



# Habitat for Humanity®

of Boone and Greene Counties, Inc.

## Family selected for 2014



*Pictured above is the Josh and Elly Majors family, including 14-year old Hadlee, 11-year old Blayne, 5-year old Izzy and 2-year old Reese.*

Habitat for Humanity is pleased to introduce the Josh and Elly Majors family, including 14-year old Hadlee, 11-year old Blayne, 5-year old Izzy and 2-year old Reese. They were recently selected to partner with Habitat in building a new home at 925 College Street in Boone.

Six is a pretty big family these days, but when you consider they occupy a small two-bedroom apartment you get an idea of just how tight things can be.

Add in factors such as having only one small window, a single emergency exit, frozen pipes in winter rendering their washing machine useless and a

leaky roof filling ceiling light fixtures, and it's easy to see why they need a better home.

Being virtually debt-free, the Majors' concentrate on healthy relationships over the trappings of modern life. Shunning cable TV, smartphones and expensive, unhealthy habits allows them to enjoy each other as the true blessings in life.

With a safe, healthy and affordable new home in their future, life is certainly looking up for the Josh and Elly Majors family. Habitat for Humanity enthusiastically welcomes them and those who will help to build their new home in 2014.

## Local Habitat Program Receives National Spotlight

Inventors often joke about trying to find solutions for their own challenges, only to find in the process they have created a solution for so many others facing the same difficulty.

For Habitat in Greene County, the challenge was how to help existing low-income homeowners across smaller rural communities struggling with the burden of broken and unsafe homes. The solution was Helping Hands and after only two short seasons it has been adopted by Habitat for Humanity affiliates across the state, region and country, all looking to address their own similar owner-occupied housing challenges.

Executive director, Erich Kretzinger, has traveled to present the Helping Hands program at affiliate conferences along with conducting webinars for rural affiliates in states like Florida, Oregon, Georgia and Minnesota.

Helping Hands offers primarily external home repairs to existing homeowners willing to work alongside volunteers in doing the repairs. Homeowners pay for the building materials through a five year, interest-free loan which helps Habitat to offer additional projects in coming years. Since home repairs typically require more labor than materials, the resulting cost to homeowners is very reasonable.

With a surplus of qualified families seeking assistance across Greene County, the Habitat for Humanity board of directors has committed to doing several more projects in 2014. It will be a busy year with ambitious goals, so keep an eye out for swarms of volunteers painting, sawing, hammering and cleaning their way to another successful Helping Hands project in your neighborhood.

Better yet, join us!

## DIRECTOR'S CORNER



### Habitat is a crazy idea...

Could you imagine any commercial bank also building the house after finding a family to finance at zero-percent interest? How about a home builder becoming the banker with a thirty-year loan to a low-income family. Imagine a social service agency identifying a family in need but then having to physically build them a house and finance the purchase.

Habitat is a crazy idea. That works. At Habitat for Humanity we utilize volunteers in finding and qualifying low-income partner families. A tremendous number of volunteers then show up with widely varying skills to actually build or repair the houses. Before any of this can happen, however, many donors first invest their hard-earned dollars to permit the purchase of materials and services that are then sold to these homeowners over time and without interest.

Habitat is a crazy idea that works . . . but only through the generosity of volunteers and donors.

Why do these great people come together to support others they have never met?

Of course I can't answer for each and every person ever to volunteer or otherwise support the work of Habitat for Humanity, but I truly believe the why can only be answered as it's a God thing. Those of Christian faith study His words and actions, finding guidance and direction in how to live fulfilled lives through offering love and support to others.

Yes, Habitat is a crazy idea. That works. Because of a shared love for our living God.

I look forward to proving this crazy idea called Habitat for Humanity continues to work by joining each of you in making a difference for the new partner families we will serve in 2014 and the many years ahead.

*God's Blessings to all in 2014,  
Erich Kretzinger, Executive Director*

## Homes Repaired, Pride Restored

There are many ways to become a homeowner. You can purchase on the open market, enter a rent-to-own contract or inherit from a family member. You can even work for a home in partnership with Habitat for Humanity.

Regardless of how a person comes to own their home, the one common feeling shared among all homeowners is *pride*. In fact, a massive segment of our economy is centered on home improvement and the pride found in having an attractive and well-maintained home.

What happens, however, when the physical work becomes too much for frail bodies or the cost is beyond what a small pension can afford?

As the shingles, siding, windows and more decay, property values are most certainly destroyed for the homeowner and their neighbors, but it's the loss of pride that hurts the most.

