



**Habitat  
for Humanity®**  
of Rhode Island -  
Greater Providence, Inc.

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The Housing Network

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**Why are these people so happy? See page 3.**



# Habitat News

SPRING 2010

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

## Providing a bridge from disaster to a better home

**D**isasters like the one in Haiti last January bring home once again the need for decent shelter. The images of destruction, of people killed and wounded by collapsed houses, of families huddled in makeshift shelter, prove once again that it is imperative to get some sort of shelter in disaster areas as fast as possible, followed by the construction of permanent, quake-resistant housing: “building back better.”

Transitional shelter is designed to bridge the gap between the destruction and the restoration of permanent housing. It is based on the concept of semi-permanent shelter that can be upgraded, expanded or possibly relocated. Successful transitional shelter fits the family it serves. It’s something they can do for themselves, preferably with familiar resources and skills. Yet it introduces “building back better” through new hazard resistant techniques and principles.

To reach the goal of getting as many families as possible in decent shelter as fast as possible, Habitat has been experimenting with Habitat Resource Centers. Following disasters, centers were established where professional builders are giving households and local builders tools, materials and information about better building methods.

Each Center responds to the particular needs of the society where the disaster took place, while keeping to the basic principle of flexible and efficient means of reconstruction.

Some examples are: In Sri Lanka, after the tsunami, one Center started to make high quality building blocks at an affordable price. Now the community co-op makes these blocks, concrete posts, door and window frames and roof tiles for Habitat houses and to sell. Partnering with other groups, the Center offers training in local construction skills. In Pakistan—after the 2005 earthquake—the Habitat Resource Centers provided transitional shelter material and training in the assembly. All shelter components could later be used in permanent housing. They also ran a free, mobile saw mill service used by over 3,000 families and provided training in the construction of earthquake resistant houses. In Bangladesh—subject to severe flooding and horrendous cyclones—raised bamboo houses were used as a core shelter, later to be upgraded with more permanent materials.

Activities in Haiti so far are limited to survival shelters such as shelter boxes from Rotary International and survival kits from Habitat, just to mention a few. It is imperative to get people in some kind of organized shelter to be able to start providing food and water, medical treatment and sanitation to them.

Teams of Habitat for Humanity workers have started the process of building transitional shelter by salvaging building materials from collapsed buildings, to be used in the rebuilding, first in transitional shelters, and later on in permanent housing.

## Volunteer Spotlight



### Tamer Nawar

Tamer came to Habitat because he wanted to learn how to build a Versa-Lok retaining wall: he was working on one at his own house and wanted to make sure he did it right. Well, he was in luck: we were just about to start a retaining wall at Capron St. Once he was “experienced” in retaining walls, we put him in charge of the wall at Public St. (one can make promotions fast at Habitat!). He’s now a “Regular.”

Tamer is also an Energy Efficiency expert and has recently started his own company as a consultant/contractor to improve the energy efficiency commercial and residential buildings. Tamer is now working with the Building Committee to improve the energy efficiency of our houses and to make sure we comply with Energy Star guidelines.

Not only is Tamer a volunteer in his own right, he has brought with him a group from his church—St. Mark’s Coptic Orthodox Church—to come once a month to Pawtucket.

As we have many more houses to build, we always have a need for talented volunteers like Tamer, with that unique blend of skills and character to make this Habitat Affiliate the best it can be.

# Habitat houses: Green paint and green friendly

**O**ur colleagues at Habitat South County are sponsoring a competition for the design of an affordable, energy efficient single family house. We think that is a great idea in this era of high energy costs and rising awareness of the need of energy efficiency. Everything done to increase the energy efficiency of our houses is not only welcome but should be incorporated in the planning and construction of our houses.

While Habitat Providence’s houses are affordable, they are also energy efficient and meet or exceed Energy Star standards. The houses are designed to ensure that they are able to allow for the maximum capture of heat. We build our walls with 2" x 6" studs and “24 inches on center” (instead of 2" x 4" studs and “16 inches on center”) which requires less framing and extra space between the outside structure and the inside wall for more insulation. This helps to prevent heat from escaping and cold entering through the walls. We use fiber cement board for siding, instead of vinyl, thus increasing the R-value (insulation value) of the house considerably. By using high efficiency

extraction ventilators in the bathrooms, we improve the air quality inside the house and prevent the build-up of moisture with the subsequent growth of mold and mildew. A high efficiency heating system and Energy Star approved appliances are standard.

The construction of new houses comes with green space and other environmentally friendly applications. Using a parking lot made of permeable asphalt and planting grass and shrubs, we prevent runoff into the sewer systems, so that more rain water will be able to penetrate the ground and clean out any potential waste.

