

HOPE & HAMMER

Habitat for Humanity London Inc. Unit #10-45 Pacific Ct. London Ontario N5V 3N4
Tel (519) 455-6623 Fax (519) 455-8479

Newsletter Editor—Melissa Tann

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Smith St. Update</i>	2
<i>Message from the Chair</i>	2
<i>ReStore Growth</i>	3
<i>Profile of a Volunteer</i>	3
<i>Announcements</i>	4
<i>Ways to Donate</i>	4
<i>Board of Directors</i>	4

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

Margaret Mead

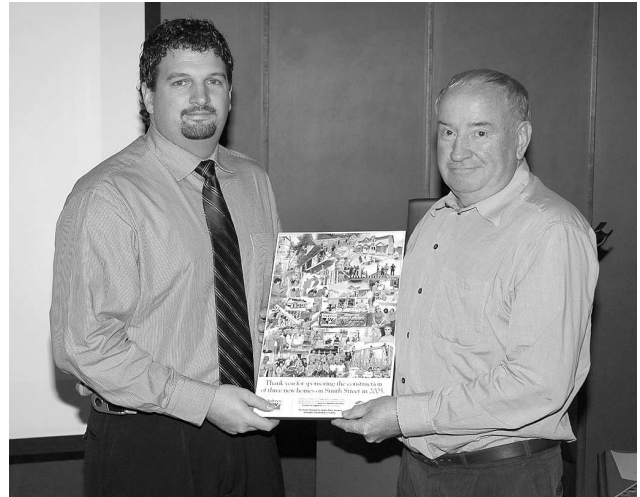


Focus on HFHL Volunteers

April 23-29 is Volunteer Appreciation Week in Canada. Volunteering takes many forms in today's not-for-profit sector. Volunteer opportunities are as endless as the motivations to volunteer. Although it is true that all volunteer contributions are important and valued I would like to take this opportunity to recognize a particular group within our volunteer ranks here at HFHL. This group is made up of volunteers who are willing to step forward and take on leadership roles within our organizations.

In laying the groundwork to meet the objective of increasing the 'capacity' of our affiliate to build more decent affordable homes the need arises for dedicated and skilled volunteers willing to step forward, assume leadership roles and work very hard. The Board, volunteers themselves, have begun the process of reviewing and revitalizing the committees that make up the body of HFHL. I would like to take the opportunity to tell you about several of the volunteers who are making this revitalization process get off to a successful start.

We are very fortunate that Steve Parker, Scott Gray and Kim Wood dedicated themselves to performing a 'build audit' culminating in a report outlining strengths and weaknesses of our last build and recommendations for improvements. Steve Parker has stepped into the position of Build Committee Chair to help revitalize the build process



Board Chair Ron Gasparetto and Andersen Window employee Ken McIntyre.

and delegate the work load in the planning and execution of the 2006 build and beyond. We have had a very positive response from a variety of skilled volunteers willing to take on responsibilities within the Build Committee and contribute in a meaningful way to our plan for growth.

Work is being done on reorganizing and expanding the mandate of our newly renamed **Family Selection and Support Committee**. Toni Cirelli, HFHL Board Member is providing leadership in these efforts and we have received a great response to our appeals to the community for volunteers who can contribute professional skills and leadership on an ongoing basis. The families we serve deserve our best efforts and increasing the number of families we serve will bring new demands

to this committee.

As you know from our last newsletter, the Playhouse Project fundraiser is on indefinite hiatus. A heartfelt thank you goes out to Carl Krizan and Ric Mommersteeg who provided leadership on the **Playhouse Committee**, and all those who participated in this project over the last three years. We are hoping that whether you like to build, paint, provide leadership, organize or just lend a hand, you will consider taking on other tasks or positions within HFHL. Some of you already have!

The Board is hoping to put together a **ReStore Committee** to help ReStore Manager Gerry Pieroni manage the growth of our incredibly successful retail operation. Other challenges include the development of an HFHL Public

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Unit 10-45 Pacific Court
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Email: info@habitat.london.on.ca

ReStore Hours:
M-F 9-6, Sat 9-4
Phone: 519-659-1949

*"The vision must be
followed by the venture.
It is not enough to stare
up at the steps---we must
step up the stairs."*



Smith Street Update

Home Dedication

On February 25, 2006 a dedication was held at 58 Smith Street, Unit 4 to welcome the Olchowec Family to their new home. Congratulations Vladimir, Vera and family.

