

Orange County Habitat's Newest Partner Family

The vision for Habitat for Humanity is "a world where everyone has a decent place to live." When Laurie Rogers and John Brown made application to be Habitat homeowners, they wanted to make that Habitat vision a reality for their family. John and Laurie are the parents of two children: Isaiah, 6, and Ariana, 3.

Laurie was aware of the work Habitat for Humanity does through reading some newspaper articles, and, at the urging of a friend, made an application to be a partner family. After meeting with a representative from Habitat's Family Selection Committee, Laurie and John realized this wasn't an easy process or a quick one. They had some issues to resolve and then applied again.

Meanwhile, the house they were renting continued to deteriorate. There was a hole in the floor that had to be covered with a piece of plywood. The house was always cold in the winter and hot in the summer. There were issues with mold that aggravated their son's allergies.

As John and Laurie were making a second application, the Orange County Habitat for Humanity Board of Directors was considering the purchase of a foreclosure house in Gordonsville. If all the details could be worked out, this would be a great opportunity for the Brown-Rogers family to quickly move into a warm, safe, and decent house.

The Board secured all the necessary inspections and made an offer. The approval and bidding were successful and over the next several months, volunteers set to work to get the house ready.

John, who has a background in construction, worked on the house as part of the "sweat equity" required for partner families. Since Laurie works full-time in Culpeper, her sweat equity hours have come in other ways: she



Meet John and Laurie and their children who moved into Orange County Habitat's 28th home. A dream come true!

helped with a Habitat Walk last fall that raised funds for Habitat. She also volunteered at the holiday bazaar being held at the Orange Presbyterian Church. Half of the proceeds of the bazaar went to Orange County Habitat.

When asked what this "new" house will mean to their family, Laurie said: "Everything! It just seems unreal. I never thought we'd be able to own a home. Now we are in a safe place to raise our family. We are so grateful Habitat was willing to work with us to make this happen!"

Joint Build with Woodberry Forest Begins November 3

The building begins Sunday, November 3, at Woodberry Forest where the boys and faculty under the direction of the builder, will frame up walls. We hope to have upwards of 125 students involved. After a couple of weeks, Joe Wayner will arrange for a flatbed truck to take down the walls and move them to the home site in Unionville. We'll need some help doing this when the time comes.

On Saturday, December 7 we will reconstruct the home at the permanent location in Unionville. It will be a serious work day and all hands will be appreciated. On that day we hope to accomplish getting the walls back up, the roof on, and perhaps the siding on, the rough-in plumbing and electric....a lot of work. Currently, a group who call themselves the "Habitat Road Crazies" and Woodberry Forest students and teachers are partnering to make this mini blitz build happen.

Our partner family for the fall 2013 Partnership Build are April and Eric and their four children. Everyone in the family is excited for this wonderful opportunity and they have already begun working on their sweat equity hours.



Ground work has begun at the Marquis Road homesite for our joint build with Woodberry Forest. The partner family, Eric and April and their four children will reside here when completed.

Orange County Habitat Earned the "Excellence in Housing Rehabilitation by a Virginia Habitat Affiliate" Award

Orange County Habitat for Humanity was one of two affiliates to receive the award in Virginia. It was presented for rehabilitation of Habitat houses in the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP). Orange has rehabilitated two NSP homes. Our last home was completed in record time to allow out partner family to move to a safer and larger home to accommodate the family size. The award was presented at the Roanoke Conference by Overton McGhee, Executive Director of Habitat Virginia.

NSP is the Neighborhood Stabilization Program, a federal program designed to help get families into homes that have been sitting empty due to foreclosures. Houses that sit vacant for long periods of time aren't good for communities, so Orange County Habitat for Humanity partnered with NSP and Habitat Virginia to buy a foreclosed home in Orange County.

This partnership meant that a family living in substandard housing could buy a home for less than it would cost on the open market. Orange County Habitat for Humanity refurbished this house and sold it to an approved family at 0% interest. The cost of buying and refurbishing a foreclosed house is about 1/3 to 1/2 the cost of building a new home.

Habitat for Humanity is an all-volunteer, non-profit ministry that builds or refurbishes houses and sells them to qualifying families at 0% interest. Donations are needed to help buy foreclosed houses. Please send a tax-deductible donation to OCHFH at PO Box 65, Orange, VA 22960. If you would like more information about the work of OCHFH, or you would like to be a volunteer with us in this work, go to our website OCHFH.org or send us an email at OCHFH@OCHFH.org.



Martha Roby of Orange County Habitat for Humanity accepted the award from Overton McGhee, Executive Director of Habitat Virginia in Roanoke this summer.

Message from the President

Fall 2013

by Cindy Reid

Love. Build.
Home. Hope.
Those are all words to describe what Orange County Habitat for Humanity is doing in this community. This year has been a busy one, on many fronts.

