



Greater Springfield
Habitat
for Humanity®

2020 Year in Review



**Moving forward,
expanding our reach,
despite a pandemic.**

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Dear Friends of Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity:

This past year has certainly shown us all the importance of Homes, Communities and Hope. For many of us, our homes have become our schoolrooms, our workplaces, and our gyms. Maintaining a sense of community has been difficult during this year of social distancing but we have found new ways to connect such as on-line chats, birthday parades, and virtual performances. Having a safe, decent, affordable place to live has enabled us to maintain the hope that this year will bring a return to in-person activities.

In the spring, we had been working on our Orchard Street, Springfield, project in partnership with Putnam Vocational, when the school shut down and the kids were not able to finish the project. With a little thinking outside of the box, we made a decision to hire on a few of the senior class members to work with us as apprentices when their classes ended. This proved to be one of the best decisions we could have made. We completed the home, and in July, the family moved in.

We continued to work throughout the summer and fall, completed a huge home modification for a disabled veteran, and two smaller repair projects. We shared resources with our friends, sending over PPE supplies to Baystate Health. After their years of volunteer and financial support to us, it felt great to provide them with service in return. We thank you. We resourced additional PPE supplies with our MA Habitat network and other nonprofits receiving a donation of cloth face masks that we shared with our partner families, volunteers, ReStore shoppers, and other community organizations, proving that together we are so much stronger.

While we were not able to have as many volunteers onsite, we are thankful to our group of long-term, hard-to-deter volunteers who worked along with the AmeriCorps NCCC team that stayed with us for a month. With the return of Community Works students, we are happy to say we ended 2020 by completing the Bloomfield Street home.

We cannot look back on 2020 without a huge thank you to the GSHFH staff, their dedication to the mission and hard work to keep projects moving forward has been nothing short of incredible. Thanks to the ReStore staff that stepped up to help with construction during the time we had to close the store, and then made the necessary changes to the store to keep us and our shoppers safe. Thank you, Mark, Sandra, Harley, Chris, Hannah, Marcus, and Uriel. Thank you to John and Brandy, who not only had to learn their new roles but had to do it in the midst of so much change. We're not sure how many times we said, "well we used to do this but we can't any more so let's try something new" and they did. To Deb, thank you for learning how to go virtual and providing our homeowners with so much support beyond our normal efforts. And to Sheri, Mary, and Edgar, for learning to adapt to new requirements and restrictions on the construction site while still getting things done.

None of the work done this year could have been accomplished without our donors. Thank you for your sponsorships, donations, and participation in our virtual events. Thank you for continuing to support our mission to build strength, stability, and self-reliance through shelter. Please consider how you can continue to help, whether through a monetary contribution, a donation of goods to ReStore, in-kind gifts, or volunteering your time.

We hope to see you all in-person over the coming year.

Anne Eisenman
President

Aimee Giroux
Executive Director



Fiscal 2020 Stats

\$175,000
Average cost to
build a Habitat
home

\$254,685
Municipal
support

\$3,180
Cars for Homes
program income

\$100,545
Corporate
giving

15,640
Volunteer hours
(construction, office,
and ReStore)

\$61,350
Individual
giving

Natasha Emery embodies perseverance

With tremendous odds stacked against her, Natasha Emery, a 38-year-old single mother of two boys, is nothing less than a modern-day superhero. The newest member into the Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity (GSHFH) family, Natasha was determined to overcome her challenging childhood to create a better life for her children. That dream came true in October 2020.

The Springfield native grew up with parents who struggled financially, and as a result, she and her sister lived with immense instability. After her parents divorced, Natasha, her sister, and their mother moved frequently, never quite planting roots. As a determined adult, she decided her life would be different. Yet, new tragedies found her. Thirteen years ago, when pregnant and shortly after she gave birth to her first son, she was beaten by her partner. The domestic abuse led to her partner's arrest and subsequent jail sentence. When he was released and promised change, Natasha cautiously allowed her young son to build a relationship with his father. A year later, the boy's father was found murdered, creating confusion and emptiness for the boy.

