



THE HAMMER TIMES

FALL 2005

Servis family home dedicated in October

After working on seven different Habitat houses over the last few years, Connie Servis is thrilled to be moving into her own Habitat home. She became a steadfast Habitat volunteer after her sister became a Habitat homeowner four years ago. She loves learning about construction and working with the other volunteers.

"I always get so excited for the homeowners," she said. "Now it's my turn." She and her 17-year-old son, Michael, moved into their home in October.

A para-educator who works with autistic students at Midland High School, Connie especially enjoyed working with all the young people who contributed to the construction of her own home. Students from both Midland and Dow High, and even some Delta College students,



Michael and Connie Servis receive the hammer from Anne Haines, MCHFH past president, at their dedication.



Connie Servis mounts the 50th Midland County Habitat home plaque on the porch railing of her new home.

were on the site throughout the summer working with other Habitat volunteers under the direction of Jon Horton, a Habitat volunteer who also teaches Building Trades classes at Mid-

land High.

"I thought it was awesome that they would all spend their summer to help me out," she said. "I couldn't give them enough praise."

Home marks 50th build for Midland County Habitat

Volunteers and supporters came together on Sunday, October 16, to dedicate the home of Connie Servis and her family at 2600 Charles Street. The dedication also marked the 50th home built by Midland County Habitat. In its 16 year history, MCHFH has provided 74 adults and 140 children with simple, decent housing.

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Heart of Christmas program makes a difference

With the whole country focused on the devastation along the Gulf Coast, it's easy to forget that there is need right here in Midland County. You can help us provide affordable, decent homes for needy area families by sponsoring a Heart of Christmas Program at your church, in your business, or at other fall gatherings.

The idea is simple. Donors "purchase" a gift (such as a window or foundation blocks)

from a list of different items ranging in price from \$10 to \$3,000. Donors receive a small handmade ornament, which they can wrap and give to a friend, family member or coworker for Christmas. The ornament indicates that a gift was given to Midland County Habitat for Humanity in the recipient's name. It's a great gift for that person who has everything.

We'll provide everything you need to be a Heart of Christmas

sponsor: a small artificial tree to set on a counter or table, several Heart of Christmas ornaments, a list of gift items to choose from, and a written explanation of the program to post nearby or include in a bulletin or newsletter.



For more information about sponsoring a Heart of Christmas program, contact the Midland County Habitat for Humanity office at (989) 496-0900.



Linda Holder

No doubt we will all remember 2005 as a year of tragedies – especially the hurricane damage in the Gulf Coast. The devastation is heartbreaking, but the generosity we've seen offered by strangers across the country, and around the world, gives us back hope. Most of us have probably prayed more than ever before during this year, so at least one positive thing resulted from these events. We continue to offer our prayers to all those who have been affected.

This year was a memorable one for Midland County

• LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT •

Habitat for Humanity (MCHFH) as well, but those memories are all happy ones. This is the year we not only built five houses, but the year we also BLITZ built three of them at one time (a first for us). It was also the year we built our 50th house.

For those of you who didn't know, MCHFH started in Midland back in 1989. That year, one house was built for a family of five, at a cost of \$30,000. The board of directors included only ten volunteers and there was no paid staff. Our entire annual budget was only \$50,000.

We've come a long way since then. In 2005, just 16 years later, we built five houses for five families (including seven adults and 11 children). These houses cost \$80,000 each to build (with an appraised value of \$90,000). Today, our

board of directors includes 19 volunteers, plus a Director Emeritus and a Bursar (both also volunteers). We have a staff of four (all part time), which includes our Executive Director, Construction Coordinator, Office Manager, and Bookkeeper. Our annual budget is \$450,000. We currently own seven building sites, and the value of our mortgages held today is \$1,560,000. We now have more than 1,000 local financial supporters (including individuals, churches, foundations, community groups, and corporations).

We are very proud of what we have accomplished in the past 16 years. We have a lot more to do to eliminate poverty housing, but we know in our hearts we are on our way toward that effort.



Dale Vanderbush and Wendy Fisher pose with daughter Samantha at their dedication.

