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Three Families, Three Homes, Three Dedications

On Thursday, October 30, a beaming Danielle Williams and her two sons, 6 year old Grant and 3 year old Logan, celebrated the dedication of their new Habitat home at 420 Rogers Street in Cadillac. They were joined by friends, family, construction supervisor Al Reinink, and several Wexford Habitat for Humanity Board members and staff. The ceremony was led by Pastor Dennis Williams (Danielle's uncle), Habitat Board President, Ed Van Alst and Habitat's Executive Director, Debra Maxey. Each room in the house received a blessing, and a candle was lit to symbolize the bringing of Christ into the home. After the ceremony, Danielle enthusiastically thanked everyone for their support and for giving her such a wonderful opportunity.



Board President Ed Van Alst officially passes on the keys to Danielle Williams' new home as Executive Director Deb Maxey looks on.



Mike and Sheri share a happy moment in their new home with children Carter and Autume.

Just a few weeks later, on December 12, Mike and Sheri Harsh, closed on their home at 418 Rogers Street, and a second dedication was held. Although they hadn't moved in completely, the Harsh family brought enough so they could spend their first night in the new home. What excitement!

and insurance, and they are all required to work with their Family Support Advocate for the next year (See page 3). These are obligations they readily accept just as they accepted the requirements to complete several hundred hours of "sweat equity" to earn this privilege. With the Whaley Dedication, twenty families in our county have now benefited from partnerships with Wexford Habitat for Humanity.

Hundreds of people contributed to the successful completion of the three building projects. The property for the two Rogers Street homes was acquired several years ago as a result of a monetary bequest to Habitat, but the houses were built primarily by Career Technical Center students along with community volunteers and members of the two partner families. Brenda Whaley's home was primarily a "community build." Churches, service groups, and other volunteers worked alongside Brenda during construction. Others donated supplies and special talents. We are thankful to all.



Brenda Whaley holds the candle, which symbolizes the bringing of Christ into the home.

Amazingly, there was still one more celebration for 2008. On December 19, a large, joyful group of family and friends gathered to help Brenda Whaley dedicate her home at 1025 Arthur Street. Brenda's children, Travis and Brianna, had been anticipating this moment for a long time and even attended the official real estate closing.

Although the three Habitat partner families now hold the keys to their homes, they are still responsible for paying the 0% mortgage, taxes,

Three Building Projects, Three Habitat Supporters Honored

Each of this year's building projects was named to honor some very special Habitat supporters. **The Williams build honors Tom and Linda Stevenson.** Tom is the owner of Basic Transportation. He uses the Habitat ReStore lot to sell used cars and then donates \$500 to Habitat for every car that is sold. He and Linda also contribute to Habitat in many other ways.

The Harsh's building project honors Darlene Merritt. Darlene was on the Wexford Habitat Board for 14 years, and was instrumental in organizing the first Festival of Trees, WHFH's signature fundraiser. **The Whaley build is in memory of Jack Fitzgerald.** Jack was on the board for 16 years and not only provided engineering expertise but also worked on almost every building project.

Calendar

Applications are being accepted NOW for anyone interested in becoming a Partner Family. (See page 3)

Jan. 25-Feb. 14
Glen's Market joins with Habitat in fundraiser. (See page 2)

April 15- Check the box on your tax form to support Habitat

Just A Few Dollars Can Help Us Build a Home



Please check the box to support housing in Michigan on your state income tax form!

As members of the Living in Michigan Campaign, the state's Habitat for Humanity affiliates fought long and hard to see Michigan's Housing and Community Development Fund established. Victory came when our friends in the legislature allocated nearly \$2.2 million to the fund in the 2008 state budget.

In 2008, the first payouts were made, with 18 groups receiving \$2.2 million for affordable housing and neighborhood improvement projects across the state. Nine Habitat for Humanity projects received nearly \$500,000. The impact will be great because the fund is designed to leverage \$3 for every \$1 spent.

Now we have a new opportunity to grow the fund. Check the box to donate \$5 or more on your 2008 Michigan Income Tax form to support Michigan's Housing and Community Development Fund. These dollars come right back to Michigan communities to provide safe, decent, affordable housing to those who need it.

To keep this check-off, we must raise \$100,000 this year and again in 2009. Tell all your friends, colleagues, family members and neighbors, "Check the Box for Housing in Michigan."

\$\$\$ Glen's Market Partners with Habitat \$\$\$



January 25 - February 14

Visit your local Spartan Store in Cadillac, Glen's Market, for an opportunity to contribute to Habitat's Mission in our community.

From January 25 to February 14, Spartan Food Stores will join forces with Habitat for Humanity affiliates in Michigan to raise money to build decent, affordable homes in our community. This partnership involves a scanning program at all participating stores and fuel centers. Customers will be asked at the check out if they would like to donate \$1, \$5, or \$10 to help build a Habitat home in the community. Donations are tracked through the cash registers by the bar codes on the medallions accompanying the sales. Customers can sign the medallions and then they will be posted in the store to raise awareness for the campaign and local Habitat affiliate.

In the Cadillac area, Glen's Market will be participating in this fundraiser. Posters and informational materials about the work of Wexford Habitat for Humanity will also be on hand, so we encourage citizens to find out more about our mission. All money raised at our local Glen's Market will go directly to Wexford Habitat for Humanity. Your dollars may be a little more precious in these tough economic times, but we hope that the generosity that has always been a part of this community will continue in 2009.



