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***Moving Forward: 2018 and Beyond***

As fellow residents of the Upper Valley, we are all aware of the increasingly high cost of buying a home in our region. To those in the low to middle income range, homeownership often seems unachievable.

For over thirty years, our volunteers have helped families either achieve their dream of owning their own home or address critical repairs in their existing owned home. We serve 81 towns in the Upper Valley and Northeast Kingdom regions of Vermont and New Hampshire from Claremont to the Canadian border.

Our Board of Directors, staff, and an army of volunteers are eagerly looking ahead to the future. We have ambitious goals for the upcoming year and beyond to not only build new homes, but to expand our critical home repair services, and to also broaden our neighborhood revitalization program.

We invite you to read through our letter to learn more about our ongoing work in the Upper Valley and Northeast Kingdom and invite you to join us in our mission. Whichever path you choose, be it financial, through a gift in kind, or by volunteering, we sincerely appreciate your contribution.

We want to hear from you! You can contact us by email or phone or follow us on Facebook and our website. Thank you for your support for our ongoing mission to provide decent affordable housing in the Upper Valley.

**Feature: Northeast Kingdom Habitat**

Based in St. Johnsbury, Upper Valley Habitat for Humanity in the Northeast Kingdom is a vibrant subcommittee that provides essential services to 55 towns across northern Vermont.

Over the past ten years, Habitat NEK helped over 100 families through new house construction, renovation, and urgent home repair projects.

Their current focus is on Aging in Place programs, addressing accessibility issues for the disabled and Critical Home Repairs, providing materials and labor for urgent home issues.

NEK Habitat is celebrating its 10-year anniversary this year! From their first meeting in 2007 at the North Church in St. Johnsbury to now having a fully staffed center, they remain dedicated to serving the Northeast Kingdom area.

For more information about NEK Habitat and to join their monthly newsletter, please visit [www.nekhabitat.org](http://www.nekhabitat.org) or email [info@nekhabitat.org](mailto:info@nekhabitat.org).



in the Northeast Kingdom

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Project Coordinator

## ***Projects: Ongoing and Upcoming***



### **Safford Commons – Woodstock VT**

In partnership with Twin Pines Housing Trust, we will be breaking ground on a new duplex townhome in early 2018. This highly energy efficient structure will provide affordable housing for two homeowner families.

An anonymous grant of \$100,000 and mortgage financing through the USDA Rural Development Program are making this project feasible financially.

We have two families identified as potential homeowners and our goal is to see our families in their new homes by year end of 2018.

### **Preparing our Families for Home Ownership**

For many of our prospective families, the journey to becoming homeowners can be long and daunting. Upper Valley Habitat ensures that our partner families are ready for homeownership. In addition to meeting income and credit metrics, they work to build their skills for managing household budget and physically maintaining their home.

All of our new homeowner families must meet the Habitat for Humanity requirements:

- Have household income between 30% - 80% of county median
- Be willing to invest 500 hours of sweat equity in their home
- Currently live in substandard housing and be an Upper Valley resident for at least one year

At this time, we have families who meet our requirements and once we obtain sufficient funding, we will be able to start building their home. We are also guiding families who don't quite meet our qualifications to address and resolve any areas of concern.

### **Neighborhood Revitalization – Claremont NH**

In 2015, we launched a new program in Claremont to help turn around a struggling inner-city neighborhood. In close collaboration with the City of Claremont, Sullivan County, and State of New Hampshire, we are now starting to see the fruits of our labors.

Our volunteers work with homeowners in this neighborhood to address urgent home repairs and help with small renovation projects. Studies indicate that by completing just two or three projects each year, we will reach a turning point within five years to see a marked improvement in the vitality of the neighborhood.

Our most recent project encompassed exterior improvements, critical plumbing repairs, and a collapsing chimney. We have more projects in the planning stages for 2018.



Neighborhood Block Party  
Claremont 2017

# ***Giving Thanks to our Supporters***

## **Funding Safford Commons**

We recently received a generous donation from an anonymous donor for \$100,000 that is earmarked for our Safford Commons project.

