A Word from the Director

In June, we wrapped up another fiscal year for Manatee Habitat with much to celebrate. Thanks to the support of so many in our community, we’ve provided five more families with a pathway to self-sufficiency and stability through a Habitat home. In addition, our critical home repair volunteer teams have completed 23 projects, including roof replacements and installation of wheelchair ramps. These repairs are being done on the homes of senior, veteran, and disabled homeowners throughout Manatee County to improve the safety and health of their homes. None of this success would have been possible without the more than 16,900 hours put in by our volunteers, and the financial support of our many donors, corporate sponsors, and faith and community partners.

Our new Restore will celebrate its first anniversary on Saturday, August 17th. It’s been a great move into a wonderful community. This new, more central location has led to a significant increase in shoppers and donations. With the additional space in our 33,000 sq. ft. store, we’ve been able to expand our home improvement section, where do-it-yourselfers can find the resources they need at reasonable prices. A new addition to our store this year will be monthly DIY events where participants can learn new skills and new ways to improve their homes.

And speaking of anniversaries... this coming year we will be celebrating our 25th year in operation in Manatee County. In 1994, the organization began with a team of very dedicated volunteers committed to changing lives. Their vision has come to fruition for the 133 families who have successfully completed the homebuyer program and are the proud owners of a Habitat home. Our work continues as we celebrate our anniversary with a groundbreaking this fall for our upcoming 16 home Habitat community called Poling Gardens in Samoset. This year you’ll see us expanding our critical home repair program into the Samoset community. Our outreach to this community will also include facilitating a resident leadership training program to help engage Samoset residents to identify and implement local neighborhood improvement projects.

Thank you to those of you who showed your support by attending our International Women’s Day Luncheon and 4th Annual ReStore Spaces Design Challenge Party. I hope that you will join us this year for the many exciting events we have planned to support our efforts and celebrate our impact in the community. More event details are inside.

As we embark on another year of important work in the area of affordable housing, we look forward to walking alongside our families with your support to bring help and hope to families in Manatee County... because all of us deserve a decent place to call home.

Karen McElroy and ReStore Staff at the 4th Annual ReStore Spaces Design Team Challenge Reveal Party
Habitat Home Dedicated in Palmetto for the Luna Family

Family and friends of Tomacita Luna and her son Danny turned out for the culmination of her journey to homeownership at the home dedication ceremony on May 18th. Volunteers who worked with Tomacita and her family, building her house along with home sponsors Sun Hydraulics and Faith United Church of Christ, shared in the memorable experience and the blessing of the home. “I am so grateful for all the people who helped me and supported the construction of my home. It means so much to me and my family to have a home of my own,” Tomacita said. She closed on the purchase of her energy efficient, green-built home with an interest-free mortgage payment she can afford on June 28. The next home dedication will also be in Palmetto, for the Hernandez family in September. Look for an invitation in your email!

Bridge to Financial Empowerment Completes Nine Week Program

Manatee Habitat has been reaching out to existing homeowners and prospective homeowners to offer assistance with many areas of home ownership. The nine workshops about Financial Empowerment (Financial Peace University) educate our families about different aspects of financial acumen, and offer incentives for saving money toward a Home Maintenance emergency fund. Each participant received a combination lock file box to help them keep organized. Eighteen homeowners and prospective homeowners attended the workshops held at the Trinity United Methodist Church on Manatee Avenue, facilitated by Jim and Marsha Price. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the workshops and are working hard to achieve their goals of financial peace and prosperity.

In addition to FPU, 35 homeowners attended the Estate Planning workshop and submitted applications to Legal Aid of Manasota, who is partnering with MCHFH, to do their Last Will & Testament, Healthcare Directive, and Healthcare POA Pro Bono so they and their families will have peace of mind should anything unexpected happen. If you are a current Habitat homeowner and would like to join the next group for Bridge To Financial Empowerment this fall, please contact Sheryl Boddy, Community Programs Manager, at sboddy@manateehabitat.org.

Manatee Habitat has a Global Impact

Habitat may work around the corner from you, but did you know that we also work around the world? Manatee Habitat’s tithe program supports carefully chosen building and shelter projects that provide housing in the world’s most vulnerable communities. One of our tithing partners is Habitat for Humanity Guatemala, whose team visited our affiliate last month to share some incredible impact stories of how our support has made a real difference in the lives of Guatemalan families. Our tithing support contributes to Guatemala Habitat’s Small Change, Giant Leap project which seeks to improve the lives of Guatemala’s most vulnerable families. Families in the program receive “Healthy Home Kits”, consisting of a smokeless stove, a water filter, and a latrine. Their goal is to impact 17,000 Guatemalan families with clean drinking water and healthier homes.

Tithing connects our local work with global impact – that means that every act of service and every donation made has a ripple effect both in our community and around the world. To learn more about our international tithing program and the countries we work with, please contact Crystal Frazer, Community Outreach Manager, at cfrazer@manateehabitat.org.