In 2011, Natasha met a new man who fathered her second son. Two months after the baby's birth, he left the family. Knowing her boys deserve more, Natasha applied for GSHFH's homeownership program in May 2016. Although her application was approved, the Emery family was not selected.

In 2017, her two-bedroom

income-based Chicopee apartment building sold and the new owners failed to care for the property. As it fell into disrepair, Natasha's sister offered Natasha and her family an opportunity to rent the second and third floors of her Springfield multi-family home. Natasha agreed, dreaming of a better childhood for her boys. Sight unseen, she moved in and instantly regretted the

shooting across the street. All of this motivated Natasha to reapply for GSHFH's homeownership program in January 2020.

But, following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the application process closed early. Again, Natasha was not selected. As a human service employee in the mental health field, Natasha's job required her to be on-call in her off hours and report to work every day risking exposure to COVID-19. Even with the pandemic and Massachusetts's lockdowns, Natasha still hoped to provide a better environment for her children, one in which they have their own living room to watch movies, a kitchen to play games, and a clean, safe, and welcoming space they can call their own. She envisions the boys playing in a backyard that is free from any violence common to the city's neighborhoods. She also hopes she can one day pass the house on to one of her sons so he can share it with his future family. But without a home of their own, these are moot points.

Her children are now 13 and 9 years old and Natasha remains undeterred. In August 2020, Natasha, once again, applied for GSHFH's homeownership program. In October

2020, Natasha and her boys were selected as a new GSHFH partner family. The roots Natasha has longed for will finally be planted. GSHFH will break ground on her new house on Bay Street this spring. Natasha recently began a new job with a promising future and one that allows her to work from home, teaching her sons anything can be accomplished with action and the right attitude.



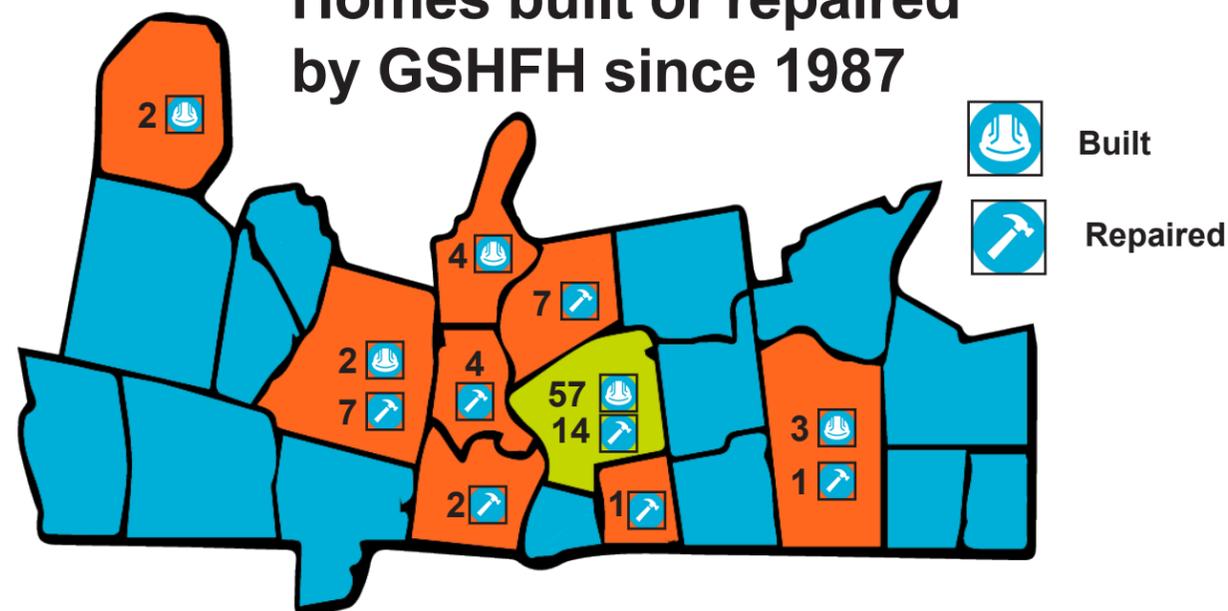
Natasha Emery (right) and her family were recently accepted into Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity's (GSHFH) homeownership program.