With these funds and mortgage financing for our families from USDA, we are in a position to proceed with construction early spring next year.

Watch our website and Facebook for details on our official groundbreaking ceremony.

## **COOP Stores – Pennies for Change**

The Hanover Consumer Cooperative Society, better known as the Co-op, featured Upper Valley Habitat as one of the Community Partners in the Pennies for Change program for the month of October 2017.

Thank you to everyone who shopped at the Co-op Food Stores and rounded up their bill to the next dollar as a donation to the program. Our share of the funds in the amount of \$5,585.24 will be designated for our next home building project after we complete the duplex in Safford Commons.

## **TuckBuilds**

Launched in 2005, we celebrated our 13<sup>th</sup> year with an eager and energetic team of students who worked on a renovation project in Claremont. This year, they donated a week of their time prior to starting their studies at Tuck School of Business.

Upper Valley Habitat was the founding partner for TuckBuilds and the program has grown to now host some 40 student participants volunteering a week of their time at various non-profit organizations in the area.

In addition to their hours of work, the students contributed \$1,600 to our organization this year. We look forward to continuing this program for many more years.



## **Hypertherm HOPE Foundation**

Associates at Hypertherm, as part of their commitment to the community, donate up to four days of their time to work with local non-profit organizations. Upper Valley Habitat is honored to be one of these organizations and we have benefited from the skills and energy the Hypertherm folks bring to our projects.

Even though we reached out near the end of the season, we were pleased to have full crews throughout the fall to help with our current renovation project in Claremont. Renovating a house that is over 100 years old is always a challenge, but the Hypertherm team was up for it and they have made a big impact.

# ***We Need You! Can You Help?***

## **Calling All Volunteers!**

Are you interested in being part of our mission? We have volunteer opportunities to fit all skill levels and all areas of expertise. You do not need to know how to swing a hammer.

Some of our needs are:

- Building – no experience needed
- Providing job site lunches & snacks
- Helping out with office work
- Professional services

We are also growing our Board of Directors and Operating Committees including Building, Family, and Fundraising. Contact our office if interested.

## **Materials Donations**

Upper Valley Habitat has limited storage space, so can only accept certain donations of materials. **Vermont Salvage** accepts materials on our behalf and we receive a portion of the sale.

(802) 295-7616  
[help@vermontsalvage.com](mailto:help@vermontsalvage.com)

If Vermont Salvage is unable to accept your donation, we suggest **COVER** as an alternative:

(802) 296-7241

## **Why Donate?**

We owe so much to our volunteers who give of their time and talents to work alongside our Habitat partner families and build their homes. Like all non-profit organizations, we rely on financial donations to fund our mission.

A remittance envelope is enclosed for your convenience. We will issue a thank you note and tax receipt promptly. Alternatively, you can donate online at our website via Habitat for Humanity International.

## **Gifts in Kind**

For our building projects, we are required to hire professional trades for foundation, electrical, plumbing and HVAC. If you are a licensed tradesperson in one of these fields and interested in donating services, please contact our office.

## **House and Land Donations**

We welcome donations of land or of older homes in need of refurbishing. Land represents a large part of our cost, and we can work with you to arrange a tax benefit. Refurbishing older homes is a great opportunity to breathe new life into a neighborhood.

## **Sponsor a House**

Organizations, singly or as a group, can sponsor a house project. Past groups have not only raised funds, but carried on much of the construction activity as a team.

## **Scentsy – Built with Love**

This season Idaho-based fragrance company Scentsy is partnering with Habitat for Humanity for a fundraiser! Scentsy will donate \$9 from each “Built with Love” wickless warmer to Habitat International.

In additions, local Scentsy consultant Ann-Marie Blake of Sharon, Vermont, is generously donating her personal commission from all sales during this time to Upper Valley Habitat.

For more information or to place an order with Ann-Marie:

(802) 323-3547  
[annmarievt@rocketmail.com](mailto:annmarievt@rocketmail.com)  
<https://4seasons.scentsy.us/party/8519242/upper-valley-habitat>

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

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