



Mesilla Valley
Habitat
for Humanity®

December 2007

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Under Construction

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Habitat for Humanity's Mission Principles

In all that we do in pursuing the mission of Habitat for Humanity, we pledge to:

- Demonstrate the love and teachings of Jesus.
- Advocate on behalf of those in need of decent shelter
- Focus on shelter by building and renovating simple, decent, affordable houses.
- Engage broader community through inclusive leadership and diverse partnerships.
- Promote dignity through full partnership with Habitat homeowners and future home partners.
- Promote transformational and sustainable community development

From The President

By Fred Hyde

In previous newsletters we disclosed an objective for Mesilla Valley Habitat to build one additional house each year. Up until the 2004/2005 building season we had customarily been building four houses each year (only three in the 2001/2002 building campaign). We built five houses in 2005/2006, and six houses during the 2006/2007 season. The plan then recognized building seven houses during the 2007/2008 year .. the current building season. Unfortunately, that quite possibly might not happen.

We're getting a late start this year! The increased construction in the previous two years has placed severe strain upon our cash availability. Both the reduced funds on hand and a projected short fall in cash income in the

next few months (donations, grants, mortgage sales, etc.) caused a nearly two month delay in starting construction on the three houses for which we had land available. We've now begun construction on two of the houses and will start on the third in a short while. Beginning the other four houses awaits both the assurance of adequate funding and the acquisition of land on which to build.

Fortunately, there is the

probability of Mesilla Valley Habitat receiving four building lots in one of the new sub-divisions being developed on the East Mesa. The lots will be made available to us by the City of Las Cruces using funding furnished by the HUD "HOME" program. We should be signing the contract with the City shortly; the land should be available to us not too long thereafter.

That leaves money! Although the near future financial picture has recently improved somewhat, there is still not a clear picture of how we will obtain the required funds for seven houses. We are obviously in need of all the financial support we can get. Please!

(Continued on pg. 2)



Dodie Gallegos and her son will receive the first home built in the 2007/2008 season.

2007-2008 Season Update

By Becca Winship

Staff and volunteers are coordinating efforts to begin our first new construction of the 2007-2008 building season located at 5422 Genesis Lane, for the family of Dodie Gallegos. She and her son Stephen will enjoy a new home soon! Our second planned con-

struction will be at 4695 Benavidez Rd, for the family of Alma and Benito Balderrama. Alma, Benito, their two children Alma and Osvaldo, and Benito's mother will reside in their new home. Both sites are located on the East Mesa in Las Cruces and will bring

relief to families currently residing in substandard trailer housing at those sites.

BREAKING NEWS!!! The concrete slab has been poured at the Gallegos house and framing starts on December 10th!

Searching for \$\$'s on the Internet!

Did you know that you can earn money for the Mesilla Valley Habitat for Humanity organization just by using a different search engine (rather than Google or Yahoo, for example!)? **You can!** By using GoodSearch! Go to: <http://www.lascruceshabitat.org> and click the box in the top right hand corner for instructions!



Fun Run

Lace up your tennies and help build a house! Not on the construction site, but in a Fun Run around town! MVHFH is hoping to host a "Fun Run" in either March or April to raise money for Habitat for Humanity. This will be a 5K Run/Walk and will be lots of fun for all ages! The money we raise will go straight into the building fund to continue this year's house construction. Watch for more information, and if you're interested in participating or helping with the run, please let the office know!

HELP WANTED!

Are you a good listener? Do you have construction experience? Do you know how to teach someone to budget their money? Are you willing to come out to the jobsite on Saturdays? MVHFH is looking for dedicated volunteers to serve on the Family Support Committee. Family Support Committee members serve as mentors to the partner families, help plan educational workshops, and encourage continued participation after becoming a homeowner. We are looking for you! Contact Becca, the Volunteer Coordinator at the office for more information.