"I really enjoy working with Habitat for Humanity. Not only are we working with the homeowners, but we also see the framed picture of the whole family and their little bio and it motivates me to get this done so they can move in and start their new lives."

-- Baylee Bluejacket, 20, from Tulsa, Oklahoma, of the AmeriCorp National Civilian Community Corp (NCCC)'s Southern Region River 4 team member

Homes built or repaired by GSHFH since 1987



Immigrant family eager to give back, help others

When TupaTupa Toto, his wife Faida Tausi, and their children immigrated to the United States in 2015, they were eager to integrate themselves in the local community. Six years later, they have not only assimilated into the area, but will soon become permanent fixtures. The family will move into their Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity (GSHFH) home in late February. With their own “personal house,” they look forward to helping other families relocating to the United States.

TupaTupa and Faida’s transition to Springfield began with the help of Jewish Family Services (JFS) of Western Massachusetts. Upon arriving in the USA, JFS assisted TupaTupa, Faida, and their brood to settle in the Western Massachusetts city and enrolled the older children in school. TupaTupa and Faida soon found jobs, a church, and began creating a new life, which also included English lessons. They added to their family when Faida became pregnant a fourth time and they welcomed a second son to the family.

It was a far cry from where they started. TupaTupa is a native of the Democratic Republic of the Congo’s (DRC) Kivu province. When the Second Congo War erupted in 1998, TupaTupa left the DRC and headed first to the Republic of Burundi and then to a refugee camp in the Republic of Malawi. There, in 2008, he met and later married Faida. The couple welcomed three children, but found living



TupaTupa Toto (left), Faida Tausi, (far right) and their family were recently accepted into Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity’s (GSHFH) homeownership program.

conditions in the refugee camp challenging as they had no money or work. In 2015, the family was granted refugee status into the United States.

