



Habitat Heartbeat

The Newsletter for Habitat for Humanity • Santa Cruz County • Fall 2005



La Familia Hernandez: padres Eduardo y Virginia, y los hijos Estephanie, 13, Eduardo, 11, and Alondra, 2.

New Homes, New Families

October was a stellar month for Habitat Santa Cruz and for two local families who found out they had been chosen to receive Habitat homes. The Hernandez family immediately began putting in their 'sweat equity' hours at the Rooney street site, where their new home is located. Likewise, Mary Gilbert and her two children, Tabitha and Simon were thrilled to think they'd have a new home in just a few months.



Mary Gilbert, daughter Tabitha, 7, and son Simon, 5, share the moment of joy with Sharon Bystran of the Family Selection Committee.

Rooney Street Groundbreaking Celebration



A Groundbreaking ceremony on Saturday October 22 at 215 Rooney Street in Santa Cruz celebrated the construction of homes for two new Habitat families. About 100 people attended the event, including Mayor Mike Rotkin, who commended the group on its good work. The site includes two Additional Dwelling Units (ADUs) suitable for one or two people. Families for the ADUs will be announced soon.

'Breaking ground' together are (l-r), new homeowners Eduardo and Virginia Hernandez, Habitat Board President Claudia Vestal, Santa Cruz Mayor Mike Rotkin, and Geri Lieby, grandmother to the Gilbert family.

Elijah's Wonderful Birthday

How do you turn your birthday into a day of giving as well as fun? About-to-turn ten-years-old Elijah Benford decided he would rather donate to Habitat than receive gifts from his 4th grade friends at Valencia Elementary School in Aptos. The party came to the Rooney Street site where they received precut wood to take home and nail together. This construction was then returned to the site and incorporated into the frame of a house. These boys will know forever that they "built part of a home for a family in need."



Tabitha Gilbert serving refreshments at the groundbreaking celebration.

The Hernandez' contemplating a new family home.



Holding a section of a Habitat home they have put together are Elijah Benford, Matthew Smith, Jason Estill, West Knutson, Malaka Gunawardena, Morgan Hasebe-Hester, Alex Gordo, and Elijah's brother Nate Benford.





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Four Homes Underway, More to Come

Director's Message



In the Summer newsletter I announced that we had permits in hand for Rooney and we would start building soon. Finally, we could move on to actual construction after months of planning and process. To say we were impatient to start building would have been an understatement! Today, we are framing four homes, homeowner families have been selected and are working on site, and we are making diligent efforts to secure future building sites. We have accomplished a lot in a year. We are fortunate not to have experienced a major disaster like so much of our country and other parts of the world have had to suffer. Be thankful.

We need to enhance our funding base if we are to sustain multiple house construction. Infrastructure and construction costs have increased dramatically. Land costs continue to rise. Building affordable housing is still possible. But it takes more work and planning on our part. To that end the Board of Trustees applied for and was awarded an \$80,000 Capacity Building grant from Habitat International late this spring. The CB grant was spread over a 3-year period and is to be used for the express purpose of hiring a Resource Development Director to aid us in expanding our funding base.

I am pleased to announce that we have hired Andrea Talaio, former Associate Director of Development for Planned Parenthood, Mar Monte, to serve as our Resource Development Director. Andrea is a welcome addition. With her expertise we have already begun to develop a funding strategy to support our future building plans. Andrea has also developed our annual campaign request, which you should have received by now. Just a reminder, if you haven't made your tax deductible contribution to Habitat Santa Cruz, please consider doing so today.

Finally, I would like to thank all of our dedicated volunteers, board members, & staff for being so committed to what Habitat stands for. I wish all of you the best for the Holiday Season and the coming year.

Chuck Hilger



Volunteer team puts up a wall.

We have plans

Third Annual Golf Tournament is Golden

A golden fall day and net proceeds of over **thirty thousand dollars** made the 3rd Annual Habitat for Humanity-Santa Cruz Mortgage Golf Tournament a huge success. The tournament, held on September 9th at Seascape Golf Course in Rio del Mar drew 120 golfers and an equal number of dinner guests. Many thanks to Sharon Bystran and Dede Carroll for the hours they put in on the silent auction (and everything else!) to make this a success.

