and drop-off schedule to transport the cans from the location where the cans are collected to one of the recycling centers that has partnered with Habitat for Humanity-Greater Columbus.** (Please contact Shellie Bensman for Recycling Center contact information). Assign a specific person to this task that will be available to pick-up and drop-off every week (or as often as needed).
  3. **When a significant amount of cans has accumulated, the person assigned to the pick-up/drop-off task should take all aluminum cans to one of the selected recycling centers.**
  4. **Tell the Recycling Center that you are dropping off cans for Habitat for Humanity-Greater Columbus,** and they will put the receipt for your cans in Habitat's account.
  5. **Keep your ears open for new contacts that will put their aluminum cans towards benefiting Habitat for Humanity-Greater Columbus!**
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## **Worthington Partnership Adopt-A-House Program**

### *Builds Relationships With Churches and Community*

The Worthington Partnership Adopt-A-House Program puts into action the old adage “many hands make light the load.” Founded in 1992, the program is comprised of 10 churches in the Worthington area whose members work together with Habitat for Humanity-Greater Columbus (HFHGC) to build homes for deserving families.

Robin Leslie, committee chair, began working with the Worthington Partnership Adopt-A-House Program in 1994 as a member of the Meadow Park Church of God. She was asked to chair the organization’s steering committee in 1995 and has served in that position for the past 14 years. Leslie organizes monthly meetings for the 15-17 volunteers who represent each of the 10 churches involved, and she is also in charge of making sure they successfully raise the funds necessary for each Habitat house they sponsor.



The Worthington Partnership Adopt-A-House Program has funded and built 15 homes, completed one home rehab, and finished another house that a different group had already started. Last year Leslie’s group co-sponsored a Habitat home with the Dublin Adopt-A-House Program, the Clintonville/Beechwold Adopt-A-House Program. The Arlington Bank and The Federal Home Loan Bank of Cincinnati (FHLB) provided funds through the American Dream Homeownership Challenge, a program designed by FHLB to provide homeownership opportunities for minorities and people with special needs. The City of Columbus- Department of Development also provided grants for this newest Habitat home, located at 549 South Oakley Avenue in Columbus.



Built for a disabled veteran who is legally blind, the one-story South Oakley Avenue house was completed Dec. 13. Leslie said creating relationships with the Habitat partner families is rewarding, and she noted she especially loves to see how her work with the Affiliate benefits children. “It helps their self-esteem, provides them with a safe place to live, and offers continuity for their families,” she said. “It’s worth it just to see the happiness a Habitat house brings.”

Working with Habitat has provided the Worthington Partnership Adopt-a-House volunteers with many opportunities: “The fellowship and community we develop with other churches allows us to come together as a coalition to build homes for deserving families,” Leslie said. “It’s been a great experience.”

*Written by Sarah Ortman, Habitat Volunteer*

# Habitat Announces Homeownership Opportunities for 2009

## *Informational Meeting Scheduled*

Habitat for Humanity - Greater Columbus will host an informational meeting in Columbus to present homeownership opportunities currently available through Habitat. The free meeting will be held:

**Sat. Mar. 14 10:00 - 12:00 p.m.** Habitat for Humanity-Greater Columbus 3140 Westerville Rd Columbus, OH 43224

Potential Habitat homeowners may qualify for a zero-interest mortgage and affordable housing if they currently live in substandard housing, are a first-time homebuyer, have a reliable source of income and are willing to partner with Habitat on the construction of their new home and the homes of other partner families. Additional information and detailed eligibility requirements are available by calling (614) 364-7014 or by attending the meetings.

More than 15 homes are planned for construction in 2009 within the Columbus Public School District on the Southside, the Eastside and in Franklinton.

Habitat for Humanity-Greater Columbus (HFHGC) is one of the only housing agencies in Franklin County targeting families who earn 30-60% of median income. HFHGC partner families are chosen after a careful review process during which Habitat assesses their need for housing; their ability to repay a zero-interest, no-profit mortgage and their willingness to partner with Habitat through sweat equity. All partner families are first-time homebuyers who earn 30-60% of the median income for Franklin County and currently live in substandard housing. Every partner family must perform a minimum of 200-250 hours of sweat equity, which includes working on their own house and those of other Habitat families, attending homeownership classes and providing Habitat program support. Every family also assumes a no-interest, no-profit mortgage with payments based on family income. Because HFHGC holds and services these mortgages, Habitat has a long-term relationship with the homeowners and the communities in which they live.

You can help us by spreading the word throughout your congregations and contacts. Help us in finding the families we can partner with to help end substandard housing in Central Ohio! For more information, contact Lisa Jones ( [ljones@habitat-columbus.org](mailto:ljones@habitat-columbus.org) or 614-364-7014.

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## The Faith Community/Habitat Connection

### *What do churches provide for Habitat for Humanity?*

- Prayer and spiritual support
- Labor – Volunteers and skilled leadership, family partner volunteers
- Resources – funding, in-kind donations, possible building sites
- Affirmation within the community
- Potential for long-term growing relationships

### *What does Habitat for Humanity provide for Churches?*

Many churches begin their partnership with Habitat for Humanity out of a desire to help other people. They are delighted to discover how working with habitat benefits them! Being a Habitat partner:

- Provides a way to engage in ministry with an established Christian housing organization that has an excellent reputation
- Allows a faith group to participate in a ministry of service that has a beginning and an end
- Provides congregation members with a tangible opportunity to put faith into action both locally and globally and to see real evidence of their faith after the project is over
- Leads many people to grow in their faith and desire to serve God
- Build community within the congregation and among all who work on a Habitat project
- Provides important and meaningful connections among Christians
- Offers people a comfortable way to share God's love
- Gives individuals with a variety of skills the chance to respond to the needs of others
- Often attracts new church members and involves inactive members by providing people with an opportunity to see tangible results of their faith efforts
- Has stirred enthusiasm among members of many congregations who have then sought more opportunities for ministry
- Communicates the message of being a caring and compassionate congregation called to action
- Helps generate a healthy pride within congregations

*Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!" --Isaiah 6:8*

## Upcoming Activities & Events:

- \* **February 28-March 8:** Habitat's ReStore at Home and Garden Show
- \* **March 21:** Mr. Barry Home Dedication at 220 Stevens Ave.
- \* **March-April:** Begin New Construction projects for 2009
- \* **April 4:** New Volunteer Orientation
- \* **April 18, 19:** Earth Day Events
- \* **April 23:** Annual Meeting
- \* **May 2:** Thrivent Builds sponsors two Shack City Events, one in Worthington and one in Dublin, Time TBA

**Check the HFHGC web site updates and additional events. [www.habitat-columbus.org](http://www.habitat-columbus.org)**

## Volunteer Opportunities!

Do you want to volunteer with Habitat for Humanity – Greater Columbus, but don't know how? Check out the Volunteer Hub (<http://columbus.volunteerhub.com>). On the site you can register a user name, view available volunteer opportunities, and sign up to volunteer. New volunteer opportunities are updated daily, so check early, check often! Contact Volunteer Coordinator Shellie Bensman with any questions ([sbensman@habitat-columbus.org](mailto:sbensman@habitat-columbus.org) or 614-364-7030).

### **Publisher's info:**

*Building Faith in Columbus*

Quarterly E-newsletter

Habitat for Humanity - Greater Columbus

For info on how to submit content for the newsletter, new recipients to be added, or other questions/comments, contact Andrew Smith ([faithrelations@habitat-columbus.org](mailto:faithrelations@habitat-columbus.org) or 614-561-1530.)