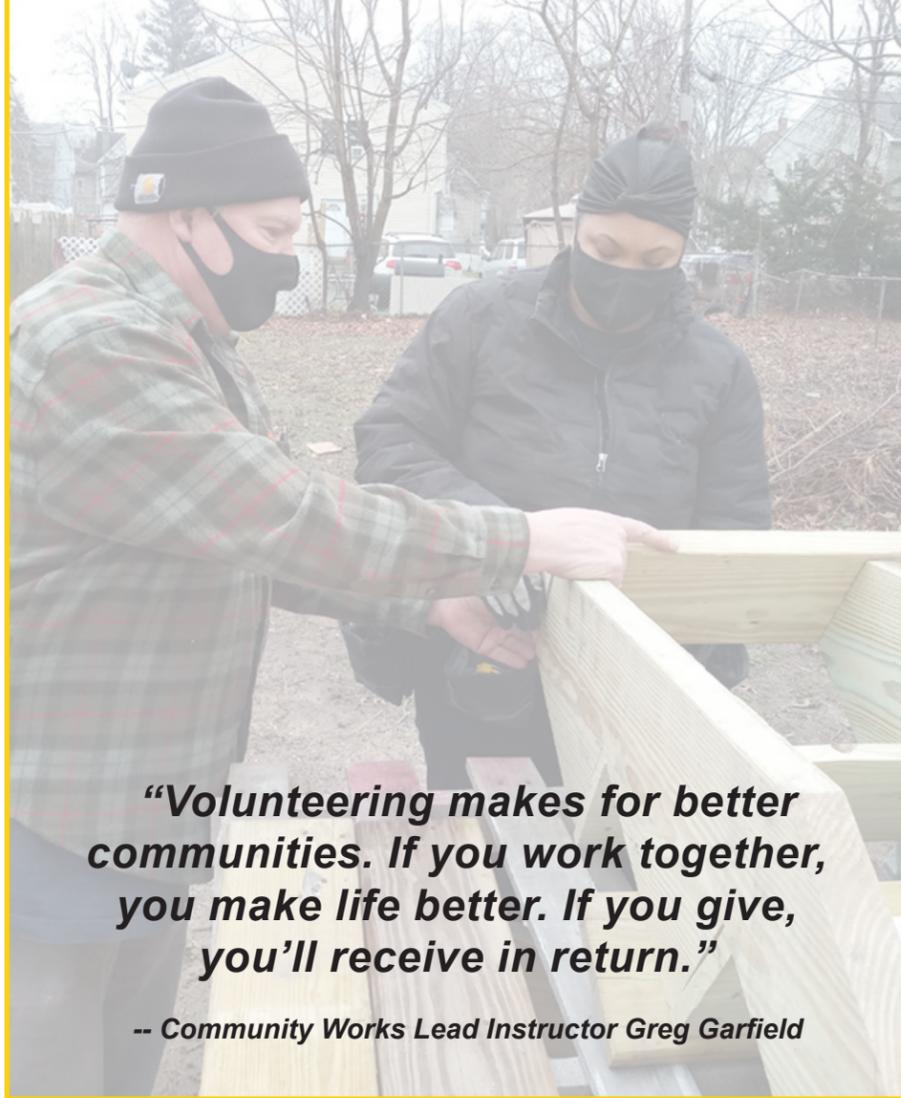
At church, in their new community, another refugee told TupaTupa and Faida about

In 2017, the family applied to the GSHFH homeownership program and although they met all the requirements, they were not selected. Undaunted, they reapplied in 2018 and again in early 2020. Following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the application process closed early. They were not selected either time. Still, they persisted and in August 2020, they applied for a fourth time. In October 2020, they were chosen for a three-bedroom house on Bloomfield Street in Springfield.

The house will be available to TupaTupa, Faida, and their children sooner than what is typically expected. Though they are excited to see their future prosper, the family is even more motivated to give back and support those who need it.

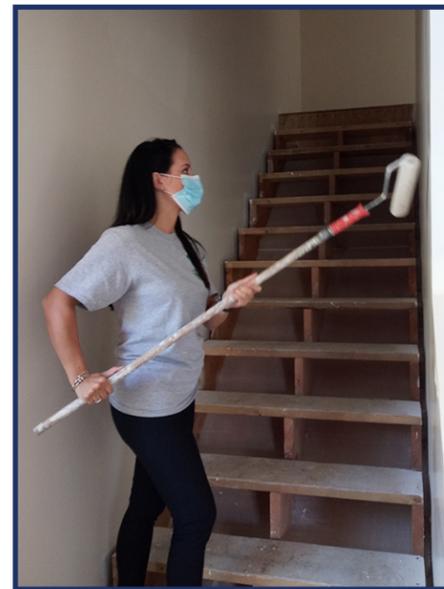
to thrive and help others. Their apartment lacks decent heat among other faults.

Though they are excited to see their future prosper, the family is even more motivated to give back and support those who need it.