Vanderbush/Fisher family settles into home

This is the first house that Dale Vanderbush and Wendy Fisher ever owned, and they are excited about the new, roomy space. Their previous home, a two-bedroom rented trailer where they lived for 20 years, was just too small for their growing family, which includes 16-year-old Tiffany, 15-year-old James and 13-year-old Samantha Vanderbush.

James, who slept on a sofa in the living room in

the old home, now has his own room. All the kids helped to build their new place, as well as worked on other Habitat homes. Still settling in, the couple has already done some landscaping, including placing special rocks that they have collected over the years. Wendy looks forward to decorating for Christmas. "It will be nice to have something bigger and newer to decorate," she said.

Habitat for Humanity International names CEO

Habitat for Humanity International's new CEO began his first day on the job September 12. Jonathan T. M. Reckford arrived from Edina, Minnesota, where he previously served two years as executive pastor of Christ Presbyterian Church, a 4300-member church with missions around the world. Earlier careers included executive roles at the Marriott Corp., Walt Disney Co., Circuit City Stores Inc., and Best Buy Inc. Jonathan, and his wife, Ashley, have three children. A video message from Mr. Reckford can be viewed at <<http://www.habitat.org/newceo>>www.habitat.org/newceo.

Dow High School becomes Habitat campus chapter

After being part of Habitat for Humanity while in school overseas in Hong Kong, Dow High School senior, Gretchen Jennings, wanted to bring this back to the States. "It was an incredible experience," she said of her involvement with a build in rural China.

Jennings and senior Celia Asiala got together, attended a few Midland County Habitat board meetings, and decided they wanted to start a Habitat chapter at their school. They found adult support through

English teacher Karen Martin, who agreed to serve as the faculty advisor. Martin said she knew right from

the beginning that she wanted to be involved. "I believe in the organization and support it. I thought it was a great idea for Dow High."

Once the trio received club approval through the Dow High Student Union, and completed the Habitat application, the group

became an official campus chapter late last winter.

According to Jennings, DHS Habitat boasts about 30 or so members. So far the group's efforts have focused mostly on fundraising for Midland County Habitat, but their goals, according to Martin, also include awareness/education about Habitat and putting beliefs into action.

Last spring, for example, they held a donut sale and made a couple hundred dollars.

Some club members also helped with the Jimmy Carter Blitz Build this past June by directing cars, and

others worked on the house on Charles Street.

Plans for this fall include a school parking space raffle, a pop can drive and participating in the Midland Mall's Day of Giving. Jennings said, "We've done a lot of work; we really hope it takes off."





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Past President	Anne Haines
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	Lori Nutt
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	Greg Weckesser
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Executive Director	Gary Jones
Construct. Coord.	Bart Jones
Office Manager	Terri Ehrlich
Bookkeeper	Kapina Williamsen
Newsletter	Amy Hutchinson

MCHFH Board meets on the second Thursday of each month at 6 p.m. Meetings are open to the public and are held at the Habitat Office, 1825 Bay City Rd. 989.496.0900 (t), 989.496.1904 (f) www.midlandhabitat.org

Habitat hurricane relief efforts

Every day we receive a phone call from a concerned Midland resident asking how they can help Habitat with its hurricane relief effort. Unfortunately, our answer has been, and continues to be, wait. Wait until the people on the ground in Mississippi and Louisiana clear away debris -- there are seven million cubic yards of it in Mississippi -- and make available building lots with electricity, water, sewer, etc. At that point Habitat International tells us that we will be invited to take part in building homes on the ground. When that happens, we'll get the word out.

So please continue to send donations to reliable relief agencies already helping out, and be patient with our hurricane relief effort -- and remember, we still plan to build three homes here in Midland for 2006 and are seeking sponsors for them.

Mission Statement

MCHFH demonstrates Christian principles

by building decent, affordable housing

through a partnership of volunteers

and Midland County people in need.

Statement of Non-discrimination

MCHFH criteria for selecting families states that we will not discriminate against any applicant with regard to their selection as a partner family based on their race, color, religion, national origin, gender, familial status, handicap or age.