Tom and Judith Cook and David and Katrina Wheeler donated building lots to Habitat. Their gifts will open up new doors for future partner families.

Habitat is extremely grateful for the recent monetary donations, both large and small.

We appreciate the efforts of John O'Brien to keep us "green" by getting our cardboard to recycling.



We are grateful to Terry Maxey for all the free snow plowing this winter. The heavy snowfall has kept him busy!!



We are truly thankful to architect John LaPorte for his assistance in plans for our first handicapped accessible Habitat home.



We heartily thank each and every one of our sponsors, guests, and contributors to the 2008 Breakfast with Santa and Festival of Trees.



Family Support for Habitat Partners

Anyone who has ever built his or her own home knows about the challenges that come with it, and these challenges are no different for our Habitat partner families. With these challenges in mind, Habitat for Humanity provides a special kind of assistance in the form of Family Support Advocates. This past year, Pam and Alan Anderson were advocates for Danielle Williams and her family, Kristin Bonney was the family support person for Mike and Sheri Harsh, and Bob and Paula Greene worked with Brenda Whaley and her family.

As the title implies, Advocates often help the families work through building issues with the best interests of the future homeowners in mind. For Kristin Bonney, the experience of being an Advocate was and is a positive one. "We were able to pick out light fixtures, carpet, floor covering and other items for the home together [on a budget] which was very fun for me. It's wonderful and very rewarding to see such nice people get a beautiful new home." Kristin's enthusiasm and experiences were shared by the other Family Advocates whose responsibilities include serving as a liaison between the family and Habitat; providing advice, information, and encouragement; involving the family in "building community" with the neighborhood; and mediating whenever there are conflicts. Advocates often go beyond what is required; Pam and Alan Anderson helped Danielle Williams "move into her home when she realized she could use more help," and the Bob and Paula Greene helped install blinds, fixed plumbing, and were quite involved in the actual construction of Brenda Whaley's home. The connection between the Family Support Advocates and their partner families does not end at closing. Officially, it continues for the next year, but oftentimes the relationship builds to one of "mutual caring" and extends much further. If you are interested in becoming a Family Advocate, please call 775-7561 for more information.

Tithing: Helping Worldwide Partners

Helping partner families in our local communities is the most important goal for Wexford County Habitat for Humanity, but like other Habitat affiliates, our organization has a connection to Habitat International, which has a presence in 90 different countries around the world. Each year, we are asked to tithe 10% of our contributions to Habitat International, but we also have the option to decide where our money goes. So far this year, we have designated \$3000 of our tithed amount for Guatemala.

Guatemala is rated as an area of high priority because of the huge housing deficit. And the deficit is growing! From the current 1.28 million, the deficit is expected to expand to 1.9 million by 2015. Fortunately, Guatemala is also a country where Habitat for Humanity has a strong partnership. Guatemala also has a special place in our hearts, since Scott Powell, our previous Executive Director, had adopted two children from Guatemala. Because the cost of a home in developing countries is very low, our contributions this year may be able to provide an entire house for a partner family. That's good news for folks like the Marco Flores family. Marco, his wife Ingrid, and their new baby just moved from a noisy, rented space that frequently lacked water in the modest kitchen and bath to a new Habitat home with two bedrooms. Imagine their excitement!

WANTED!

Partner Families

Are you looking for an opportunity to buy a simple, decent home? Wexford Habitat for Humanity is now accepting applications throughout the year for partner families. You can download applications and find information about eligibility at :

<http://www.wexfordhabitat.org>

You can also pick up an application at the Wexford Habitat ReStore on Boon Road (across from the airport). If you have questions, please call 231-775-7561.

Breakfast with Santa & Festival of Trees 2008



Santa came for breakfast at the Cadillac Grill on November 22, but he had time to chat with all the children in attendance at Habitat's annual Breakfast with Santa. The children also had a chance to see all the trees decorated for the evening event, Festival of Trees. Their favorite was a fancy, feathered tree named "Pink," which had been decorated by the Zonta Club of Cadillac.

The Festival of Trees and Breakfast brought in over \$30,000 dollars for Wexford Habitat this year. A few of the highlights at the Festival auction included a NASCAR tree featuring NASCAR tickets donated by Steve Anderson and the Cadillac Tire Center, a mound of exciting gifts piled on a handcrafted toboggan donated by Sheila Hill (PoSH Salon), a dinner for 8 prepared by "The Winettes," and a beautiful wreath created by Rita Meech out of recycled materials. Planning has already begun for next year's Festival. Call 775-7561 if you would like to be involved.



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HABITAT FOR HUMANITY BY THE NUMBERS

- **1,280,000**—The current housing deficit in Guatemala (the highest in Central America)
- **30,000**— The number of houses Habitat Guatemala will have built in by March 2009, maintaining the goal of building 10% of HFH homes worldwide.
- **4200** —Number of dollars to sponsor an entire house in Guatemala
- **Priceless**—The joy of HFH partner families everywhere when they are able to move into their new homes.

This coupon is good until March 1, 2009

**20% off
any item
in the
store**



Wexford Habitat for Humanity was established in 1989 by community leaders of Wexford County who wanted to make a difference and eliminate poverty housing. They saw a need for simple, decent, and affordable housing. With the completion of the 3 homes this year, 20 families from Wexford County will be living in safe, decent housing.

Habitat for Humanity eliminates poverty one house at a time.