

the builder

Paterson Habitat for Humanity's Newsletter

home is the key

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better homes and safer streets



Partnering with families to build decent homes goes hand in hand with community partnerships to build stable and safer neighborhoods. That's the Habitat way. And both forms of construction are underway in Paterson Habitat's 12-block focus area in the 4th Ward.

So far almost 40 Habitat families have moved into attractive, environmentally friendly designed homes, financed with low-interest Habitat mortgages made possible by our donors – and we're working on the next 35 homes to meet our 75 home goal. These new homes add visual appeal to 4th Ward streets, as do the renovations to existing homes and the demolition of abandoned buildings.

We're also a part of a neighborhood effort to create safer streets. With the leadership of 4th Ward City Councilwoman Ruby Cotton, neighborhood residents and groups are working with the city to introduce Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED). This is an urban planning approach to discourage crime by improving the physical environment of high-crime streets, investing in better lighting and cleaning streets, and increasing community involvement.

We're part of the CPTED coalition in Paterson along with the non-profit Rebuilding Together North Jersey, the Paterson Housing Authority and a growing number of concerned residents. CPTED research identified six high-crime corridors in Paterson, two of them in the 4th Ward. Paterson Habitat has taken on the administrative function of this anti-crime partnership for this year. We're represented by Claire Rolling, our neighborhood development project assistant from AmeriCorps. "What this is really about," Claire says, "is community people coming together to take back their own streets."

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*deceased

home is the key



This April Habitat for Humanity affiliates around the world are uniting around a campaign called Home is the Key.

It's a reminder that decent, affordable housing is key to providing strength, stability and self-reliance for families and for whole communities. The stability of a home reinforces the stability of families. Children do better in school when they have a quiet, safe place to study. Parents improve their finances by investing in an affordable Habitat mortgage instead of throwing money away on exorbitant rents.

Nathalie and her husband Jean well understand that home is the key. The parents of three young children are partnering with Paterson Habitat to build and buy a new home in Paterson's 4th Ward. It's in the 12-block area where we're concentrating our efforts to help revitalize whole neighborhoods. For this hard-working couple, it's been a long journey.

They grew up in a U.N. refugee camp in Tanzania after fleeing with their families from the war-torn Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire). They met each other just before they were re-settled to the United States in 2007. But even with Jean working 12-hour days for 10 years, their only option for shelter in North Jersey was a series of substandard apartments where high rents soaked up their modest income.

Their new three-bedroom house will be built by our volunteer construction crews, with the help of "sweat equity" volunteer hours from the new homeowners. Their affordable Habitat mortgage is made possible by the support of our donors. This resourceful family will be profiled in Paterson Habitat's spring mailing.

We hope you will read more about them and help us help other families like Nathalie and Jean, because home really is the key.

from Deacon Davis, with love

Love is blooming at the intersection of 12th Avenue and Rosa Parks Boulevard in Paterson's 4th Ward. It takes the form of collard greens, bell peppers, corn, turnip, greens, watermelons, cantaloupes, garlic and other produce cultivated by Deacon Willie Davis on a corner patch of land owned by Paterson Habitat. "The most important thing going on here is love," explained Deacon Davis, "Even plants won't grow if you don't love them." His community garden produced 1,500 pounds of vegetables last year, for neighborhood families, and his goal for this year is 2,500 pounds. The non-profit group City Green has helped with expenses, but the daily work of tending the garden is left to Deacon Davis and his community volunteers. He has high hopes that the garden will become a place where people of all faiths and races come together and grow their understanding of each other.



the green side of Habitat

There's a green side of Paterson Habitat that's helping save the environment and save money for our homeowner families.

The new homes built by our partner families and construction volunteers are built to Energy Star Version 3.1 standards. Energy Star is an international standard for energy efficiency in construction and manufactured products developed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Our homes built to the Energy Star Version 3 standard are estimated to be 20-25 percent more energy efficient than traditionally built homes. This increased energy efficiency means not only a cleaner environment but also lowers a homeowner's utility bills by as much as 20 percent. That combination of saving the environment and saving money is also working well at the ReStore in Wayne, where we sell donated gently used and surplus furniture, household goods and building supplies at bargain prices. Everybody loves a bargain and the environment benefits by keeping these items out of landfills. All proceeds go to support the work of Paterson Habitat.

Donations and customers are welcome Tuesday through Sunday. For more information go to habitatrestorewayne.org.

Cars for Homes

Donate a Car: Donating a car, truck, boat or plane to Habitat for Humanity's car donation program is a great way to support our work in your local community.

Donate a vehicle by calling 877-277-4344 or online at patersonhabitat.org/donate-a-car

a homeowner with a strategic plan

When Ronessa Johnson applied to become a Habitat homeowner almost 15 years ago, she knew it would change her life. But she never could have guessed how much or how soon. Before Ronessa even built her house, the financial management course required of all incoming homeowners had piqued her interest in saving money and creating a financial strategic plan. A hair stylist by profession, she used her new found financial plan to save enough money to buy her own hair salon and named it – A Strategic Plan Beauty Spot. “Everyone else calls it ‘Ronessa’s place on the corner,’” Ronessa laughs. Her successful business is just around the corner from the Habitat home where she’s raised two now grown daughters, with 10-year-old Chrislynn still at home. Active in her church and the community, Ronessa is also a Paterson Habitat board member.



a volunteer who loves details

Paterson Habitat’s most visible volunteers are the people in hardhats on our construction crews. But we have all kinds of volunteer jobs, and the people who answer the call bring an astonishing set of skills and experience with them. Kathryn Komsa Schmidt of Ridgewood is a prime example. Now vice president of our Board of Directors, she also runs her own party and event planning business. During a 30-year management career in the financial services industry she mastered the art of planning and directing big, complex events. She’s put that art to work for Paterson Habitat with spectacular results. Kathryn spent a year and half organizing our 30th anniversary celebration, an event that attracted 350 people and was a major fundraising success. “I have an attention to details that can drive some people crazy,” she admits. But it makes her one very special volunteer.



HopeBuilders

HopeBuilders are the foundation of Habitat for Humanity’s work to build strength, stability and self-reliance through shelter. As a HopeBuilder, you’ll be joining a special group of donors who give each month to help others realize their dream of affordable housing. Through your monthly support, we can eradicate poverty housing and help families build decent shelter so they can enjoy a brighter future. patersonhabitat.org/hopebuilder



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**Everyone
deserves a decent
place to live.
You can help.**

Give generously before June 30 to help families build strength, stability and independence through shelter. Visit patersonhabitat.org/donate today!