To help restore this pride, the Helping Hands home repair program was expanded across both Boone and Greene Counties in 2013, assisting a total of nine low-income homeowners in some capacity including new roofs, new siding, new doors, accessibility improvements and even tearing down and disposing of a garage that had collapsed. Countless gallons of fresh paint



*Before & After Helping Hands*

were applied along the way.

Nine families had at least a portion of their pride and dignity returned this past year through an outpouring of selfless kindness from Habitat for Humanity volunteers and donors.

Regardless of how these nine families came to first own their homes,

today you can see their restored pride in tears of joy and hear it in their heartfelt words of appreciation. As a volunteer or supporter of Habitat for Humanity, it is undeniably *your* helping hands that has made these wonderful outcomes possible.

# Who are these people?

A few short years ago nearly every volunteer came to our Habitat worksites through affiliation with a local church congregation. As those congregations have matured, however, the physical work of building and repairing homes has become more challenging.

In response, Habitat for Humanity has been presenting the opportunity to help eliminate poverty housing to other local community groups, sports teams, engaged citizens and school groups. While all are new to the efforts of providing safe, secure and affordable low-income housing, they understand the need and have been quick to respond.

One exceptional source of new volunteers has been the athletic teams of Des Moines Area Community College through the Boone campus. Student-athletes from the volleyball (pictured), softball and baseball teams have made notable contributions over the past few building seasons.



Another group counted upon especially for highly physical work is the students from Woodward Academy in southern Boone County. These young men bring strong backs and endless enthusiasm for tackling some of the most physically challenging tasks we face. Most impressive, however, is their unending politeness and respect for others on the jobsite.

Local service clubs and employer groups have also become valued partners in the battle for improved housing. Rotary, Kiwanis and Lions Clubs are often now joined by employees from City Hall, local banks and other supportive employers. Moving forward, these non-traditional volunteer sources will continue to grow. The fall of 2013 saw the first work day completely covered by volunteers from the Iowa State University Chapter of Habitat for Humanity.

The upcoming year will see our very first visit from an RV Care-a-Van. This unique Habitat for Humanity program connects volunteers who travel the country in recreation vehicles, stopping to actively participate in local Habitat building projects for two weeks at a time.

While church-affiliated groups remain at the center of the local Habitat Christian housing ministry, new volunteer groups will continue to step forward, sharing a belief that quality housing for all is worthy of their sweat and energy. Please ask how you can help support their efforts.



## Habitat Volunteer Spotlight

**Retirement:** No more late meetings. Pressing deadlines are a thing of the past and no more tackling tough jobs others avoid. Sounds pretty nice – but Harry Ahrenholtz didn't get that memo.

After a long and successful career in Ag business, Harry quickly found he wasn't ready to sit idle in retirement. In fact, it's hard to imagine him any busier while pursuing his career.

Harry was invited to join the Habitat for Humanity board of directors in January, 2012, and is now easily one of our most valuable volunteers. Serving as board president in 2013 and accepting to serve again in 2014, his calm and steady leadership has become a beacon for others.

It's on the jobsite, however, that Harry has the greatest impact. A major supporter of the Helping Hands home repair program, he has been invaluable in estimating projects, coordinating the work and leading construction volunteers. He has spent endless hours doing all of this for the benefit of others as an outpouring of his Christian faith.

When not working with Habitat, Harry might be found helping others as Chairman of the Trustees for First United Methodist Church in Jefferson, as President of the Agriculture Clean Water Alliance or in his role as a newly-elected member of the Jefferson City Council.

Harry and his wife, Carol, have called Jefferson home since 2002 with three grown sons and their families living within relatively short distances. Two live in the Kansas City area and one lives in Slater, Iowa. As grandparents to seven grandchildren ranging from 9 to 21 years of age, holidays and shared vacations are some of the greatest joys in their lives.

Born and raised in Iowa, with his degree from the College of Agriculture at Iowa State University, Harry knows first-hand the importance of our rural communities and the need to come together to serve and protect each other.

The partner families, volunteers and supporters of Habitat for Humanity thank you, Harry, for your tireless dedication and service to others. It seems we could all learn a lesson from you on how to live a rich and fulfilling retirement.

# Someone else's new beginning starts with YOU!

**Yes!** I want to help Habitat for Humanity build and repair homes in our communities. Please accept my donation in the amount of:

\_\_\_\_\_ \$500

\_\_\_\_\_ \$250

\_\_\_\_\_ \$100

\_\_\_\_\_ \$50

\_\_\_\_\_ other

All contributions to HFH are tax deductible.  
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**Return to: Habitat for Humanity  
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