

Habitat Happenings



**Habitat
for Humanity®**
South Central Minnesota

A newsletter for friends of Habitat for Humanity of South Central Minnesota

Spring/Summer 2019

Habitat Welcomes **NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

After several months of conducting an executive search, the Board of Directors of Habitat for Humanity is excited to announce that Connie Ireland has been hired as Habitat's new Executive Director. Connie joined the organization on January 29, 2019 bringing over 30 years of experience in housing, community, economic and workforce development. She has worked in the private and non-profit sectors but most recently spent 20 years in the public sector.

Bill Heidcamp, Habitat's Board President, stated... *"We are very excited to welcome Connie to our team. We are particularly pleased that she is a life-long Mankato resident, which will allow her to bring an extensive network of contacts into Habitat's efforts. Not only will she bring a tighter focus of providing exceptional mission-driven services to our community, she will also be dedicated to expanding Habitat's collaborations with other agencies that are working towards stabilizing families. Please join me in welcoming Connie to our Habitat team."*

Since starting in late January, Connie has hit the ground running to better understand the complexities of Habitat's organization. She's also been climbing a steep learning curve to grapple with the acquisition of property and the re-framing of the



organization's structure. Amidst it all, Connie has made it her mission to re-connect with Habitat's stakeholders and supporters to discuss ways in which we can collaborate to build strength, stability and self-reliance through shelter in our communities.

We hope that our paths will cross in the very near future. As always, please feel free to swing by our office at any time to introduce yourself, meet the staff, and take a tour. We'd love to meet you!

Letter from the **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**



Connie Ireland

Greetings to all of our friends of Habitat! It has certainly been a winter to remember in Minnesota, and I'm sure everyone is anxiously waiting for spring to arrive. I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself to you. I have only been serving in this role for a couple of months, but already I can share how rewarding this work is. This is a great opportunity to take advantage of my career experiences and bring me back to a time earlier in my career when I was involved in affordable housing development.

I have spent most of my career as a "road warrior" traversing all of southern Minnesota and then the entire state and more recently making daily trips to St. Paul. I have worked in the private, non-profit, and public sector and have been blessed to have experiences in housing, community, economic and workforce development.

I recently left state government serving as the Executive Director for the Governor's Workforce Development Board. The Board was the largest in the nation with 65 members. While serving as the executive director I had the opportunity to implement a new federal law, build a new organizational structure, and establish a new foundation for the Board. While this was rewarding, as a Mankato native, I knew it was time to "be home." I am certain that God had his hands in bringing me to Habitat. The minute I met the team and the Board, I felt the passion in my heart and knew this was my new journey.

Working with and for people to make a difference is where I find my passion. I have worked at local, regional, and state levels and with a multitude of organizations. Being

Executive Director Letter continued on page 2.

ABDELLA AND FAZIA NAMO FAMILY



Abdella and his wife Fozia both grew up in Ethiopia. Each moved to Kenya in 2000 due to political unrest in their home country. They met in Kenya where they married and started their family. Four of their five children were born there—two sons, Arafat (18) and Abdachis (15), and two daughters, Lina (13) and Gamachiftu (8). In 2010, they arrived as refugees in the United States and lived in Atlanta, GA for four years. They had a third daughter—Jazeera—while there. They moved to Mankato in 2015 and received their U.S. citizenship in 2016.

Abdella has worked with Jack Links Snacks the last two years, and Fozia is a stay-at-home mom. Both put in their 400 hours of sweat equity hours painting their own and other Habitat homes and working at the ReStore. “We knew that moving into a Habitat house would be good for our family. We are very excited to own our own house. Habitat has been good to us. We thank you!”

NICOLE NELSON FAMILY

Nicole Nelson grew up in Alexandria, MN and moved to the Mankato area in 2011. She moved into her new Habitat home in St. Peter in fall of 2018. Nicole is a perfect candidate for a Habitat home. She and her five-year-old daughter—Sophia—had been living in a rundown apartment next to a rambunctious bar for the last year-and-a-half. They shared a bedroom and had no yard or nearby parks in which to play. She found out about Habitat for Humanity’s search for families through the St. Peter Chamber of Commerce’s newsletter. She was desperately looking for something more stable for her daughter. “It’s so nice to know that we are living in our own home, that it is ours!” When she received the call from Habitat saying that she was selected, she said... “I cried really hard, I was so relieved. I am so very appreciative for this opportunity and want to thank everyone who has contributed to making my dream come true!”



Letter from the EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR continued from page 1.

able to serve and see the differences that we can make for someone is what attracted me to Habitat. Habitat for Humanity’s vision for safe, affordable housing is shared by several “like” organizations to help families move forward to self-sufficiency in their jobs, home, and daily lives. My personal goal is to leverage my connections and knowledge to align our services and programs to provide more opportunities for families within our Habitat service area.

I would be remiss if I didn’t mention how grateful I am for the ReStore team and Jeff Devens, the Manager. I have not worked in retail and am pleased with the success and professionalism they bring to our organization. The rest of the team at Habitat are all dedicated, committed individuals who are driven to serve. Their knowledge and skills fulfill the needs of Habitat from family services, community outreach, construction management, fundraising, event planning, and fiscal and administrative responsibilities.