A special thank you to our sponsors: Misiti-Miller Engineering, Alphagraphics, The Tied House, Cal Giant, John Fuchs Construction, Pacific AgPak, David South, MD., Santa Cruz Sentinel, Exchange Club, McClure Construction, Monterey Bay Properties, Sanctuary Fund, Santa Cruz County Bank, Santa Cruz Title, Solari Charitable Trust, Santa Cruz Mortgage (thank you!!), Burry Photography, Santa Cruz County Homes Magazine, Bosso Williams, Michael and Jennifer Parks, Watsonville Community Hospital, Central Coast Endoscopy Center, Coast Commercial.



Santa Cruz Mortgage staff offered refreshments at the 9th hole.



Paul Sanders, Tournament chairperson for the third year, has done it again!



Getting it just right.



Volunteers Always Needed

Would your group like to participate in any part of Habitat? Please call Meghan Green at (831) 685-0671 or email her at <hfhvolunteer@cruzio.com>.

See the story on page 4.

Working group from First American Title.

New Resource Development Director

I wasn't quite sure what to expect when I started with Habitat in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. The organization seemed to be everywhere and I was excited to be going to work for a major player in the rebuilding efforts. I did know that the regular work Habitat for Humanity does - locally, nationally and globally - is life changing. Whether it's South Africa or Santa Cruz, children blossom in a home they can call their own. Parents become better parents when they feel good about themselves. So, I was very ready to be part of the organization.

The work that Habitat Santa Cruz has done over the past 15 years is amazing. Building twenty-four homes county-wide is a tremendous accomplishment and I know there are many unsung heroes who made it possible. But now the housing crises in our county is out-of-control. To increase the number of Habitat homes built each year we need the community to participate.

Our immediate need is to raise \$ 320,000 for the Rooney Street project by April 2006. We have launched an organized, intensive fundraising effort to secure major gifts and pledges in order to meet that goal. Concurrently, we are creating a fund development plan that addresses the issue of growth and sustainability. Long term what we'll be working on is establishing a heightened understanding of Habitat and its intrinsic value, coupled with creat-

ing meaningful linkages and partnerships. Down the road a bit, I'd like to see us establish endowment and planned giving programs.

I was asked what I'd like Habitat, and myself, to be doing 10 years from now. Sipping umbrella drinks while basking in the Hawaiian sun! No, what I'd like is for Habitat Santa Cruz County to be established as an essential and prominent player in addressing the housing crisis in our community. I'm committed to ensuring that 5, 10, 20 years from now Santa Cruz will be better than it is now and that the people then will benefit from the work we do today.

As for the personal part, I'd like to see my now 3-year old son Luca as happy as he is today and I'd like to be celebrating my 20th anniversary with my wonderful husband Jeff, surrounded by my extended family and friends.



Resource Development Director Andrea Tolaio with her husband Jeff and son Luca.



Meghan Green,
Americorps Volunteer
for Habitat

Volunteer Coordinator for HfH Santa Cruz

"I think most people have the desire to do a job that is truly useful to the community. I wanted to help low-income women. It's certainly the reason I decided to work for a non-profit organization after college." Meghan Green, an Americorps/Vista volunteer, began a year's tenure with Habitat Santa Cruz in August, 2005. She says she didn't know much about Habitat for Humanity except its excellent reputation, but now that

she understands its goals she finds the idea of "fighting poverty" - Americorps' mission - via Habitat a great way to go.

Ultimately Meghan's intent is to develop a system for handling volunteers that will become a regular part of the local affiliate's program. And she has jumped right into the fray to get this done. In less than three

months, she has scheduled and given orientation to over ten groups - corporate, religious, and academic, seen that lunch is provided for all workers each workday, given safety talks, and assisted the Construction Coordinator with supervising groups, handing out tools, purchasing tools, and just about anything else that arises on site or in the office that has to do with taking care of the people who pound the nails.

Meghan also oversees volunteers in the Habitat office. She particularly enjoys working with the families who are putting in their 'sweat equity' hours. Even the children participate in earning their new homes - photocopying, hole punching, labeling, filing, and, of course, given the skills of this generation, working on the computer.

Meghan is from Redmond, Washington and is a graduate of Whitman College in Walla Walla, Washington. She has worked for several nonprofit organizations and has lived as a student in both Spain and Argentina.

If you or your group or someone you know would like to participate in any part of Habitat, please call Meghan Green at (831) 685-0671 or email her at <hfhvolunteer@cruzio.com>.