



## WHAT'S NEW:

The ReStore is moving.

## COMMUNITY:

OK4WD Truckfest.

Day of Help in Belvidere.

Veterans Day at the build site.

Community Center grant.

## PARTNERS:

Welcome, Heartland Home

## PEOPLE:

Volunteer Tom Massey

Comings and Goings

Visit the website at [warrenhabitat.org](http://warrenhabitat.org) for details of all events.

## Annual Appeal

Imagine that you are working two jobs and still can't afford the rent for yourself and three children. Imagine that the medical bills caused by your son's condition suddenly overwhelm the household budget. Or that your car breaks down and you don't have the money to fix it and you depend on that car to get you to work. Or that your daughter has a persistent cough that you just know is worsened by the drafty, leaking apartment you live in. These are the situations that actual, hard-working Warren County residents have found themselves in, through no fault of their own.

### Working but struggling financially

According to the United Way, 1.2 million households in New Jersey are unable to afford the state's high cost of living. New Jersey's affordable housing crisis is severe. This means high and rising rental costs. And wages of middle-class workers have been flat over the last twenty years, while low-wage worker paychecks have actually fallen. This often leads to hard spending choices involving housing, transportation, healthcare and daycare. What would you do if you found yourself in one of the situations described above?

### You have impacted the lives of hundreds

Through donations of time and money, people like you have helped these families and others get on their feet again and attain the financial stability that we all seek. That starts with mortgage payments which are often much lower than rental costs for apartments which are often substandard.



If you've donated to Habitat in the past, you have helped provide the spark that keeps these families strong and self-reliant. That means healthcare and education options that would not otherwise have been possible for these families. And, you're helping to build a home with a veteran family, which will be completed in the spring.

### The need is large and growing

It is estimated that more than 8,000 families in the county are one emergency away from a serious financial setback. Our Habitat model centers around building decent housing in partnership with such a family. Mortgage payments are kept low by using the family's sweat equity, construction volunteers, and donations of money and materials.

### You can help us help more families

We will soon be accepting applications for other working families in circumstances

similar to those above. As you prepare for the busy holiday season ahead, please pause to consider how you can be of help to more people in Warren County who just need a hand up. Go to our website at [www.warrenhabitat.org](http://www.warrenhabitat.org) and donate today! Thank you for your continued support.

## OK4WD Donates over \$6,400

In October, OK4WD held its 28th annual OKtober Truckfest event at their Route 57 location in Stewartsville. For the last three seasons, owner Jim Oostdyk has donated the proceeds of this event to WCHF. This year, through registration fees and raffles, the family owned business was able to raise over \$6,400. Those funds will be applied to the Habitat Veterans Build currently under construction in Washington, NJ.

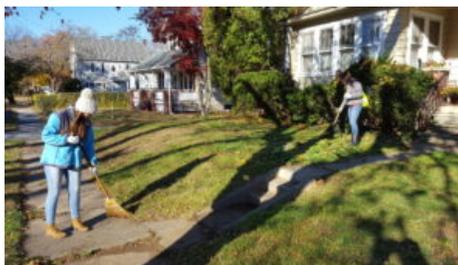
The Truckfest is a very popular community event. Food, refreshments, live music and free admission draw a large crowd annually. The show features demonstrations of new products by vendors, vehicle displays, awards, prizes, giveaways, and activities geared toward children. The event is targeted to owners, suppliers, operators, and enthusiasts in the four wheel drive market. Judges proclaim winners and award trophies and recognition to best displays and demos in a number of different classes.

Ben Eskow, WCHF Executive Director, thanked Jim and his team. "OK4WD has been an amazing supporter of Habitat through the years," he began. Without their continued backing, and that of other companies and organizations, Habitat would not be able to address the county's affordable housing crisis. Our partner families, employees and volunteers thank OK4WD for their incredible generosity."

## A Day of Help in Belvidere

Members of the Belvidere United Methodist Church (BUMC) staged a Day of Help on November 11th. The program assists elderly, disabled, and low income families with cleanup projects around their homes. Six Belvidere families took advantage of the service, which included clearing of brush, leaf removal, window washing, and general yard cleanup.

The event was modeled after the Hope in the Hills of Warren (HHW) Day of Help program and was spearheaded by BUMC Pastor Evan Dodge and Tim Driscoll, a member of that congregation. Both termed this year's program a complete success. HHW is a community extension of WCHF that has assisted families in the county since 2010. Tim was a member of the HHW team and participated in their program events for years.



A key to both programs is the connection of groups of youths with the homeowners receiving the service. They are both instances of the Habitat for Humanity International Home Preservation program, which offers home repair services such as painting, landscaping, weatherization and minor repairs, ensuring that families live in safe, decent homes for years to come.

The BUMC team piloted the Day of Help concept in 2016 and its success ensured that it would be continued. There is a need for home preservation programs in other sections of

## VOLUNTEERS WANTED!

Habitat for Humanity would simply not exist without its volunteers. And Warren County steps up. Last year, 342 people donated their time to WCHF, contributing a total of at least 13,550 volunteer hours!