The demographics of our service area are ever changing, and we must address the disparity gaps that exist. Habitat serves all regardless of race, disability or socio-economic status. Everyone should have access to safe, decent, and affordable housing for their families. We must also stress the importance of our volunteers and address the fact that our volunteers are aging. We will continue to grow our volunteer base and value our volunteers who are also great mentors. Please consider becoming a volunteer and sharing your time and talents.

Together, we can and do make a difference in the lives of families. I am proud of the history of Habitat for Humanity and the impact that Habitat for Humanity of South Central Minnesota has made. I am excited to be a part of this organization and am grateful for all the people it impacts. I look forward to connecting with many of you who I already know and to building new friendships with those of you who I don’t.

Hard Hat BREAKFAST

Habitat is climbing on the bandwagon this Spring and is hosting what has become a very successful fundraiser for other Habitats in the State.

On Tuesday, May 21st from 7:15 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. at the Courtyard by Marriott, we'll be serving up a free breakfast buffet for attendees wanting to:

- *connect with like-minded individuals*
- *learn more about our work at Habitat*
- *meet Habitat homeowners and volunteers*
- *discover how they can help deserving families secure decent and affordable housing*

Our keynote speaker will be **Sheri Allen**—the retiring superintendent from Mankato Area School District—who has served as the superintendent in Mankato for 10 years. Ms. Allen is an avid advocate for healthy youth and safe and stable housing. Joining her on the program will be one of our Habitat homeowners—**Abby Martin**—who will tell her heartfelt story of her and her children's lives before and after securing a Habitat home.

For more information on attending our inaugural Hard Hat Breakfast, please call Dawn at 507-388-2081 extension 4. *She'll be sure to reserve you a seat at the table!*



Sheri Allen



Abby Martin

It's Par-TEE Time -

HABITAT'S 17TH ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

After suffering from record-breaking snow and cold temperatures this February, don't you think it's time to start imagining an ideal day, on a golf course, teeing off with friends, for a good cause?



Let Habitat help you bring that to fruition by inviting you to join us for our 17th Annual Golf Tournament on Friday, July 19th at the North Links Golf Course. Registration and lunch start at noon followed by a tee time of 1 p.m. You may register for the tournament for \$125. This includes a cart, contests, lunch and dinner along with prizes. Teams of four or individual golfers are welcome. Proceeds from registration fees will help support Habitat in our mission to eliminate poverty housing in our local communities.

For more information about this event or sponsorship opportunities contact Dawn at 507-388-2081 extension 4.

Thank You - to our steadfast donors who generously gave

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A Special Thank You!

Habitat would like to give a special shout out to all of the donors who generously contributed to our "Stay at Home So We Can Build a Home" non-event fundraiser. The response was phenomenal! We brought in nearly \$24,000 of contributions from 107 donors. Of these, 32 were new donors to Habitat and the remaining 75 were previous donors. The gifts ranged in size from \$10 - \$2,000. We are enormously appreciative for each and every donation we received, and we loved hearing that you thought the concept was "fresh and fun." Thank you again for your unwavering support of Habitat and your commitment to our 2019 construction season! Your support helps us build strength, stability and self-reliance through shelter in our communities.



***We appreciate that you
are building with us!***

Since the ReStore's inception in June of 2007, the store has experienced incredible growth. During our first full fiscal year, we rang up 4,703 transactions totaling \$111,960 in gross sales; plus, we diverted 72.8 tons of materials away from landfills. Over the past 11½ years that the ReStore has been in business, it has grossed over \$2,887,234 in sales and has diverted over 1,996 tons of material away from the landfill. That is almost 4,000,000 pounds! To help you visualize four million pounds, a typical semi-truck and trailer carries a load of 42,000 to 46,000 pounds, which means that nearly 100 semi-loads of "stuff" has been saved from going into the landfill. That's a pretty remarkable feat in and of itself!

Since our humble start in mid-2007, the income from the ReStore has helped underwrite the construction of approximately 70 homes. Not only has the ReStore grown and done great things, but the products that we sell have helped the community with low-cost building supplies and home improvement items. This fiscal year—which ends June 30, 2019—the ReStore is projected to have over \$405,000 in sales. This growth is made possible because of this great community!

Sometimes the donations that come to the ReStore are past their usefulness. The ReStore is very diligent in recycling

everything that we can. We separate aluminum, brass, copper and ferrous metals and bring them to a recycling center where we can make money. We also separate cardboard, glass and plastic so it can be recycled and kept out of the landfill. Since the ReStore started keeping track of recycling income in fiscal year 2015, we have made \$14,611 in recycling proceeds.

Thanks to all who support Habitat for Humanity of South Central Minnesota and its ReStore. A big shout-out goes to the ReStore's volunteers, our donors, and our customers. Without you we couldn't fulfill our mission of building decent and affordable housing for families in need.



