

# NEWSLETTER



**Habitat for Humanity**  
of Merced County, Inc.



The photos above show part of the activity from one day. Most of the rest of the building process is less spectacular and takes many hours of intensive labor to show easily recognizable progress. The nature of building is that a frame, such as the one seen being assembled above, must have a properly measured and poured foundation in order to be square, level and have rooms properly proportioned. Once the frame is completed, work must go slower to ensure the wiring and plumbing will function properly when the home is completed. The finish work is extremely time consuming as everything must join together neatly in order for the home to look professionally finished.



U C Merced Baseball team volunteering for Habitat for Humanity - our Brush with Kindness project helping Senior citizens. Here is a Senior who was amazed at the hard work and the complete trimming of her overgrown trees, bushes and vines in her yard. They were outstanding workers.

Four more helped another Senior to finish digging a trench so he can reconnect his sewer line. Hats off to the U C Merced baseball team.



Another group of ten U C Merced students working for our Habitat for Humanity Brush With Kindness project helping box up books and items for a Senior citizen in a wheelchair to move to his basement so he can have his walls painted. Great job! Wonderful young people in our community.

Another wonderful group of volunteers, our "OLD GUYS" as they call themselves, who work faithfully three mornings a week on construction of our present Habitat house building project. Thanks to the roofers who completed the roof to avoid the rain damaging the home's interior.



## **Lumber from iconic Rockefeller Center Christmas Tree to be used in building Habitat for Humanity home in Philadelphia**

Becoming a modern Christmas tradition, the Rockefeller Center™ Christmas Tree will help make many brighter holidays for years to come for low-income families when lumber milled from the tree is donated to Habitat for Humanity for the eighth consecutive year.

After the holidays, Tishman Speyer, the owner and building manager of Rockefeller Center, will mill and return lumber from the 85-foot-tall, 13-ton Norway spruce to its home state of Pennsylvania where it will be delivered to Habitat for Humanity Philadelphia.

“The annual holiday gift of the lumber from the Rockefeller Center Christmas Tree has been a blessing for both Habitat and the families who have benefited from the donation,” said Jonathan Reckford, CEO of Habitat for Humanity International. “We are grateful for Tishman Speyer’s generosity and look forward to giving this year’s tree new life as a Habitat home.”

“For more than eight decades, the Rockefeller Center Christmas Tree has been synonymous with the holiday season,” said Keith Douglas, managing director, Rockefeller Center. “We can think of no better way to cap off the holidays than letting the tree’s legacy continue as a home for a family in need of affordable housing.”

Last year’s tree was used earlier this year to build the exterior and interior walls of a Habitat home in Bridgeport, Connecticut. Lumber from previous trees has been used in the construction of homes in Pascagoula, Mississippi; Stamford, Connecticut; Newburgh, New York; Philadelphia; Morris, New Jersey; and New York City.

Inspired by Tishman Speyer’s annual tradition of donating the milled lumber of the Rockefeller Center Christmas Tree, author David Rubel collaborated with Habitat for Humanity, Random House and illustrator Jim LaMarche to create “The Carpenter’s Gift,” an uplifting holiday picture book set in Depression-era New York. Highlighting the timeless themes of charity and goodwill, “The Carpenter’s Gift” shows that the best gifts are the ones that are unexpected, and may well inspire readers to do some giving of their own.

**"With this house I feel happy, and now my life is totally different"**

**The story of Guadalupe Gutierrez**

**Woman entrepreneur from Estell, Nicaragua.**

Guadalupe Gutierrez is one of the women beneficiaries of a seed house in Estell. Since she is together with her husband they've wanted to have their own house, but their income were never enough to save and build one, they earned just the necessary to support their family with 6 kids.

After a lot of struggle she was able to buy a piece of land, but all her savings to build their house were used in basic expenses for her family whenever her husband got unemployed. Guadalupe has worked as a maid and also selling tacos and en, chiladas at a small restaurant.

Her every day working shifts were from 6 am to 12 at night, with only a small break to go to her house to feed her kids. After some time she noticed that her salary was really low and that she could start her own small business selling food. "I felt really ashamed to see the conditions my old house was in, with all those rotten pieces of wood, and I used to worry that people would feel reluctant to buy my food, but now with my new house I know that my life has changed", said Guadalupe.