We seek to bolster our team with these skills:

### Chief Financial Officer

Oversees Affiliate finances: forecasting, bookkeeping, cash flow, budget development, and participates in affiliate strategic decisions.

### Volunteer Coordinator

Responsible for monitoring the volunteer experience: managing programs related to volunteer recruitment, retention, development, and appreciation.

If you'd like to know more about these positions, call the office at (908) 835-1300

## Support the ReStore

The ReStore is Habitat's retail outlet, located at 390 Route 57 West, Washington, NJ, 07882. The mission of the ReStore is to raise funds to help Warren County Habitat for Humanity build homes for qualified local low income families and reduce waste by recycling or reclaiming materials that would otherwise be discarded.

Tax deductible donations of furniture, décor, household goods, building supplies, rugs, appliances, and many other items are prepped and set out for resale to the public.

Proceeds from the retail sales are then used to fund Habitat program expenses such as home construction and rehabs. See what it's all about. Donate, shop or browse at the Habitat ReStore!

### ReStore volunteers needed:

All forms of retail store activities are performed, such as loading and unloading, merchandise refurbishment and staging, cashier, floor rep, and maintenance/janitorial.

## ReStore Hours

Tuesday: 9-5  
 Wednesday: 9-7  
 Thursday: 9-5  
 Friday: 9-5  
 Saturday: 9-5  
 Sunday-Monday: Closed

Call: (908) 835-1980

the county, other than Washington and Belvidere. A similar venture is under consideration in Hackettstown.

If you would like to discuss a project comparable to A Day of Help in your community, call Ben Eskow, Executive Director, at (908) 835-7879.

## Veterans Day

WCHFH honored veterans on Veterans Day with a ceremony at its build site in Washington, NJ. Fifty people showed up on a chilly morning to pay tribute. Veterans Chair Bob Pesaniello arranged the ceremony as one of his first actions in that role, "We are here to honor the brave men and women who served this country," he began.

Pastor Jim Scovell of the First Presbyterian Church of Washington gave the benediction, and led the audience in prayer. Sergeant Jim McAleer, of the Somerset County Police Pipes and Drums played God Bless America and anthems from the service branches. Benedictions and prayers were followed by the National Anthem.



When veterans in attendance were called to the front of the assembly, nine members of the crowd emerged. Included were a number of members of the WCHFH building team. Also included was Heather Freeman. Heather and Bob are "partner parents." They're working with WCHFH to build their home on this site. Heather had a six-year tour of duty with the Army National Guard.

Ben Eskow expressed the thoughts of many in the audience as he paid tribute to the veterans. "We want to thank you for your service and your sacrifice. And also the sacrifices made by your families so that we all can be free and secure," he offered. The assembly gave the nine veterans a loud and sincere ovation.

## The ReStore is moving

The ReStore is moving. It is currently situated at 390 Route 57 West in Washington, NJ. in the Tractor Supply plaza. The ReStore is the Habitat retail outlet that sells furniture, décor, household goods, building supplies, rugs, appliances, etc, and uses the profits to fund new home construction.

The ReStore opened its doors as "The Store" in the spring of 2012 and has been at its current location ever since. The retail showroom and ReStore offices will be moved just down the road to 384 Route 57 West, a building that formerly housed the ShopRite supermarket. Occupying approximately half of the building, the ReStore will have The Chapel at Warren Valley's brand new worship center as its neighbor, and both organizations couldn't be more pleased.

Store hours will remain the same at the new location. Watch for notices of the move schedule and be sure to come and visit the ReStore at its new and larger space!



## USDA Awards Grant for Community Center

Warren County Habitat for Humanity applied for and was awarded a grant to refurbish and modernize common space in its office building. The building at 31 Belvidere Avenue in Washington serves as the WCHFH headquarters. The grant was approved by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) in the amount of \$35,000.



The grant application specified that the improvements to the facility would enable it to host community gatherings. The building is to be modified to be suitable for community meetings of several dozens of individuals. It is the stated mission of this project “to bring the community together by building on our resources, strengths and talents to elevate the hope and well-being of our community.” Making this facility available enables WCHFH to focus on uniting the citizens of Warren County and supporting community collaboration. By promoting the well-being of youth, families, and veterans, it is the vision of the project team that the refurbished center will become a place where community is built and families thrive.

The USDA grant will provide the funds for approximately one third of the cost of the project. Other grants will be pursued to help defray the total costs. WCHFH is also seeking partnerships with community-minded organizations, corporations, businesses, and other community leaders. These partnerships could increase awareness, funding, and momentum for the new Community Center right in the center of town. If you or your group is interested in partnering with Habitat in this manner, call Ben Eskow, Executive Director, at (908) 835-7879.



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## Spotlight: Tom Massey

You can often find **Tom Massey** in the small workshop area carved out at the back of the ReStore. Tom has been a volunteer at Habitat for over four years. "After I retired from AT&T, I was looking for something to do, and I started to volunteer at the build site," Tom explained. "It was a great experience, but I was ready for something else when someone suggested the ReStore."