Volunteer Opportunity

On Saturday May 6, 2006 HFHL volunteers will be doing some preliminary landscape work at the Smith St. site to prepare for our next build. If you are interested in helping contact Lee at the office.

2006 Build Date

Saturday September 9, 2006 will be the day we launch our final build at Smith St. We will erect the last semi-detached unit. The build will run for approximately 3 weeks. Keep an eye on www.habitat.london.on.ca for updates.



Vladimir and Vera Olchowec along with their four children (pictured above) prepare to cut the cake at the Dedication Ceremony hosted by the HFHL Family Selection Committee.



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

"Your current safe boundaries were once unknown frontiers." Author Unknown

It is this quote that best describes how I view my mandate as the Chair of Habitat for Humanity London Inc. Our organization has been steadfast in its deliverance of decent affordable shelter. Habitat, however, is facing new internal and external pressures due to the success of the ReStore and the growth of the affiliate, which we have responded to by rethinking how best to serve our partner families and our community. Our current Board of Directors has worked hard and contributed a great amount of time and effort to work through various issues resulting in a

definable direction with tangible goals. "The vision must be followed by the venture. It is not enough to stare up at the steps---we must step up the stairs."

In order for Habitat to remain competitive, continue to grow and expand the number of families we assist we must seek ways to secure new funding sources, to finance land acquisitions, and to create viable sustainable building forms. There are numerous agencies in our community which are vying for the same donation dollars and Habitat must distinguish itself from this pack. I am confident in the dedication, passion and skill from our volunteers, staff and Board members, their

assistance with the challenges we face and their generosity in lending their time and experience to continue to build decent affordable housing in our community.

In closing I am very honoured to be a part of such a wonderful organization whose infectious generosity and hard work and dedication make dreams come true for families in our community. I look forward to serving with you in our great cause of eliminating poverty housing and making decent affordable shelter a matter of conscience and action.

Ron Gasparetto

RESTORE GROWTH

The London Habitat for Humanity ReStore has reached another 'best year ever' in terms of sales and returns to the affiliate. The staff and volunteers at the ReStore are very proud of this success. We also realize that this success is attributed to the efforts of everyone associated with HFH London. Creating good will in the community, spreading the word about the store and the work that HFH does worldwide is the best advertising we can buy.

With this success comes growth and the subsequent challenges of managing growth. Our national organization is providing support for affiliates in the area of managing the growth in popularity and profitability of ReStores across Canada. Sessions presented at the upcoming National Annual General Meeting include how to start a second store, the challenges of moving to a larger location, purchasing buildings to house ReStores and affiliates, Health and Safety Issues in ReStores, and the need for uniform Operating Procedures in the 45 ReStores across Canada. When I came to manage the store in 1998, the main challenge was simply surviving. A lot has changed since then.

Inventory has a lot to do with the level of sales that we can expect. Generally, new product brings higher prices, more sales and more customers to the store. Over the past eight years, we have primarily relied on the individual homeowner doing renovations sending us good reusable items and leftovers. While these products fill up the store, a steady and labour intensive pick up service is required to collect large quantities of material. In the past new product was rare, but over time, a variety of businesses have become donors of more highly valued product. Customer returns, shipping damaged, end of lines, outdated packaging and 'close outs'

found their way to our store and sales really jumped when these items hit the shelves.

We are not the only ones to have noticed this source of very salable product. It takes time and effort to present ourselves as an option for companies divesting themselves of excess product. Often, taking product means taking an entire transport trailer full or leaving it. A larger ReStore facility with storage would allow us to claim the product and distribute the overflow to other interested ReStores in the area - a win-win situation for all.

Change is in the near future for the Habitat for Humanity London ReStore as we search for a new location that will allow us the flexibility to efficiently handle larger quantities of product while still being true to our roots and our current customers. Physical labour will still continue to be a part of our daily routine, but with more space we won't spend as much time juggling product around to make room. While we continue to promote the use of good quality used materials we will plan for the growth and prosperity of REStore by looking at new sources of materials. Please contact myself or Lee Jones, our Volunteer Program Manager, if you have expertise in material handling, space planning or retail operations and you would like to volunteer to help us successfully manage the growth of the HFHL ReStore.

