



With your help, Habitat homeowners are able to overcome barriers that so often exist between their families and better, healthier and more financially stable lives. Jonathan Reckford, CEO, Habitat for Humanity International.

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When you meet Kim and Matt Johnson and their family (photo right) you will learn how happy they are to have been selected to live in a new home being built at 42 Cleveland Avenue in Rutland. The Johnsons are currently renting an older two bedroom unit in a building that houses several other units in the same building, surrounded by paved parking spaces. Many photographs of their family decorate the walls of this home but space is at a premium. Their new home, designed by John Berryhill, will have three bedrooms, a nice yard and the mortgage, property taxes, and insurance will be lower than their rental fees.

Matt owns his own business, *Johnson Landscaping*, and has clients throughout the state. It is a demanding job, but he loves it. "I eat, breathe, and sleep this business!" Kim also works there, doing bookwork, as well as some landscaping. She also works at Kinney Motors. Fourteen year old Breanna currently stays with Matt's mother. They are looking forward to having a third bedroom so they can all be together.

Kim said, "It never really occurred to me to apply for housing help with Habitat for Humanity. We were so busy just working, paying rent, and meeting other expenses. Owning a home seemed like a faraway dream." But Jessica at their bank, the Vermont State Employee's Credit Union, told them to apply. "We had never taken that first step to home ownership. "It will be ours! We feel like it is an investment in our children's future. Instead of paying rent, we will be investing in ourselves."

Photo - Malekhai Johnson with help from Chris Heintz, breaks ground for HIS new home!



The ground breaking ceremony occurred on June 10, with about 50 people in attendance. Speakers included Habitat for Humanity of Rutland County President Chris Heintz, Mayor David Allaire, John Russell III, Cabot Orton of The Vermont Country Store, Ludy Biddle of NeighborWorks of Western Vermont, and Joe Kraus of Project Vision.



The Building Blocks of a Habitat Home

It all begins with our VOLUNTEERS

who generously contribute their talent, expertise, and financial resources without which none of this would be possible.



First Wall!

Habitat builds strength, stability and self-reliance and shelter.

We salute our core builders!



L-R – Skip Abelson, Tom Heavner, Paul Brown, Site Supervisor, Al Williams, Barbara Lacy, AJ Engel, Alicia Ayles, and Steve Follett. Not pictured are Kim and Ray Washburn. Most Wednesdays and Saturdays you will find these experienced volunteers leading and teaching other volunteers. Thanks to their inspired work, the Cleveland Avenue house is coming along very well.

Our involvement with Project Vision

Last fall we reported how grateful we were to Joe Kraus and Scott Tucker, leaders of Project Vision, who welcomed our participation. Project Vision is a cross-sector community collaborative whose mission it is to address substance abuse, reduce crime and build great neighborhoods. The Vision Center was created as a bricks-and-mortar answer to engage organizations, day-to-day, to enhance cooperation and improve successful outcomes in lives, families and neighborhoods. One of the goals is to increase home ownership. With this in mind, the Rutland City Aldermen voted to give us the Cleveland Avenue property. Without this extremely generous contribution, it is doubtful that we would have sufficient financial resources to commence building this past spring. We are proud to play a role in this important work.

Letter from Dave Pearson, Co-President, HFH of Rutland County

As a minister of the Pittsford Congregational Church in 2011, Chris led a group to a Habitat work project in Maine. The trip made a great impression on many parishioners who encouraged Chris to form a steering committee to investigate forming an affiliate for Rutland County.

Chris recruited volunteers to work with him. After a three-year effort, the Rutland group was granted affiliation on July 1, 2014. Chris has led the affiliate as its president since then. His efforts have resulted in finishing a total house rehab in Fair Haven, providing a fine home for Melissa Fournier and her two daughters and beginning construction of a new home on Cleveland Avenue in Rutland for the Johnsons, a family of four. Under his leadership, we have raised significant funds and gained possession of two additional building lots for construction. Perhaps most importantly for the future of affordable housing in Rutland County, Chris was instrumental in forging partnerships with NeighborWorks, The Rutland Redevelopment Authority, The Rutland Housing Authority, Project Vision and other area non-profit organizations.

Under Chris' leadership, our affiliate has developed significant momentum. He recently accepted a new job as pastor of the Fair Haven Congregational Church and is ready to move on to other activities. Andy Salamon and I have agreed to co-chair the board until we find a new board president. We thank Chris for all his time and inspired leadership.

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Our Home Buyer Selection Committee – We will soon be looking for our next partner family. Please review the qualifications below and let us know if you feel that you or someone you know is a good candidate for Habitat homeownership. Contact us at 802-747-7440 or rutlandhabitat@gmail.com.

The following criteria will be considered:

1. Need for better housing.

Potential homebuyers might be dealing with poorly built, unhealthy, damaged or inadequate housing. Alternatively, you might have a rent that you cannot afford, or may be living in a home that is inaccessible for your disabilities.

2. Willing to partner with Habitat.

Our homebuyers put in hundreds of hours of “sweat equity,” which means they help build their own home. These prerequisite hours will also include classes in personal finance, home maintenance and other relevant topics to help ensure a successful transition to homeownership.

3. Able to pay an affordable mortgage, property insurance, and property taxes.

Habitat offers homebuyers an interest-free mortgage. Those payments are cycled back into the community to help more area residents meet their housing needs.

4. Residency

Applicants must be living in or working in Rutland County for a minimum of a year at the time of their application.

Golf....a tale of two tournaments!

Our Second annual golf tournament was held on May 26 at the Proctor Pittsford Country Club. Dave Pearson and Paul Brown did a wonderful job recruiting golfers, and securing great prizes.



[The Lookout Tavern and Restaurant](#) hosted their "Lookout for Each Other" 16th charity Golf Tournament on September 11th at the Green Mountain National Golf Course. Each year the Lookout Tavern chooses a local cause to donate 100% of the proceeds as they “Look Out” for their friends and neighbors! This year, Habitat for Humanity was one of the beneficiaries! Prizes were presented at a special dinner at the Lookout Tavern.

We are most grateful to Board Members Dave Pearson and Paul Brown for organizing our tournament and to the Lookout Tavern and Restaurant owners Joy and Phil Black for selecting Habitat to be one of the beneficiaries of this year's tournament.

Both tournaments raised awareness of HFH of Rutland County and funds to pay for building supplies for the home we are building on Cleveland Avenue. We thank everyone who participated and hope to see them and more avid golfers again on May 25, 2018 at the Proctor Pittsford Country Club.



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Volunteer Opportunities

Through the end of September, 130 different people had contributed 1,781.2 hours to the Cleveland Avenue build. This is tremendous support! Contact Alicia Ayles at 802-747-7440 or rutlandhabitat@gmail.com to schedule time for your group to become involved. Individuals can come any time but are urged to review the safety rules (posted on the *volunteer* page of the website) before they come for the first time.

What many people do not realize is that as much time is contributed by people who help with aspects normally completed by paid staff. We are an all-volunteer organization.

We are actively seeking more people to become involved with setting the direction for our affiliate as a member of a committee (resource development, community relations, homebuyer selection and support, finance or as a member of our Board of Directors). There are other opportunities, large and small, to work on a project (golf tournament, dedication, ground breaking, for example).

Don't be shy. We need people to help build a sustainable organization that will serve our community well, now and for the long-term! Contact us at rutlandhabitat@gmail.com.

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