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Building Homes, Building Hope for 20 Years

Join Our Mailing List!

Be part of our 20 year celebration. Register yourself for our newsletter.

We are pleased to provide you with our first newsletter of 2011! We plan to keep you informed about Habitat Hamilton, and celebrate with you our performance which is made possible through the volunteers and corporate partners who personify the Habitat concept.

In 2010 it was through the contribution of over 25,000 hours that our past year was filled with accomplishments ranging from the commencement of our four townhouse units at the Robert Land Development, operation of our regions most successful ReStore, a presence at over 10 community events and the undertaking of a rewarding Kitchen Salvage Program.

Our website serves as the most timely manner to find out progress on our builds, Family Selection presentations, special events, and opportunities for volunteering with our organization.

Volunteers are encouraged to check out the Volunteer Hub through the Volunteer tab on our website or directly at (<http://habithamilton.volunteerhub.com>). It's your first step for registering as a volunteer, and our system to keep you informed of what opportunities exist and allow you to sign up.

We welcome your comments, suggestions and involvement in our future newsletters.



Executive Director, Robert (Bob) McConkey

GREETINGS FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Welcome to 2011! Isn't it great how we start each New Year with optimism and promise of great things to come? I guess it's just our nature to look to the future and dream of how it could be. I am reminded of the famous words of Bobby Kennedy as he made his run at the Presidential nomination in the late 60's when he said, *"Some see things as they are, and ask why, while I see things as they might be, and ask, Why not?"* What a positive attitude the young Mr. Kennedy showed at a time when

the Viet Nam war was raging and segregation was common between the races and civil disobedience was everywhere.

One of the great things about living long is the wisdom we collect as we travel our journey. I am thankful to have lived long enough to have seen different times over the years when things have looked bleak and the skeptics have blown hard at how we are near the end. It is never near the end because we always find ways to resolve our challenges and survive the tests we are put to

move on in the face of what at times seems certain demise.

In my job at Habitat for Humanity, I am regularly inspired and humbled by families who have known difficulty and have continued to move forward in spite of what must seem impossible odds. They do so because they love their children and they want to create opportunities for their kids that they themselves have not had. My heart has broken as I have listened to stories of their kids witnessing the atrocities of ethnic cleansing, or a mother paying more than 50% of her meager income for rent and being at the food bank every month so she can feed her beautiful children. These and so many more, teach me every day why we need to get up every morning with purpose and enthusiasm.

The founder of Habitat for Humanity, Millard Fuller, knew instinctively that the provision of simple, decent and affordable housing was something that we can provide as a matter of conscience. That together we can help pull good families out of the scourge of poverty with a simple hand up and not a hand out. We are inspired by these simple notions that together, as a community, we can come together and help our neighbors participate in a better life.

In seeing the changes that Habitat for Humanity has made to the families we serve, I know that we are not just changing their lives for the better, but our own at the same time. There is a saying which goes like this, "When we work for a living, we put money in our pocket, but when we give freely of our times and talents and resources for the well being of others, we put meaning in our lives!" I have seen this saying in action almost every day for many years now in the lives of our volunteers, our donors, corporate sponsors, staff and Board of Directors. Each has found themselves being driven by the realization that they can individually make a difference in the lives of good people and their children. We are blessed with the opportunity to serve these folks and teach them that they are never alone. Love exists here in Hamilton and around the world. Together we are building homes and building hope.

Welcome to 2011. Let's continue our good work together.

MEET A PARTNER FAMILY

The Bah/ Diallo family arrived in the Hamilton area in 2004, the endpoint of a journey of more than 7300 kilometres not knowing what life in in Canada would bring. They did know life here would allow them to live without the fear and trepidation that existed for them in Guinea. The family not only settled into their new homeland it flourished, expanding to six children - ranging from 10 to just under 2 years. This family of now eight has more change in its near future as a Habitat for Humanity Hamilton partner family, making their dream of home ownership a reality.



Back L to R - Aleseny, Aminatou, Binta, Isatu, Rugeyata, Yusufu
Front L to R - Alassane, Aliou.

With their family secure and flourishing Yusufu Bah and Aminatou Diallo dreamed of providing their children with a healthy, decent home, this is where Habitat for Humanity Hamilton is able to help. Initially, the Bah/Diallos applied to be a partner family in 2008, without success as they were below the income guidelines. Habitat want to ensure their partner families success by not accepting a family if the repayment plan requires more than 30% of their income. For some this rejection would have been the end of their Habitat story, for Yusufu and Aminatou it only spurred them on, rather than end the process they dug in and increased their employment income.

Determined to provide a home for their children they attended the Family Selection meeting in late summer and completing the application once again. After review by the family selection committee they were approached to become one of the partner families for the current Robert Land Development (Phase One).

Their dream is becoming a reality as they will be taking possession of their own home later this year. When asked what this opportunity means to them they said, "The difference that an affordable home will make to what our family can do is a dream. The children know that this means they can become involved in activities like piano lessons, organized soccer and other community events." On an afternoon outing through their partially completed home, the children could not hold in their excitement. They are amazed that within a few months they will be living in their own house on Niagara Street.

The family credits Habitat Hamilton with changing their lives for the better, and understand it is the involvement of community volunteers, contributors of thousands of hours of volunteer time and materials, who deserve the accolades.

The Bah/Diallos know taking possession of their home is not the end of their journey. They are looking forward to continuing to work with Habitat Hamilton as volunteers in the construction of Phase Two of the Robert Land Project and being able to help change the lives of other families.

A YEAR OF CELEBRATION

1991-2011  TWENTY years in Hamilton

We look forward to some special events and opportunities as Habitat Hamilton celebrates its 20th year of Building Homes, Building Hope in Hamilton.

We will be featuring articles, seeking photographs of past events and developing unique community involvement experiences to ensure that we recognize the past, present and future contributions of our community.

We welcome your ideas on how we can celebrate this milestone. Please contact volunteers@habithamilton.ca to express your interest or share your memories of what Habitat has meant to our community