The good news is that since she is living in her new house the income of her business has improved considerably. "I'm relieved and I don't have that permanent thought in my mind about not being able to build my house, or if I was going to die before I could do it", Guadalupe said.

Nowadays, in her brand new house, Guadalupe feels thankful and told us that since she has her house she's been happy because her life changed drastically and her business looks different.

## Habitat for Humanity is an Ecumenical Christian organization

Habitat for Humanity believes in putting Christ's love into action by building houses in partnership with people in need of a simple, decent place to live. Habitat builds houses using Biblical economics — no profit charged on the houses or the mortgages. At the completion of a Habitat house, there is a dedication with prayer and a ceremonial presentation of a Bible and keys to the new homeowner.

### **A thank you to those organizations who have helped with the current Habitat Build, at 927 W 8<sup>th</sup> St.**

The Mennonite men of Winton who framed the house.

Calvin Dyck and the other Mennonite men who roofed the house.

San Benito Glass, who supplied the windows and gave up a portion of their profit.

Creative Plumbing, who donated the labor to plumb the house.

Steve Macha and his ROP class, preparing the site and leveling areas after we trenched to lay in the water and waste lines.

Gateway Fire Equipment, who provided the labor for the fire prevention system.

### **Habitat for Humanity of Merced County President's Message by Jan Sorge**

What an exciting Planning day we had with our board members on Saturday, January 31, 2015. Great ideas were shared and a consensus of goals was established in priority order. This year is a year of NEW BEGINNINGS for our local Habitat for Humanity!

New board members shared their dreams and visions, other members share their wisdom and expertise and together WE WILL HAVE A GREAT TEAM!

Committees will be working recruiting volunteers from our Orientations to work with them to further the Vision of Habitat that "everyone in Merced County has decent and affordable housing."

Site Selection Committee Don Spiva, April Gill will work with Jim Tolladay and Lyle Allen to start the process for the next building site.

Family Services Committee Nell Venegas, Pete Delacruz and Ida Johnson will be visiting our Habitat families to encourage them and offer assistance if they need help with budget counseling, etc. and give them the support they need to be successful. They will also be organizing the next Orientation for accepting applications for the next Habitat home.

Michelle Paloutzian will be working with George Gallaher to update our video presentation for the next Orientation tentatively planned for early March at the Boys & Girls Club. Michelle and her committee also recruit new board members – we would like representation from all the different cultures in our community on our board. as well as a lawyer.

Brittany Oakes and Sean Arnold will continue searching for grants, marketing and looking to partner with some other groups in our community.

Donna Hall will be working with our treasurer Patti Houbein in our financial forecast, developing a budget and a system for mortgage payments to increase if taxes and insurance rates change. Fred Pillsbury will be encouraging all board members to take part in all fundraising events to show their support and develop a relationship with our donors and supporters.

I will be working with new Volunteers to place them at events such as our Applebee's' Flapjack Fundraiser. This fundraiser will help us build more homes for our community.

We're determined to print four newsletters a year – featuring a board member each time, pictures of our volunteers at work, publicizing the upcoming events, our need for a building to store donated items so we can open a ReStore, plus help on our committees. We would love to have someone concentrate on Fundraising and Grant Writing. If this is your expertise, give me a call and I'll set up a meeting with you.

Yes, 2015 is going to be a great year! Join a Committee – share the excitement!



Pictured above are longtime volunteers, Brenda Hughes and Beverly Sullivan delivering lunch to volunteer builders at our current project. Their contribution helps the builders build consistently sturdy and reliable affordable housing for those in need in Merced County.

We are considering a fundraising activity which may include dog houses, children's playhouses or doll houses. If you are builder and aren't available during construction hours, perhaps you might consider building a playhouse to be auctioned or raffled off. If this or any idea you may have for volunteering is something you want to do, please contact George Gallaher at (209) 358-3811.

## VISION STATEMENT

Our vision is that:  
everyone in Merced County  
has decent and affordable  
housing.

