



Her very own bedroom isn't really too much to ask, is it? After all she is a grown woman with two teenagers, Ashley and Daniel. She works hard at her night job to pay the bills. Hasn't she earned a room of her own? Habitat for Humanity of Sarpy County thinks so. And that's why Patty Liekhus was selected as a partner family about three years ago.

Living in a two-bedroom apartment, Patty, being the generous person that she is, gave the bedrooms to her children, leaving no bedroom for herself. So Patty transformed the dining room area into a bedroom, hanging sheets up for privacy and placing a bed and nightstand in the dining room.

Since being selected, Patty has been working to complete the 250 sweat equity hours required of her. She has had to find the time for these hours when she is not working her full-time job or spending time with her kids.

Patty was getting close to finishing her sweat equity hours in March when a Habitat home became ready for occupancy. She has rented her home pending completion of her hours. And Patty found a unique way to finish her sweat equity hours. She went to Pearlinton, Mississippi, traveling 16 hours each way. From Feb. 25 to March 4, Patty worked to help rebuild the town that was devastated by Hurricane Katrina. In order to go on the trip, Patty had to use her vacation time.

According to Patty, all the work was worth it. Her Habitat house, which we dedicated on April 2nd, has three bedrooms and means that finally she has a room of her own.

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Hello Habitat family,

Since becoming Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity of Sarpy County, one of my main goals has been to get more youth involved in our program. Young people are a special part of our organization, both as volunteers and as children living in Habitat homes. In fact, 43 of 63 of the people in our homes are children.

I have been working on getting Habitat's message into schools and youth organizations across Sarpy County. And so far the response has been overwhelming! The youth are really answering the call! Students at St. Mary's School in Bellevue created a "Habitat Shower" and collected Christmas decorations and items for the yard and home for our newest Habitat family. Youth from Cub Scout Pack 457 in Bellevue made small homes out of recycled materials and collected change that added up to a \$175.00 donation for Sarpy Habitat! Fifth and sixth graders at Betz Elementary School are planning a Bowl-to-Build fundraiser for us on May 13th in Bellevue.

With so many youth working hard to help low-income families in need of affordable homes, we would like to reward their efforts. That is why we have created Youths for Habitat for Humanity of Sarpy County. Young people aged 16 and under, who complete requirements, are welcome to apply for membership in the club. And, as a special bonus, the first 50 who complete membership in the program will receive a special gift donated by Papio Fun Park in Papillion. Thank you Papio Fun Park for supporting the youth who help Sarpy Habitat!

For more information about the club, call or email our office.

Margaret Stamp

Executive Director

Habitat for Humanity of Sarpy County

- 119 W. Mission Avenue
- (402) 292-6560
- Office Hours: Monday through Friday 9:00AM – 3:00 PM
- Web Site: www.hfhsarpy.org
- E-Mail sarpyhabitat@qwest.net

GREETINGS FROM OUR PRESIDENT

IVNA JOHNSON

New sites, new families, new grants, new youth outreach, new board members to elect, new responsibilities, new challenges – no one can say that volunteering for Habitat is dull! This is an exciting time as our affiliate grows from its comfort zone to meet our expanded vision and the growing need for affordable housing in our community.

Believing we are more affluent than some areas, many people have asked me if we really have a need in Sarpy County. To this, I give a resounding yes. Every social service agency will tell you that they are having difficulty meeting needs as housing and utility costs increase. The only housing authority in the county has a waiting list that exceeds two years. So the need for housing is legitimate.

During our application period this month we had over 34 families apply – a record. Unless disabled, the majority held full-time jobs, but just do not earn enough to realize the dream of a home of their own. They want to have roots in our community, become contributing taxpayers, and participate in what we call the Good Life. That's why we, Habitat for Humanity of Sarpy County, are willing to meet the new responsibilities and challenges.

To assist us in this mission, we have expanded our office hours. Ten people,

who volunteer a three-hour shift weekly, man the phones, greet visitors, and support the work of Habitat in numerous ways. Making all of this run smoothly is office manager, Blanche Deal.

Two others, Margot Cook and Marian Cheney, are leaving the Board of Directors because their terms have expired. I would like to thank all three of them for their many years of dedicated service to our affiliate.