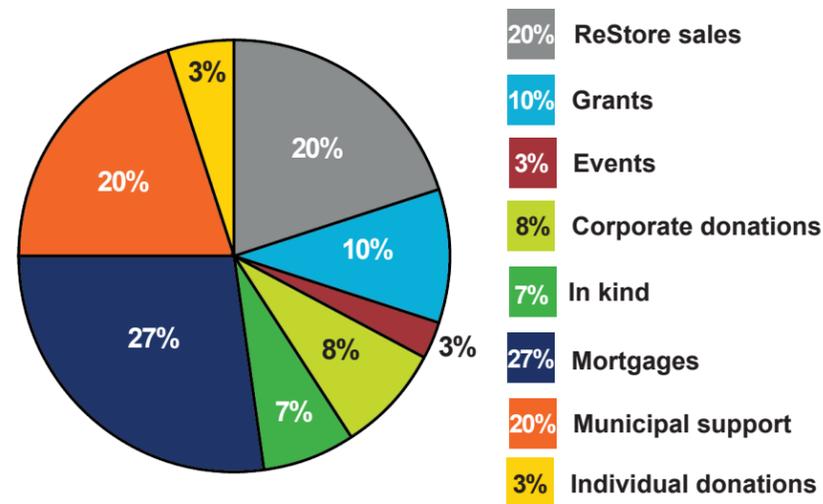


“Volunteering makes for better communities. If you work together, you make life better. If you give, you’ll receive in return.”

-- Community Works Lead Instructor Greg Garfield

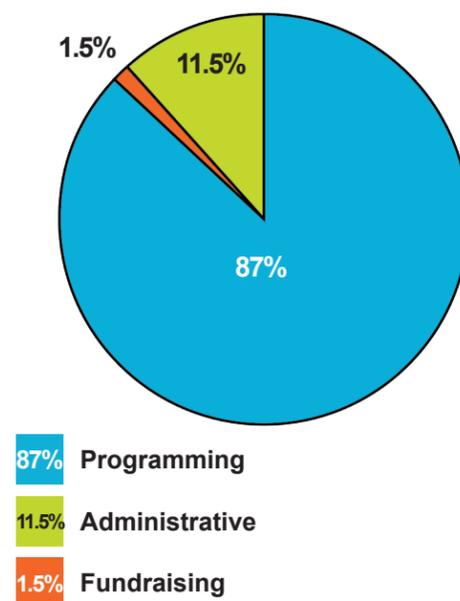


Sources of funding revenue



** Figures are based on a 2020 audit.

How gifts are used



Ana Castro makes dreams come true

When Ana Castro became a mother at 15 years old, she consciously decided to do her best by her child, ensuring both their wellbeings was her top priority. She earned her GED and sought a better job. As their family grew, Ana never lost focus of her goals. Now, a 46-year-old single mother of nine children, her last goal is to own her own home. Ana is almost there. Her Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity (GSHFH) home on James Street is expected to be finished this spring.

Before Ana applied to GSHFH, she knew the responsibility attached to homeownership was significant and not one to take lightly. To ready herself, she worked to better her credit, enrolled in several courses and programs, including Way Finders's Family Self-Sufficiency program, a financial education, and a first-time homeowners course. Upon successful completion, the medical receptionist opened her first bank account and applied to GSHFH for the first time in April 2018. She was not selected for homeownership at that time, but with continued hard work, dedication to effectively managing her finances, perseverance, and commitment to the GSHFH homeownership program requirements, Ana