Gerry Pieroni
HFHL ReStore Manager



ReStore Hours:
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Profile of a Volunteer — Jean Knowles



This column takes a look at who our volunteers are by asking them to tell us a little about themselves and why they volunteered. This time we asked Jean Knowles to share with us.

1) How long have you volunteered for HFH London?

-This is my 7th year.

2) What volunteer job do you currently do for HFH London?

-Currently, am Co-Chair of the Faith Relations Committee. As our Committee is in charge of recruiting numerous churches and organizations (last year we had 32 Volunteer Build Days!) and then being on hand to see all is looked after and our wonderful volunteers are happy and fed. I have also been involved on the Builds from Krupp Street, Watson, Josephine, Julia and the last two years on Smith Street.

3) What have you found most rewarding about your experience as a volunteer with HFH London?

-Seeing deserving families acquire lovely new homes - and watching the building volunteers learning new tasks as the home/s take shape.

4) What do you do when you are not volunteering at HFH?

-I also volunteer with St. Paul's Daily Bread Food Bank, Volunteer Committee Orchestra London - was on the Executive for 4 years, work as Flea Market Co-Ordinator at the Spring and Fall Rummage Sales, Boutique at OLC Concerts, Christmas Gift Wrapping and organizing volunteers for and working at OLC Education Concerts in various schools in London and the Thames Valley School Board; on the Board of Directors of CN Credit Union, various activities arising from our Stewardship Mission Outreach Committee at First St Andrew's United Church, and volunteer at our Hospitality Meals there.

5) What do you consider your greatest accomplishment?

-Having been married to my husband Bill for 40 years - (on June 25) - and working for the same Company for 34 years which gave me a very early retirement which has allowed me to volunteer and "give back" to this Community which has been so good to me.

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We're on the Web!
habitat.london.on.ca

A Hand Up not a Hand Out

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ontario Volunteer Award - On April 6, 2006 HFHL Volunteers Christina Katsios and Jean Knowles received the Ontario Volunteer Award from the Honourable Mike Colle, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. Christina has been a HFHL build volunteer for two years, helped with our Playhouse Project last year and traveled to the Jimmy Carter build in Detroit Michigan last year. Jean has volunteered with HFHL for 7 years. For more on Jean's other volunteer activities see Profile of a Volunteer on p.3. Our heartfelt congratulations to these two hardworking volunteers!

LSREB Community Service Award - On April 11, 2006 Steve Parker received the Community Service Award from the London and St Thomas Real Estate Board. Steve is a real estate agent with Re/Max Advantage here in London. He has been a tireless build volunteer for many years, assists us in our search for land for affordable housing, scouts locations for our ever-expanding ReStore, and recently stepped into the role of Build Committee Chair. Congratulations Steve on being recognized by your peers for the great work you do in the community on behalf of HFHL.

Habitat for Humanity London Annual General Meeting

The Habitat for Humanity London Inc. Annual General Meeting will be held May 16 from 6-8 p.m. in the Tonda Room, London Public Library, Central Branch.

WAYS TO DONATE

You can now donate online at www.habitat.london.on.ca by clicking on the 'Canada Helps' icon on the main page. There are several categories to choose from:

Building on Faith 2006, Law Community Build 2006, or 2006 General Donations. You can make a one time donation or donate monthly. Canada

Helps sends you a tax receipt and your donation will be sent to Habitat London. Please help support Habitat for Humanity London in 2006!

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2005-2006

Chair

Ron Gasparetto

Recording Secretary

Kathleen Gahagan

Past Chair

Laird French

Treasurer

John Wilkin

Fund-Raising Chair

Abbie MacMillan

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Executive Director

Julie Coley

Volunteer Program Mgr

Lee Jones

Resource Dev Mgr

Coleen Crnich

ReStore Mgr.

Gerry Pieroni

ReStore Assistant Mgr.

Jane Saunders

continued from front page...

Relations Committee, and a Finance Committee. Co-Chairs Jean Knowles and Dawn Pemberton need new members for our Faith Relations Committee. There is a continuing need for dedicated skilled volunteers to help us shore up

the foundation of HFHL.

If you are interested in finding out more about opportunities within any of the Committees or Board of Directors please contact me at 455-6623 ext 221 or ljones@habitat.london.on.ca.

I am pleased and proud to be part of a community that has responded so positively to the call for help in Habitat's mission to eliminate poverty housing and improve the quality of life in London.

Lee Jones, Volunteer Program