On a final note, I would like to congratulate all the volunteers and sponsors that made the recent Second Annual Auction such a successful event. A special thank you to Bill and Linda Ernst, who chaired the fundraiser. Since the final tally is not in, look for pictures and event details in the next issue of *Habitat Chat*. Also check the Bellevue Leader and our website, www.hfhsarpy.org, to stay abreast of Habitat's many activities.

If you would like to volunteer and join with us as we make home ownership a reality for Sarpy County families, please call the office. We welcome your participation.

Ivna



New Property:

Habitat for Humanity of Sarpy County is proud to announce that we have purchased nine adjacent lots in Bellevue! The purchase of these lots is great news because one of our challenges is finding affordable land in Sarpy County.

The lots are located on Rose Lane north of 25th Street and Cornhusker Road.



Executive Director Margaret Stamp fully supports the Board action saying, "Purchasing these lots is a demonstration of the faith our Board of Directors and volunteers have that God will provide us the money for these lots through donations from our generous community and through grants."

Our Affiliate paid for the land with a bank loan, and is asking for donations to help pay for the lots. If you would like to donate money, please contact us at 292-6560 or send your gift to: Habitat for Humanity of Sarpy County, P.O. Box 1664, Bellevue, NE 68005. If you belong to a club or organization in Sarpy County, please consider encouraging your organization to donate for this purpose.

Progress on Jackson Street House

The volunteers have been working hard throughout the winter on this duplex located in Olde Towne and their efforts are paying off! The project is nearing completion! We look forward to dedicating this home this summer.



2506 Jackson Street Habitat Duplex



Kitchen in the South Unit

Habitat for Humanity of Sarpy County Seeks Land Donations

One of our greatest challenges is finding homes to rehab or property to build a home on for the many eligible families that apply to become homeowners. Habitat for Humanity of Sarpy County's goal of building simple, decent homes that low-income families can afford works hand-in-hand with the ordinances of local municipalities. We impact the community where we build or rehab by turning a vacant, blighted property into additional tax dollars for the municipality, as well as increase the local property values. The additional income can be used to improve education and recreation in a community.

Because of our non-profit status, our organization may be the perfect fit for those who have been given property or a home through an inheritance. Often property/houses sit vacant for a long period of time before owners realize that the tax donation value of the property can outweigh the cash value, after considering the cost of time and travel to maintain the property.

Donations of property/houses that have not been properly maintained and therefore are often not sellable are also accepted. However, for our Affiliate, this is not a problem. Each of the homes we rehab is completely gutted and we install all new insulation, drywall, plumbing, electricity, etc. to ensure that the family won't be facing any unnecessary repairs.

What type of property are we seeking?

The most affordable property to build on is a lot on a public road with direct access to utilities. However, we are willing to explore many possibilities. This includes a multiple

lot piece of property that would provide land to build a number of houses over several years.

What if the property already has a building on it?

If the building is in good structural shape, we may be able to do a rehab. If the building is not suitable for a rehab, we can demolish the home and clear the property to build a new home.

Why should I donate my land to Habitat for Humanity of Sarpy County?

The most fundamental reason for donating land is helping less fortunate families build a stable life as homeowners in the community and the resulting feeling of satisfaction. There are also significant tax benefits from donating land.

I want to help, but I need to get some money from the property.

If you are willing to sell the property at a price substantially below the market prices, you will still be eligible for tax advantages, and we may be able to reach a price that allows us to achieve our home-pricing target.

Whether you own property or know of property that might be available, please call 292-6560 or email sarpyhabitat@qwest.net. The property does not need to belong to an individual. Churches and businesses may have excess property that they would be willing to donate. We will investigate all possibilities.

Habitat Calendar

Below is a list of upcoming events that you will not want to miss! We look forward to seeing you at these upcoming events.

Saturday, April 29th – 2:00 PM – Groundbreaking Ceremony

Ground will be broken for our next construction project, a new home at 2009 Jefferson Street in Bellevue. The ceremony will take place at the site. Volunteers will be needed this summer to get this project going! For more information, contact our Construction Volunteer Coordinator, Craig, at hfoffice@cox.net or call him at the Habitat office at 292-6560 on Thursdays between noon and 3 PM.