Donor Portrait: Meet Beverly Clapper

She's Found Good Reasons to Support Manatee Habitat since 2004

Beverly has been supporting Manatee Habitat's mission for more than 15 years. "I know the good work Habitat does giving a hand up to people in need," Beverly said in a recent interview. She enjoyed attending Habitat's International Women's Day Luncheon and ReStore Spaces this spring, which brought Habitat homeowners and event guests together to highlight the how stable housing changes lives and builds community. Beverly is active at her church, First United Methodist, on the Missions Committee, and supports other charities, too. She has chosen to keep building for future generations by making a legacy gift to Manatee County Habitat for Humanity in her estate planning. Thank you, Beverly!
Ample parking, good lighting and plenty of space inside all made the 4th Annual ReStore Spaces at the new ReStore an enjoyable event for the design teams, judges, staff, volunteers, and most importantly, the guests who came out to see the amazing rooms. Five teams competed for awards in three categories: the Judges Choice Award; the Community Choice Award; and the People’s Choice Award. Teams worked on their themed room and then staged their vignette, in an 8 ft. x 12 ft. space at the ReStore. Shoppers were delighted to see the teams at work on their rooms at the ReStore. Teams then posted photos on their fundraising webpage for online voting in the week before the event.

Guests enjoyed drinks and delicious food served by eight restaurants at stations in the store while bidding on the silent auction items and great raffle prizes. Habitat homebuyer Tomacita Luna spoke to guests about how her Habitat home will change her life and she thanked everyone for attending, shopping, and donating to the ReStore. Everyone that made this vision five years ago grow to the amazing fundraiser it is today.

“We had such a great evening learning more about Habitat home ownership and ways to repurpose old items. I’m looking forward to the next ReStore Spaces, they just keep getting better and better!” said Karen McElroy. Want to try your hand in the 2020 Design Team Challenge? Contact Karen McElroy, Director of Retail Operations, at kmcelroy@manateehabitat.org.

Mark your calendar for Friday, May 15th, 2020 for the 5th Annual ReStore Spaces Reveal Party. A Big Thank You to our 24 Event and Food and Beverage Sponsors for making this event possible.

**4th Annual ReStore Spaces Design Team Challenge Shows Off New ReStore**

A sense of celebration was in the air on March 8th as more than 100 guests came together at The Grove in Lakewood Ranch on International Women’s Day, a special day to celebrate the contributions of women around the globe. Guests enjoyed the opportunity to network before the luncheon and check out hosted exhibits of Manatee Habitat’s green-building techniques, ways to volunteer in many capacities and even how to volunteer abroad through Habitat’s Global Village missions. Keynote Speaker Teresa Mast shared her touching story of facing many challenges along the path that led her to running her own construction company, being a wife and mother and always finding a way give back through the good and difficult times. Yesenia Garcia-Lorenzano shared a similar story of self-determination and perseverance that led her to U.S. citizenship, a successful career, a college-bound daughter and a home of her own; all from starting life in this country as a small child traveling with her family harvesting fruit. Thanks to METV, a recording of the event can be viewed on their YouTube Channel at (ManateeEducationalTV - search ManateeHabitat.)

Mark your calendar for Friday, March 6th, 2020 at The Grove and bring a friend. Our Keynote Speaker will be Cheri Coryea, Manatee County Administrator - the second woman to hold that position.

**Much to Celebrate at the INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY LUNCHEON**

Sponsored by: Bradenton Herald - Grove - Manatee Air Heating & Cooling - METV

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**Manatee Habitat is 25! Celebration**
Saturday, Nov. 9, 10am - 2pm
Family-friendly FREE Event
Bradenton Riverwalk

**Habitat FORE Humanity Charity Golf Tournament**
Presented by AutoNation Ford Bradenton
With Hall of Famer Jan Stephenson at Waterlefe Country Club
Friday, Oct. 18
11:30am Registration, 1:00pm Shotgun
Manatee County Habitat for Humanity Honors our Volunteers

Article by Barb Slater, Volunteer Coordinator

On March 27th, we gathered at Emerson Point to share a meal and celebrate this past year's hours of service donated by our volunteers. The impact of their generosity lives in all the homes we build and repair. Special honors were awarded to the following:

**Lifetime Achievement: Bob Masur.** Bob, a Vietnam veteran and an AT&T retiree of 31 years, joined us in 2008 and has worked on 33 new homes and 23 Rehab/Brush with Kindness projects putting in 4587 hours. Bob always lends a hand no matter the task!

**Construction Volunteer of the Year: Tim MacDonald.** Tim, a retired EMT has cross trained in several areas becoming a lead volunteer in specialized building techniques. He shares this knowledge as he leads regular and casual volunteers on site.

- Bent Nail Award: Bud Rives, Bob Hrabovecky, John Smith and Ed Wenzke
- Office Volunteer of the Year: Janice Shamblin
- Restore Volunteer of the Year: Joyce Koubia
- ReStore Newcomer of the Year: Phyllis Sellers
- Development Volunteer of the Year: Sharon Barhorst
- Outreach Volunteer of the Year: Anna Garcia Gonzalez

Volunteers received Presidential “Points of Light Awards” including a certificate signed by the President of the United States and a pin. Three volunteers earned a Gold certificate for over 500 hours this year, 18 volunteers earned a Silver certificate for over 250 hours and 25 volunteers earned a Bronze certificate for over 100 hours. In all 19,577 volunteer hours were donated.

My prayer is for you to be inspired to join this marvelous team of volunteers, to learn and share new skills so that we can grow our mission to serve more families in our community. You can also support their efforts financially or with your donations to the ReStore.