CARE-A-VANNERS ARE A'COMING

Once again, Habitat for Humanity of South Central Minnesota is going to roll out the welcome mat this spring to a team of avid Habitat International volunteers called the Care-A-Vanners. This volunteer program invites anyone who travels by recreational vehicle to add a Habitat build to a part of their journey, or even to make it their destination. Some Care-A-Vanners live their

life on the road full-time going from place to place to help in constructing Habitat homes; others just squeeze in an adventure when they can. Along the way, they get to meet and work with families on their house and help them create a place that they can call home. All of them appreciate the need for safe, affordable housing. It's this mindset and commitment that helps us further our mission in South Central Minnesota. It starts with recreation, but ends with relationships.

We have invited Care-A-Vanners to join us in constructing a home during the two-week period of May 13th through the 26th. We will anxiously await to see how many Care-A-Vanners want to venture our way. In past years, we have hosted anywhere from three to six Care-A-Vanners per two-week period. If you would like to join us in sharing our appreciation for their magnificent generosity, we would love to have you sign up to serve a lunch for the team during their stay. Please let us know if this is something you, your employer or church would be willing to do. We would greatly appreciate your hospitality!





TERRY & CAROL ENDRESEN *Construction Volunteers*

If you've been around Habitat much in recent years, it's likely that you've bumped into Terry and Carol Endresen in your wanderings. The Endresens got involved with the St. Peter Habitat Chapter in the mid-1990s when Terry ran his own construction company. While they spend most of their volunteer time—approximately 1,000 hours a year since 2012—working on the homes that Habitat builds in St. Peter, you can also find them at the center of all of the St. Peter Chapter's fundraising events. This can include grilling brats at Habitat's 4th of July food stand and running bingo cards at the Red Men Club on Habitat's designated Saturday. If that's not enough, Terry also serves on the ReStore Advisory Committee and is an active member of Habitat's Construction Committee; and, Carol plays an important role on Habitat's Family Support Committee. In that role, Carol stays in touch with new homeowners to answer questions and helps in decision-making that impacts the interior finishing of the home. She serves as the intermediary between the homeowner and the construction crew and helps sequence what decisions the homeowner needs to make next. Both Terry and Carol serve on the St. Peter Habitat Chapter Board.

Terry started his volunteer work on Habitat construction sites both building and instructing the volunteers on different aspects of construction. Now he designs the homes that the Building Trades high school class builds; and, he serves as the construction site supervisor to put in the foundation of those homes and finishes the construction once they have been moved from the high school onto their permanent foundation. He works with eight or nine other St. Peter construction volunteers in the process.

Due to his 15 years as an Industrial Arts teacher, working with a program that provides an opportunity for high school students to build a Habitat house is very rewarding for Terry. It is also rewarding to work with the many dedicated volunteers who help finish the homes. Both of them also enjoy working side-by-side with the new Habitat homeowners and turning over the house keys at the homeowner's dedication.

We would like to heap a load of gratitude onto this volunteer couple extraordinaire!



DENNIS ERICKSON *ReStore Volunteer*

Dennis was inspired to volunteer with Habitat because of his philosophical belief that one should give back to those less fortunate than oneself. He started giving back by volunteering with Habitat after a successful career of teaching math for 35 years. When he retired from East Junior High School, he went onto MSU where he taught classes and supervised student teachers there. After a total of 40 years of being an educator, he decided to "retire, relax, have fun, and travel."

Dennis has volunteered in a number of capacities with Habitat. A neighbor initially got him involved in volunteering to help on a Habitat build in Mankato. He got hooked and then proceeded to volunteer constructing houses in St. Peter through his church. If that weren't enough to keep him "relaxed" after retirement, Dennis also began volunteering his time with the ReStore. Up until three or four years ago he was involved in building and volunteering in the ReStore. While he doesn't profess to be good at any particular construction skill, he does like to sheetrock and put siding on houses. His role in the ReStore includes pricing items, stocking the shelves, and providing customer service.

Over the past 25 years, he and his wife have spent five to six weeks skiing in Colorado. While the time they spend skiing has lessened over the years, they did get in a weeklong ski trip to Colorado in January and are venturing to Florida for the months of March and April. It sounds like they have got the "retire, relax, have fun, and travel" gig down to a fine art!

Dennis and his wife Mary Jo have been married for 57 years. They have one daughter and two grandchildren.

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OUR VISION:

A world where everyone has
a decent place to live.

OUR MISSION:

Habitat for Humanity of South Central Minnesota is a non-profit,
Christian housing ministry dedicated to building decent and
affordable housing for families in need.

507-388-2081 • www.habitatscmn.org

We need **EVERYONE!**



Everyone deserves a decent place to live, and everyone can do something today to help make that possible for another family. Every donation helps a family help themselves. Every helping hand makes a difference. Your financial support, your time and your voice will help bring independence to families in need of a decent place to live.

Please call us at 507-388-2081 if you're interested in:

- Becoming a Habitat homeowner
- Sitting on a Committee
- Donating furniture, appliances and materials to the ReStore
- Volunteering your time at the ReStore, on a construction crew or at an event
- Contributing stock, donating land or including Habitat in your will
- Making a lunch meal for our visiting "Care-A-Vanner" volunteers during their two-week stint with us