



**Habitat**  
for Humanity®  
of Addison County, VT

**NEWS**  
from the  
**CREWS**  
Spring 2020

## Grant helps Habitat homes add solar panels

Habitat for Humanity of Addison County's two homes on Seymour Street in Middlebury and the first home the organization will build in Vergennes will all be designed with rooftop solar panels, in expectation for providing solar electricity to each home.

This is all thanks to current funding and future allocations from a state agency that made the option more affordable.

With help from Efficiency Vermont, HfHAC arranged to receive a \$10,000 grant for the first home on Seymour Street from VLITE, the Vermont Low Income Trust for Electricity. The homeowner will pay an additional \$10,000 through their mortgage.

Special thanks go to Peter Schneider and the Efficiency Vermont staff for their guidance. Our solar contractor,

Eric Hartman of Harvestar, also lent his expertise in assisting with the grant process.

Depending on the homeowners'

electric usage, the solar panels could generate enough power to cover all of their electric needs, said Dave Furney, a member of HfHAC's Building Committee.

He hopes more of the organization's homes will be able to take advantage of solar power through the grant program. As of now, VLITE has allocated an additional \$10,000 for



**Shawn O'Neil's HfHAC home in Cornwall added solar panels in 2019. More could follow soon.**

## Habitat and the Coronavirus

We were ready to begin construction on the second Seymour Street home in Middlebury in late March, but the coronavirus had other ideas. Construction has been halted with the governor's "Stay Home, Stay Safe" order, recently extended to May 15. We look forward to beginning work on Colleen and Annaka Norden's new home (*see story elsewhere in this issue*) when it is safe to do so. In the meantime, stay safe and be well.

— **Steve Ingram**, *president*,

Habitat for Humanity of Addison County

each of our next two planned homes, at Seymour Street and Booth Woods in Vergennes.

"Everybody I've talked to on the Building Committee is very excited about it," Furney said. "We will continue to work hard to get these grants in the future. It's a great thing."

# United Way, HfHAC collaborate in finding applicants for new homes

It's not uncommon to hear a healthy partnership referred to as "a match made in heaven." Heaven isn't the only place where great partnerships are made though. It can also happen at Vergennes Day!

So it was in August 2019 when Habitat for Humanity of Addison County and United Way of Addison County occupied adjoining spaces on the town green in Vergennes that such a match was made. Mickey Heinecken, the affable former president of HfHAC, and Helena Van Voorst, executive director of UWAC, struck up a conversation and soon came to the realization that the two non-profits could benefit from collaborating. The conversation continued later in the day when HfHAC's current president, Steve Ingram, and Helena resolved to hold a joint meeting involving their agencies.

HfHAC's biggest challenge is finding qualified applicants for the homes we build. UWAC's United@Work program provides peer support to employees of Porter Medical Center and Middlebury College who have experienced a life event that may adversely impact their employment. Helena sensed that Trish Lafayette, UWAC's coordinator for United@Work, could work in conjunction with HfHAC's Family Selection/Family Support Committee to help identify families who would qualify for a Habitat house.

Trish stays in contact with United@Work participants so that, when their lives are stabilized, she can assist them in planning for their futures. This is where the missions of the two non-

profits dovetail. Both agencies strive to set their clients up for success. "For many of the people served through United@Work, owning a home seems like an impossible dream," Helena pointed out. "The collaboration between United Way of Addison County and Habitat for Humanity of Addison County helps make this dream feel within reach for hard-working people who are committed to

their own future and just need a little support along the way."

Our community is stronger when everyone—businesses, churches, non-profits, service organizations, and individuals—find ways to join together and work toward common goals. United Way and Habitat for Humanity: a match made in heaven (and Vergennes)? Absolutely!

## HfHAC VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



### ◀ Mary Lou Webster, Brandon

*Years volunteering:* 11

*Specialty:* "Painting, but I've really learned to like dry-walling and taping. I have really enjoyed learning how to frame a house."

*Why I volunteer:* "It started as a church volunteer project, and kept on going."