First and foremost, another Orange County family has a good, safe, and affordable home. OCHFH bought an older house that was in foreclosure in Gordonsville, we rehabbed it in record time, thanks to an ace volunteer, Gene Whitaker. We closed on the house around Thanksgiving, and our partner family was able to move into it in January! Since then, the family has continued to work on their sweat equity, they've taken home ownership classes, and have paid their down payment. By the time this newsletter comes out, they should be homeowners!

We were able to use Neighborhood Stabilization Funds to help with the purchase and repair work on this house. When those funds are available, it's a great deal for our partner families. We will continue to look at this as an option for Orange County families in need of better housing.

Another tool in our toolbox is VHDA (Virginia Housing Development Authority). They have funding to help qualified first time homebuyers get a mortgage. Habitat for Humanity partners with VHDA when families qualify for both programs.

This fall, OCHFH has plans for our first "partnership" build. We are partnering with Woodberry Forest School. Our plan is to build or panelize the walls of a 3-bedroom house, on the grounds of the school, using students to do the work, under the supervision of Habitat construction volunteers. The supervision for this will come from a group calling themselves the "Habitat Road Crazies". They travel all over the country to help special builds like this one. To see this group of "crazies" in action is a sight to behold!

After a few weeks, the panelized house will be taken down, loaded onto a flatbed truck and taken to our build site near Unionville, and put back up on our already completed foundation. From there, a local contractor, Joe Wayner, and local volunteers will finish the house. We have a lot to look forward to this fall!

We welcome you to join us in this mission, whether you like to swing a hammer, or run a bake sale, there's a Habitat job waiting for you. We are an all-volunteer, non-profit organization, so your help and your donations are all-important. Give us a call, or send us an email. We'd love to talk to you!



Honoring John Henry

First Contact

"John Henry" is not a name one encounters frequently. Around 1989 or 1990, I was working in a local real estate office and a gentleman called one day and announced "This is John Henry". I never forgot the name or introduction, but apparently I did not impress Mr. Henry very much, because I never sold him anything.

A few years later I became involved in Rapidan Habitat for Humanity, and thus my acquaintance with Mr. Henry began anew. That was also the beginning of a great education that transcended any schooling I had previously encountered.

RHH. At the time I was vaguely familiar with Habitat for Humanity. Since Joan and I were involved with real estate, and wished to contribute something to the community, Habitat for Humanity seemed to be a worthy and appropriate organization to support.

I soon learned that Rapidan Habitat for Humanity was operating on a shoestring and lots of hope and determination. Warren Stephenson was the president with hope, and John Henry was the embodiment of DETERMINATION.

It had taken lots of small fundraising efforts and quite a bit of time for the first Habitat home to be completed. It was for a local person whose family I was familiar with, so to me it was a great outcome. It also set a standard for the activities to follow.

Working with people. John has an unmatched ability to interact with people. He can debate and persuade any CEO, but he can also engage with the most disadvantaged among us. It doesn't matter who it may be, he can relate to anyone and provide encouragement in just about any situation.

True Grit. The most compelling attribute of John is his absolute refusal to be denied the attainment of his objectives. It is fair to say he never takes "no" for an answer. Regardless of the obstacles at hand, he will persevere until the resistance breaks down, or if a better idea comes along. He will always accept a new idea, but only if it is presented with the same force and determination as he exercises. It can be a really tough sell to persuade Mr. Henry to change his mind about anything.

His entire philosophy can be summarized by one of his most used quotations: "Plan Your Work, and Work Your Plan". It certainly has worked for him.

Slowing Down. Because of the tremendous work done by Rapidan Habitat for Humanity, there is a significant group of people in Orange County living in their own homes largely due to the foundation prepared by John Henry. Over the years John has slowed down a bit, but due to his determination the organization has grown, involving many dedicated and equally determined people who carry on the mission John helped to create.

In the beginning, one home every few years was the norm. Now there are dozens of homes. It is an accomplishment few would have thought possible 25 years ago, but if you had known John as I did then, it would not be a surprise at all.

~ Dwight Peck

John Henry and I were locating a Habitat house site in a wooded lot in Rhoadesville. All of a sudden a huge pit bull dog came tearing through the woods acting as if he was going to attack us. John said to ignore him and we stood our ground. The dog continued to growl and finally bumped our legs. John said, "I've had enough, help me find a good size limb". He did and started swinging and yelling like a wild man. That dog probably was not accustomed to a human like John and made a beeline for his home next door. Later, John met the owner and informed him to keep his dog chained and move the dog pen from Habitat property. That's John the animal trainer, fearless. ~ Jim Gerock



Photo by Drew Jackson, *Orange County Review*

Long-time LOW resident John Henry (center) was inducted into the Habitat for Humanity Virginia Affiliate Hall of Fame in May 2013. "John was about Habitat all the time, he could not talk to anyone without making a pitch for Habitat. John was our chief volunteer, Board member, Board President, fund raiser, and deal maker," said Cindy Reid, current Board President (left). "OCHFH (then known as Rapidan Habitat for Humanity) built a lot of houses for a small, rural, all volunteer affiliate. We had a four house Blitz Build in 2004, and a Women's Build one year. We are now making plans for our 28th house, a remarkable feat for an all-volunteer affiliate."