MVHFH Welcomes a New Executive Director

By Becca Winship

Jack Wingard was appointed Executive Director of Mesilla Valley Habitat for Humanity as of November 2007. Jack has lived in the Mesilla Valley for ten years and came to Habitat in September as the Construction Supervisor. He is excited to serve in this new role! Jack's educational background consists of a bachelor's degree in Community Development from Pennsylvania State University

and a graduate degree from St. Francis University. He has served for thirteen years as the Executive Director of two different public housing authorities. He has also served in the affordable housing non-profit sector in construction and administrative positions for twelve years. He has served as a City Councilor and City Clerk in a local government as well as having wide and varied ex-

perience with affordable housing programs at the local, state, and federal levels. In his spare time, Jack likes to read and play basketball and softball. He hopes to be of greatest assistance to our affiliate as we expand and fulfill the mission of Habitat—to build decent, affordable housing for those in need in our community. Jack's cell phone contact is (575) 202-4327.

Our Volunteer Coordinator Introduces Herself

By Becca Winship

I'm Becca Winship, a recent graduate of Roanoke College in Salem, VA. I am working here as part of the Border Service Corps. I grew up between Damascus (the friendliest town on the Appalachian Trail) and Abingdon (home of the state theater of Virginia) Virginia and decided to move to the southwest after college. I am working with MVHFH as the Volunteer Coordinator. My interest in Habitat began my very first

day of college; I attended an orientation session about community service, found out I could spend my fall break building houses, and decided to go on my very first break trip to Columbia, SC the fall of my freshman year. I fell in love, and followed that trip up with 4 more "break trips" over the following 3 ½ years. The construction sparked my interest in actually WORKING for Habi-

tat, and when I found the opportunity to work with Habitat, live in the desert, and speak Spanish all rolled into one program, I took a stab and applied. After three months of living in Las Cruces, I've decided that I love it here. The stark beauty of the mountains, the drastic difference in landscaping, and the great feel of community make me feel like I will be able to call this home for at least the next year

From The President

(Cont'd from pg. 1)

And there is always another serious matter .. volunteers! Mesilla Valley Habitat for Humanity is in need of local people with building skills willing to work two or three morn-

ings a week on a regular basis to help give underhoused, low income people in the Las Cruces area "a hand up - not a hand out". If you know of anyone who might be interested in volunteering, please ask them to call either Becca or me at 525-0475.

How it Started - As We Celebrate 20 Years of Building

By Malcolm Fell

It was 1987 and people were talking! The Methodists were talking to the Catholics, and the Presbyterians were talking to the Unitarians about this new idea that Millard Fuller was talking about in his book, "NO MORE SHACKS." He described how people could partner with low income families to help them help themselves to build decent, affordable houses.

They were holding meetings, putting up posters, talking at church meetings, and somehow, arranged for Millard Fuller to come to Las Cruces and talk about how they could make it happen here. He spoke on April 3 to a large group of excited folks at the social hall of St. Paul's Methodist Church, and his enthusiasm was contagious.

Within a month, they had formed committees, elected officers, and were starting the process of becoming an official affiliate of Habitat for Humanity. On the team, they had a builder, and a banker, and a lawyer, and a real estate professional, all eager to get properly organized and start building. Seven churches were the core for volunteer recruiting.

Official recognition came on October 13 that Mesilla Valley Habitat for Humanity was now an Affiliate, and Millard Fuller wrote a personal letter to President Hank Warren to notify and encourage the team.

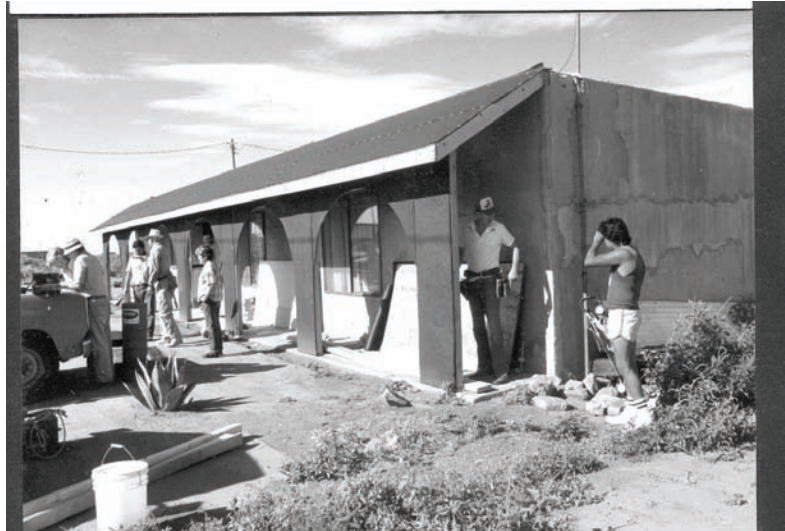
But they hadn't waited for official word to start building, and found their first home-owner partner in