### ◀ Bruce Jensen, Brandon

*Years volunteering:* 9

*Specialty:* "Grunder." (He's being modest; he pitches in wherever he's needed. We should also note that Bruce and partner Mary Lou—see above—often play a key role for HfHAC crews, making and delivering delicious baked goods for coffee breaks.)

*Why I volunteer:* "Camaraderie."



### ◀ Bob House, Middlebury

(We call him Doctor Bob on the work sites because there are two Bobs and he's a retired physician.)

*Years volunteering:* About 10

*Specialty:* "Taking directions and learning. There are lots of good teachers. I enjoy supervising the college kids; they are enthusiastic and are quick to pick up many skills."

*Why I volunteer?* "I enjoy being able to problem-solve a construction or demolition task and then see what I and my colleagues have completed. There is great camaraderie."



## HOMEOWNER SPOTLIGHT

### A new home to call their own

After moving three times in the last year, Colleen Norden is looking forward to having her own stable home.

Her 7-year-old daughter Annaka is looking forward to having her own bedroom and choosing a color for the walls. She's thinking pink or violet.

Both mother and daughter will get their wishes when they move into Habitat for Humanity of Addison

had been approved. "It was a really nice Christmas present," Colleen said. "They even brought a bottle of sparkling cider and flowers."

Colleen, an academic coordinator at Middlebury College, said her search for affordable rental housing in Middlebury was an eye-opener. "I didn't realize how buyer-beware renting was going to be," she said.

With a no-interest mortgage and Habitat volunteers contributing their muscle, the Habitat house will provide her and her daughter a stable, energy-efficient home at an affordable price. Colleen and Annaka, a first-grader at Mary Hogan Elementary School, are looking forward to walking to downtown stores, restaurants and



**Colleen Norden and her 7-year-old daughter, Annaka.**

County's newest home at 51 Seymour St. in Middlebury. The two-bedroom, one-bath home will be built behind the Habitat-built home that Frankie Rivera and Dora Soberal and their three daughters moved into in December.

Colleen and Annaka got the word on Christmas Eve that their application for a Habitat house

events. "To be in the community is very exciting to us," Colleen said.

Colleen, who has some experience rehabbing old homes, eagerly embraces the opportunity to pitch in on construction of her new home.

Like Frankie and Dora's home, this second house on the Seymour Street lot was designed by Middlebury College architecture students. "I'm excited about the good design of this house," Colleen said. "They're really building a thoughtful, beautiful home."



### 2020 Board of Directors

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Phil Yauch, *Cornwall*

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## National Bank will handle mortgages

Habitat for Humanity of Addison County is grateful for a new partnership with National Bank of Middlebury. Starting in March, the bank has volunteered to manage the organization's mortgages.

As the all-volunteer organization builds more homes in Addison County, the task of managing the homeowners' mortgages has become increasingly complicated, said Mickey Heinecken, a HfHAC board member and former president.

"That, in the early days, was doable. You're tracking just one mortgage," Heinecken said. "We have 11 mortgages now."

Heinecken conferred with Beth Buckman, a fellow Habitat board member who is an assistant vice

president at the National Bank of Middlebury, about having the bank take over mortgage oversight. Bank officials stepped up, Heinecken said.

The agreement helps ensure HfHAC can remain all-volunteer, he said. "It's a much easier task asking someone to be treasurer. We don't have to say, 'Oh, by the way, you have to handle 11 mortgages.'"

"National Bank of Middlebury welcomed the opportunity to partner with Habitat for Humanity of Addison County, which provides such valuable service to the community," said Meaghan McLaughlin, the bank's vice president, business community lender.

HfHAC would like to thank McLaughlin, Caroline Carpenter, Sarah Cowan, Mindy Goodrich and Beth Buckman at National Bank of Middlebury for making this agreement possible.

## HfHAC in the News



*Seven Days'* Spring 2020 edition of "Nest" featured Habitat for Humanity of Addison County's collaboration with Middlebury College architecture students.

"I think it's really interesting that we get to think about all this, but it's also reassuring to have experts working with us," said Middlebury sophomore Isabelle Gorri van.

You'll find the whole story here:  
<https://tinyurl.com/H4HAC>