"There isn't anyone who better deserves to be in the Virginia Affiliate Hall of Fame. Central Virginia, and Orange County specifically, is much better off for the work and inspiration that John Henry provided," reported Overton McGhee, Executive Director at Habitat for Humanity of Virginia.

We have been involved with Orange County Habitat (Rapidan Habitat before that) for about 15 years. Early in our association with John (known affectionately by some as "Mr. Habitat") he was an occasional visitor in our home as we worked together on administrative details of the affiliate. His enthusiasm was evident and he obviously was intent on helping to provide decent housing for low income families. As most of you who know John are aware, he's also a no-nonsense kind of a guy.

One day he stopped by to "sound off" a bit about a meeting he'd had with someone in the organization. This person had obviously given John some pretty negative feedback about some of his thoughts and ideas. John, seemingly not hurt or upset, laughingly remarked to us, "So, I just picked up my toys and went home!" That was a moment of clarity for us and we saw John through different eyes. We realized he didn't care if you liked him or not, or that you might not like his ideas. He felt excited and sure about his goals and wanted others to feel the same way. That attitude wouldn't work for most people, but it surely worked for him--at least most of the time, in our opinion. Look at what his hard work, dedication and constant "Yes, we can!" attitude has helped accomplish for many deserving families in Orange County. When there was a family in need of housing, John worked hard to get it built. Of course, this was with a lot of help from some very dedicated and hard-working volunteers and businesses who were willing to pitch in. Thank goodness there are some of these same kind of people in Orange County Habitat still giving their all to this day.

~Skip & Liz Bond



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Our other current Board members include:

Dawn Cooper
Robert Clore
Carol Couch
Shirley Newman
Rob Racer

Rev. Dr. Denise Hall
Tom Woolfolk
Melanie Parmelee
Skip Bond (*ex-officio*)

Cars for Homes is Habitat for Humanity's vehicle donation program. All donations from Orange County residents will go to help build homes in Orange County. Give us a call at 540-672-5041 or visit www.carsforhomes.org to donate cars, trucks, boats, RVs, motorcycles, airplanes or other motorized vehicles. You will be sent an acknowledgement and all the forms required by the IRS regulations. Even if your vehicle doesn't run it can still be an important donation, vehicles are the most heavily recycled consumer product. Call today to get rid of that old vehicle, help build a home for a needy family and get a tax deduction!

Habitat Holiday Cards, the Perfect Gift!

Looking for a great gift? Trying to find something for the person who has everything? Need a last minute gift? Orange County Habitat for Humanity has the perfect way to give a gift to a friend or loved one and make a difference in the lives of others.

You can honor a family member, friend, work colleague, or anyone this holiday season by making a donation to Orange County Habitat for Humanity. The recipient will be notified of your generosity by a holiday card telling them of your donation in their name.

Contributions provide building materials, supplies, and support for families of Orange County who are in need of decent, affordable homes.

You will receive an acknowledgment of your tax-deductible donation. Please make your check to: Orange County Habitat for Humanity, PO Box 65, Orange, Virginia 22960. Enclose a note with the name(s) and addresses of those you want to receive a holiday card. We will immediately notify them of your gift.



Our Affiliate Raised over \$40,000

Over the past two years Orange County Habitat for Humanity has had a variety of fund raising efforts which have raised over \$40,000. Many, many volunteers, businesses and supporters have made this possible and we say a huge THANK YOU to all.

Special acknowledgements to:

- David and Charlene Scibal and Gina Sedwick for a great Halloween dance at the Willow Grove Inn.
- Gibsons Auctions, Ryan and Rachel Gibson, Denise Samuels and Elizabeth Szunyogh for our big tent auction and the food table at the July auction.
- Pat Stewart for the Habitat Walk in Orange and Lake of the Woods.
- David and Jennifer Gallihugh for hosting our Silent Auction at their Corner Cabinet Shop and donating beautiful custom cabinets. Sponsors were Miller Law Firm, Mason Insurance, Cowan Reality and Edward Jones Investments.
- Skip and Liz Bond for their donation of a P. Buckley Moss print which was raffled in partnership with Orange County 4-H.
- Orange Presbyterian Church Christmas Bazaar organized by Shirley Newman and Sharon Mohrmann.
- Carol Couch for organizing events large and small and chairing the Fundraising Committee
- Jeff Poole and the *Orange County Review* for graciously promoting all events.