

Quick Comments ...

Did you know that children do better in school if they have a safe, decent place to live? Makes sense, doesn't it? More specifically, if their parents are homeowners rather than renters, their grades and their classroom behavior improves even more substantially.

Some interesting studies and statistics have been released supporting what Habitat for Humanity has been saying for a long time: families thrive when they have a stable and secure home environment. An increased sense of self-esteem and pride, responsibility, self-reliance and the feeling of belonging often result as Habitat for Humanity offers a "hand-up," not a hand-out.

The benefits of home ownership to a community can result in increased safety, better schools with parental involvement, and generating economic growth that will, in turn, help to strengthen the entire community.

Studies also show that a "domino-effect" occurs when properties begin to improve throughout a neighborhood. Crime decreases. Property values increase. Homeowners begin to pay property taxes that can generate thousands of dollars back into the county's tax rolls. And, as the homeowners are paying off their mortgage, they are accumulating wealth through growth in home equity.

These are many of the reasons why Habitat for Humanity builds homes for families in need in St. Johns County. Our mission cannot be accomplished without the support of the entire community. We appreciate your help!

Diane Quick
Executive Director

President's Corner

Our Strategic Plan through the year 2009 has been updated. Our plan calls for Habitat to build 60 homes in the next five years—more than twice as many homes as we built in our first 11 years. Of course, it also means twice as many families to select and prepare for home ownership. We are fortunate to have many dedicated volunteers working on our Family Selection and Support committees. We rely on these committees to select truly needy families and help prepare them for the responsibilities of home ownership. In the past, these volunteer members have done an excellent job and our continued faith in them is well justified.

Building homes brings other challenges. Obviously, we need land and money. We have been blessed with enough land to take care of our building needs for the next five to seven years. Money is always a critical issue and, as our building plans increase, so do our needs for monetary donations. Again, we have faith in the generosity of those in our community to meet our needs. We set building schedules based on our goals and the expectation that we will have enough volunteers with the right skills. We need more volunteer crew leaders. That need will grow as we implement our new building schedule calling for us to start one new house each month and finish each house in four months. We have demonstrated our ability to build at this pace but not on a sustained basis. We have faith that a few additional volunteers will permit us to meet this schedule on a continuing basis.

We need to keep in mind that the reason we are scheduling more homes to be built is to meet the growing need of very low income families in our community, increasing the numbers of affordable homes needed. That, after all, is our mission.

Eliot Smith
President

Board of Directors

President, Eliot Smith; Vice President, Conley Weiss; Secretary, Kathy Trela; Treasurer, Dail Taylor; Members: Toni Higgs, Carol Alford, Joe Logan, Judith Foxworth, Bob Compton, Hattie Jenkins, and Kathryn Peterson.

Committees

Building Committee, Family Selection Committee, Family Support Committee, Scholarship Committee, Site Procurement and Development Committee, Finance Committee, Public Relations/Fund Raising Committee, Development Committee, Church Relations Committee.

*You're invited to the
9th Annual
Silent Art Auction & Wine Tasting
December 2, 2004
The Casa Manica Hotel
6 PM to 10 PM
\$50.00 per person
Reservations Required
Call 826-3252*

MOTORCYCLE RIDE RESCHEDULED

Due to Hurricanes Charley, Frances and Jeanne, the **First City Honda Sea-Doo and WQXTV Channel 22 Second Annual Motorcycle Ride** has been rescheduled for Saturday, **October 30th, 2004**. The itinerary will remain the same and an added feature will be a celebration of Halloween! If you wish, come in costume and be a part of the fun.

A poker run is planned, lunch will be served and there are many prizes to be won—all for \$20.

GOLF TOURNAMENT TO BE HELD AT MARSH CREEK ON MARCH 28, 2005

The First Annual Golf Tournament will be held at Marsh Creek Country Club on Anastasia Island on Monday, March 28, 2005. Tee-off is at 9 am. The day will include an Award Luncheon, prizes, fun and much more.

Committee members include **Verna Brown, Sarah Antonson, Derek Hankerson, Victor Yerrill and Dail Taylor**. If interested in working on this committee, please call Verna Brown at 826-3252.

Habitat will welcome any 1/2" or 3/4" inch sheets of plywood left over from the hurricanes. Please call the office at 826-3252.