Tom checked it out and found an immediate match. The ReStore accepts gently used items including furniture, and then puts them up for sale. Proceeds are then used to build Habitat homes. "The furniture may come in with a broken leg or a missing hinge. Something that can be

fixed if you have the right tools and skills," Tom said. "Fortunately, I had been interested in working with wood since I was seven years old," he added. "I've always had a workshop and small projects. I started working in the workshop and at the ReStore and I've been there ever since."

As much as he enjoys working with wood and repairing broken furniture, Tom's favorite part of working at the ReStore is the relationship he has forged with his co-workers. "I'm able to work with younger people who are really interested in learning the ins and outs of woodworking and repair, and it's been a really great experience," he noted. "I'm able to be a mentor to them, and it's fun to watch their excitement as their skills grow. It's therapeutic for some of them, it builds self-esteem for others. I don't know who gets more out of it, them or me." Tom also enjoys talking to some of the regular customers who come by the ReStore, including one man in his eighties.

One of Tom's most recent projects was to support a Habitat fundraiser in Hackettstown that featured a cornhole tournament. "Cornhole" is the backyard beanbag toss game that uses boards as targets. A sponsor donated all the materials required to build eight sets of boards. Tom and his team then researched the exact specifications of the boards according to the American Cornhole Association. They incorporated the Habitat for Humanity logo into the design of the board and created and produced high-quality boards that will be used for years to come.



Tom has participated in the planning for the upcoming move of the ReStore and is excited about the new facility. "It's going to be a bigger and much better workspace that we'll have and we're all looking forward to starting there," he related. "I'm just happy to be a part of it. I have fun doing what I'm doing and I really enjoy working with the people here."

It's safe to say that the feeling is mutual.

## New Partnership

WCHFH is happy to announce a partnership with **Heartland Home Inspections**. The state certified, officially licensed business is owned and operated by Ed Novak, a long time resident of Washington Township. The company offers the full portfolio of home inspection services including standard structural and systems inspection, inspections for radon, termites, mold, and in-ground oil tank sweeps.

Ed has a history with Habitat. He has made significant donations to the WCHFH construction fund and has supported Habitat in his prior jobs. He values its contributions to the county and would like to enhance that support through his new company. “When I started my business, I wanted to ensure we gave back to the community in a meaningful way,” Ed noted. “Habitat for Humanity has been helping families and strengthening the community for almost twenty years. It’s a great fit with what we are establishing at Heartland.”



There are a number of ways that his real estate related company will help WCHFH. Ed has agreed to provide services at no cost for pre-occupancy inspections of all Habitat homes. Secondly, when properties are donated to Habitat, Heartland Home Inspections will do an underground sweep for environmental issues to ensure Habitat is aware of all conditions prior to accepting or declining the donation.

Another possible area of support for Habitat centers on the future plans for a Critical Home Repair program at Habitat. That program provides assistance to qualifying families in making necessary repairs that they would not be able to make on their own. Ed has offered to inspect, review and assess proposed projects as input to Habitat’s decision making process.

The potential role of Heartland Home Inspections in the Critical Home Repair process will be worked out with Executive Director Ben Eskow. “Ed and his team at Heartland Home Inspections have made a tremendous commitment to the Warren County community by sponsoring these much needed services for Habitat homes,” Ben observed. “His partnership in the Critical Home Repair program is a giant first step in getting that program piloted.”

You can learn more about Ed and his inspection services business at

<http://heartlandhomeinspection.net>

If you would like to know more about the Habitat Critical Home Repair program, please call the WCHFH office at (908) 835-1300.

## Comings and Goings

**Mike Post** recently joined the Board of Directors. He and his wife Ellen live in the Bronx. Mike has resided in the Washington area for twenty years, having taught in the Warren Hills School District for seven years. He was also the principal of schools in Clinton Township and Bethlehem Township.

**Mary Ostroski** is leaving the Board after having served four years as the Strategic and Long Range Planning Leader. Mary was instrumental in securing a Habitat Capacity Build grant for \$100,000, and the recent \$35,000 grant from the USDA to help build a community center.

**Kim Spangenberg** will be writing grants and assisting to secure new sources of funding for WCHFH. She has almost 25 years of experience working with nonprofits in direct services, program development, fund development, grant writing and management. She has served as an Executive Director and Development Director prior to owning her

own consulting business, Serendipity Grant Writing & Consulting LLC. She is a long-time resident of Warren County where she lives with her teen aged son.

Welcome Mike and Kim, and thank you Mary, for your amazing work and leadership!

## Thanks to our Sponsors

The partner families, staff, and volunteers at Warren County Habitat for Humanity would like to thank our major donors and sponsors for their generosity and continued support in 2017:

### Absolute Home Mortgage Corporation

Alice Bingert

Elizabethtown Gas

First Hope Bank

Heartland Home Inspections

HFI Truck Center

Home Instead

Investors Bank

Home Depot

Lowe's

Mars Wrigley Confectionery

Oakwood Lanes

OK4WD

Washington Rotary Club





## ***Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays***

The Partner Families, staff, and volunteers at Warren County Habitat for Humanity extend our wishes for a joyous, safe, and peaceful holiday season, and a happy and fulfilling new year!