Mary Luna, who had come from Chicago with her 6 children to escape street gangs. She had started a house on land she owned, but needed help to finish it.

On their first work day, 30 people showed up to help build. By December 26, MVHFH held their first dedication.

Because MVHFH had no land and very little money, the next three partner families were people who already owned a suitable piece of property. The fourth house was the first to be built from the ground up, and was completed in 1989. And the fifth house was the first to be "blitz-built," and, with the help of local carpenters who volunteered, was fully framed and closed in on St. Patrick's Day of 1990 for homeowner partners Maria and Thomas Enriquez.

The affiliate grew and ma-



Construction at MVHFH's First house in 1987

tured because of enthusiastic work by groups of local volunteers who held rummage sales, auctions, 'walks' and band concerts to raise funds, not to mention all those who swung hammers, sanded drywall, and painted walls.

This is a story of many dedicated and hardworking volunteers who worked through these 20 years to get 67 families into decent homes. We will tell more in another issue, including tales of 1995, a 'Miracle Year'.



Mark Your Calendars! Las Cruces Homebuilders Association Fundraiser

This year, the LCHBA will again partner with Mesilla Valley Habitat for Humanity in conducting a silent auction and casino night at its new building located on N. Main Street. All net proceeds from this fundraiser will benefit Habitat! The event is scheduled for the evening of Friday, January 25, 2008. Please support this very worthwhile endeavor by donating or soliciting for NEW item donations of a minimal \$50 value or providing cash donations of \$50 which will be used to assemble



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Mesilla Valley Habitat ReStore Reporter View from the Cash Register December 2007

By Judy James

Many people have asked, "How is the store doing?". The store is doing quite well. Four fulltime employees have been hired and their salaries as well as the monthly lease payment and utility bills are being paid by sales from the store. A loan was taken to provide start-up cash and is being repaid very quickly. We have a dream of being able to sponsor a "ReStore Home" in the near future.

Greeting the customers as they come in the door brings responses from "Do you sell to the public?" to "I came to buy the couch I saw here yesterday.". Several people have come in "just to look around" and wind up being the biggest purchase of the day. I have heard "My mother/grandmother had one just like this." more than a few times. Many customers have said we have the best thrift store in town. Many customers say we are the perfect place

to get what they need for their remodeling or craft project. Some of our best customers are ones who bring in something to donate and then look around the store to find just what they have been looking for.

Volunteering as cashier at the ReStore began my retirement phase two. It is a great place to work with the public and help low income families become home owners at the same time. My shift begins with a walk thru the store to see what has come in since I was there last. We have been surprised with some of the donations that have been given and perhaps more surprised at what our customers purchase. Electric organs and pianos have been some of the surprising donations. Futons and small ceramic pots continue to sell surprisingly well.

The ReStore is dependent upon volunteers, donations and customers, in that

order. It takes time and effort to receive donations, prepare items for the shelves, display merchandise well, assist customers, manage the cash register, answer phones and all the things needed to conduct business. The paid staff cannot do everything that needs to be done. We can only sell what has been donated. Construction material, gently used appliances and furniture are only the beginning of what we have available for sale. Customers buying these items is how we raise money to keep in business and support Mesilla Valley Habitat for Humanity.



Visit the ReStore!

2301 South Main Street
Las Cruces, NM
(575)523-5019
10:00 AM till 5:00 PM Tuesday
thru Saturday