The public is welcome to attend this Groundbreaking Ceremony.

Saturday, May 6th – 8:00 AM – Prayer Breakfast

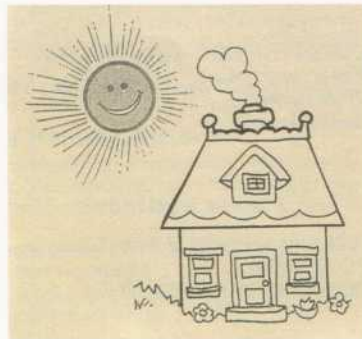
Thanksgiving Lutheran Church of Bellevue at 36th Street and Highway 370 is hosting a Prayer Breakfast, sponsored by the Bellevue Kiwanis Club and Cross Trek Ministry. Moneys collected will benefit Habitat for Humanity of Sarpy County. Cost of the breakfast is \$15.00 per person.

Saturday, May 13th – 8:00 AM – Bike Ride Event

The *Bellevue Bicycle Club* will host a bike ride event, called the Second Annual Spoke & Hub Century, to support Habitat for Humanity of Sarpy County. Breakfast will be served from 6:30 – 8:30 AM; the ride begins at 8:00 AM. Rain date is May 27th. For more information, visit our Web site at www.hfhsarpy.org and look under calendar items, specifically the non-construction calendar, for the registration form. Please print the forms off and make them available at your work, church, etc.

Saturday, May 13th – 10:30 AM – Bowling Fundraiser

Betz Elementary School 5th and 6th graders are raising funds while having fun bowling. Stop by Leopard Lanes and support the cause.



CELEBRATIONS COMMITTEE FORMED

A Celebrations Committee has been formed to plan groundbreaking, dedications, parade participation, National Day of Prayer, and the annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner. Our celebrations are with Habitat homeowner families, not for them.

One example of what we do for a Groundbreaking Service:

- ❖ meet to plan the service
- ❖ send invitations
- ❖ print a bulletin
- ❖ secure a photographer

Present members of this committee are Erlene Chloupek, Jean Hankins, Kristi Smith, Ann Boepple and Deb Stinn. Won't you join us? We welcome your participation! Meetings are called as events occur. We meet at the Bellevue Library on a Sunday afternoon as needed.

YOUTH ACTIVITY PACKET

Stop by the office to pick up a fun youth activity packet! The youth packet for children includes a Habitat crossword puzzle, coloring sheet, word search, "Adventures of Habicat" flyer, and the instructions and template to build a 3-D Habitat house out of paper (scissors and glue needed). To get a copy of the packet call or stop by the Habitat office weekdays between 9 AM and 3 PM.

SPEAKER'S BUREAU

Habitat for Humanity of Sarpy County has formed a Speaker's Bureau. Habitat volunteers give public speeches about the mission of Habitat and what the public may do to help.

If you belong to a club, organization, or church group, call or email sarpyhabitat@qwest.net to arrange a Habitat volunteer to speak to your group.

Habitat volunteers are invited to join the Speaker's Bureau. Check with Margaret for more information.

Donations:

December 2005 – March 2006

In Memory of:

Randall "Randy" Mills
Clarence Zens
Dave Dulzo

In Honor of:

Blanche Deal
Ron Begg
John Will

Make a donation in honor/memory of someone you love by sending a donation to Habitat for Humanity of Sarpy County, 119 W. Mission Ave. Suite F, Bellevue, NE 68005. Please be sure to include your address. For more information visit www.hfhsarpy.org or call 292-6560.

All donations to Habitat for Humanity of Sarpy County are tax deductible!



Steven Evans, son of Sarpy Habitat homeowner Tara Evans, won a gold medal in all-around basketball skills on March 24, 2006 at the Special Olympics state competition in Lincoln.

Steven will also be competing at the state-level in Special Olympics bowling, because he placed first in the 12 – 15 year old category at the Regional Special Olympics Bowling Tournament held at Leopard Lanes on January 21, 2006. Steven is a member of the Bellevue Stars bowling team.

He is a freshman at Bellevue East High School.