ADOPTED SEPTEMBER 20, 2008

## Thanks to our contributors

The following have sent contributions to our affiliate since July 11, 2014. Cut-off date for this listing is February 16, 2015. If there are any errors or omissions, please call George Gallaher at (209) 358-3811.

### Individuals

Lye Allen  
Ms. Andow  
Sean M. Arnold  
Stan & Doris Bynum  
Joann Callaway  
Bob and Peggy Faretta  
Paul & Gina Fromson  
Arlene Gach  
Maxwell E. Greene  
Ronald W. & Kathryn Hansen  
David and Jeane Hetland  
Patricia G. Houbein  
Brenda Hughes  
Jacquelyn Kivley  
Kenneth J. & Leola Leap  
Richard J. & Jane E. Loewen  
David M. & Dana Jean Moroni  
Lorraine Nelson  
Cecilia Nichols  
Brittany Oakes  
Michelle Paloutzian  
Vernon J. & Norma Jean Parlier  
Gordon & Lou Phillips  
Mary Ann Reynolds  
June Severns  
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Kathryn Stowell  
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Roderick H. Webster  
Kurt & Julie Wetzell  
Lye Allen  
Ms. Sophia Andow  
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Joann Callaway  
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Arlene Gach  
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Cecilia Nichols  
Brittany Oakes  
Michelle Paloutzian  
Vernon J. & Norma Jean Parlier  
Gordon & Lou Phillips  
Mary Ann Reynolds

June Severns  
Jan Sorge  
Kathryn Stowell  
Stephen & Sharon Wainwright  
Roderick H. Webster  
Kurt & Julie Wetzell

### In Memory of

Max Buettgenbach  
Virginia Buettgenbach  
David Cameron  
Jerry and Barbara Cameron  
Peter Fluetsch  
Dorrance W. & Olivia A. King  
CM SGT Alfred G. Mueller USAF  
Jacqueline T. Mueller  
Irene Parker  
John M. Parker  
Hazel Pillsbury  
Fred T. Pillsbury  
Kellie Marie Varela (Ramos)  
Ms. Pauline K. Ramos  
Bill Sanford  
David and Jeane Hetland  
Jeanne S. Sanford  
Chi Chi & Roger Wood  
Col. (Ret.) Albert G., Stewart  
Jane Stewart  
Col. (Ret.) Albert G., Stewart  
John Wainwright  
Barbara Wainwright  
The Wainwright brothers: Bill, Dick, John  
Barbara Wainwright  
Margaret Wilce  
Kenneth C. Wilce

### In Honor of

Lyle Allen  
Jerry & Betsy Schaffer  
Phillip Lopes  
Adrienne Lopes

### Businesses

Central California Silage Covering  
Goodshop  
Habitat for Humanity International, Inc.  
Hattie Givens Testamentary Trust  
Leap/Carpenter/Kemps Insurance Agency  
Pacific Gas & Electric Co.  
SaveMart Supermarkets

### Churches

Italian Catholic Federation Branch 39  
United Methodist Women of Merced

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(209) 723-8811 • Fax: 723-8812



## Calendar

March 16  
Board meeting

April 11  
Rummage Sale  
St. Paul Parking Lot  
8-2 pm

April 20  
Board Meeting

May 18  
Board Meeting

### Habitat for Humanity of Merced County

P.O. Box 423  
Atwater, CA 95301-0423  
Phone: (209) 726-0850  
Website: [www.hfhmerced.org](http://www.hfhmerced.org)

#### Board of Directors

##### Officers

President: Janice Sorge  
Vice President: Michelle Paloutzian  
Secretary: George Gallaher  
Treasurer: Patti Houbein

##### Committee Chairs

Administration: Janice Sorge  
Church Relations: Janice Sorge  
Construction: Lyle Allen  
Family Services: Nellie Venegas, Ida Johnson,  
Pete Delacruz  
Finance: Donna Hall  
Fund Raising:  
Public Information: George Gallaher  
(209) 358-3811  
Site Selection: Don Spiva  
Volunteers:

##### Members-at-Large

Fred Pillsbury  
Brittany Oakes  
Sean Arnold