In times when environmental issues are becoming more widespread, Habitat Providence is adapting the construction of new houses to be of low cost to families, to create a healthier air quality inside the house and to be more environmentally friendly. We hope that the design competition in South County will advance the knowledge of efficient and affordable design and we trust that our colleagues will share the results with all other Habitat Affiliates—and all other community housing development organizations.



### Some Energy Star installation techniques.

Energy efficient vinyl windows and Hardiplank fiber cement siding (shown here being installed on the duplex house at 38-40 Veazie St.), along with the use of house wrap, are some of the techniques used to make a Habitat house eligible for an Energy Star rating.

## Update from the Sites:

(Home sponsor or primary volunteer group is noted in parentheses.)

- **577-579 Public Street:**  
(Bike & Build)  
Completed and dedicated on September 19, 2009.
- **30 Hollis Street:** Rehabilitated a foreclosed duplex and transformed it into a single family house for the Sanchez/Garcia family of eleven. The dedication was just in time for Thanksgiving, 2009.
- **124 Potters Ave:** A Habitat unit was re-purchased and “re-habbed.” Closing with new family by April.
- **38-40 Veazie Street:**  
(Bike & Build)  
Siding, insulation, interior utilities and drywall in progress.
- **41-43 Jefferson Ave – Pawtucket:**  
Our first project “Outside Providence.” The Pawtucket Project is at the same stage as the Veazie Street duplex. See pictures, Page 4.

All photos in this issue by Colleen Fox Choiniere



**September 19, 2009: 577-579 Public Street dedication.** New owners at 577, Evelyn Lafrance and Augustin Jaiman, enjoy a light moment with Habitat-Providence Executive Director Herman deKoe after the formal dedication.



**Winter work:** Plumbing (left) and electrical work (right) begin in Feb., out of the cold and wet weather. The work went on as shown here on Veazie St., as well as at the Jefferson St. site in Pawtucket.



## Many thanks to our supporters...

- Adler’s Hardware
- All State Foundation
- AMICA Insurance
- Amtrol
- David Angell Memorial Fund
- Bank of America
- Bike & Build
- The Champlain Foundation
- Citadel Comm. Corp.
- City of Providence
- Dimeo Construction
- Fannie Mae
- Federal Home Loan Bank, Boston
- FirstFed Charitable Foundation
- Frost Family Charitable Fund
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- Hoffman Charitable Gift Fund
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### “SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT” Anchor Insulation and Insul-Mart.

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- Pawtucket Credit Union
- Residential Properties
- R.I. Commission on Women
- Rhode Island Foundation
- Rhode Island Housing
- Rotary Club of Providence
- Sacajawea Charitable Foundation
- Savage & Luther Family Foundation
- Smith Boilers
- Tyco Inc.
- UCC of R.I.
- United Way of R.I.
- U.S. Senator Jack Reed
- Ward, Fisher & Co. LLP
- Washington Trust Company
- Wells Fargo Housing Foundation
- Whirlpool
- Wildwood Foundation
- Ed Wojcik Architects
- YouthBuild, Providence

## How to contribute and get more involved:

### VOLUNTEERING

Rhode Island ranks as one of the lowest in the country in volunteer hours. You can help change that by becoming a regular volunteer on a Habitat site and help build houses for families in need. Call the office at (401) 831-5424 to sign up.

**Instant gratification and tangible results.** (You will feel good about yourself, we guarantee it.)

Visit us on our new  
**Web Site**  
<http://www.habitatprov.org>  
Look for us on Facebook

- Site updates
- Contact information
- Volunteer opportunities



**Donate your old car to Habitat For Humanity...**  
and use it as a **TAX DEDUCTION.**  
For more information, go to  
<http://www.habitat.org/carforhomes/>

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# The Pawtucket Project

MAYOR JAMES DOYLE of  
PAWTUCKET

invites you to the

**ONE YEAR CELEBRATION**

of the Pawtucket Project

Friday, April 9, 2010 at 11:00 a.m.  
41-43 Jefferson Ave., Pawtucket

Friday, April 9th, will be one year after we started the work at Jefferson Avenue in Pawtucket. To celebrate this, Habitat Providence will be having a press event at the site. Local businesses, media outlets, volunteers, staff and local government officials will be in attendance. There will be a short ceremony followed by refreshments and a tour of the site.

**All are welcome to attend.**

**Jefferson Ave. in March.** Work continues on the outside (top, right) when weather permits. Meanwhile, inside drywall installation (below, right) that was started in late February continues. Electrical and plumbing rough inspections had already been completed, and the exterior walls were insulated, before the walls could be covered.