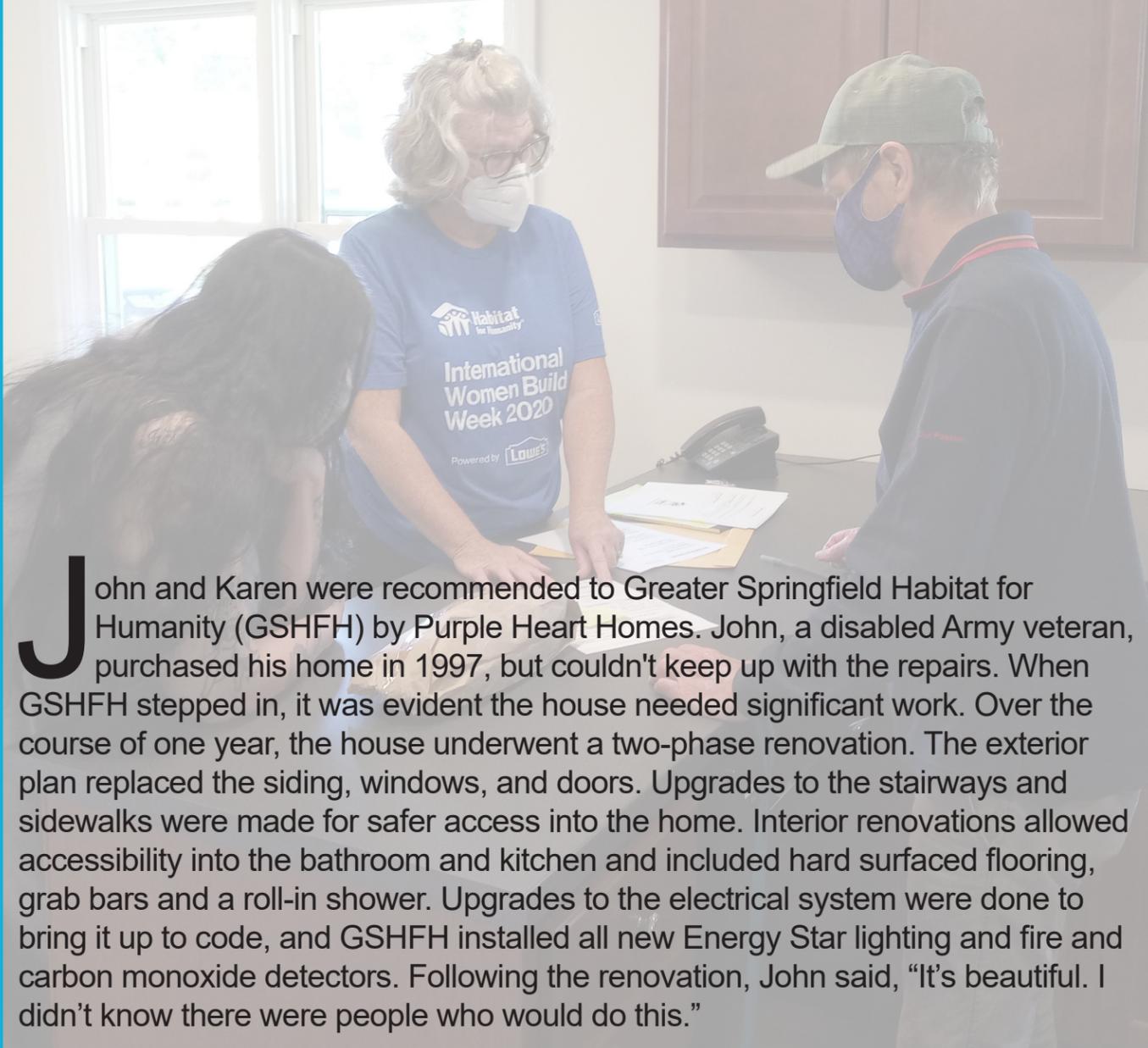
Ana Castro (back row, middle) and her family are among the new Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity's partner families.

reapplied in early 2019 and was selected to purchase a soon-to-be constructed four-bedroom home on James Street in Springfield.

Ana and her four youngest children are excited to move into their new house. Ana's middle three children live on their own, and her two oldest children have passed away.

Despite the tragedies Ana has suffered, Ana is determined

to give her children the best life she can. That includes a home with a yard; one in which the three youngest children no longer have to share a bedroom or where some children sleep in the living room just to get a slice of freedom. Ana dreams of hosting cookouts in her backyard and the young children want a pool. She knows these are just little things, but to her, they are everything.



John and Karen were recommended to Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity (GSHFH) by Purple Heart Homes. John, a disabled Army veteran, purchased his home in 1997, but couldn't keep up with the repairs. When GSHFH stepped in, it was evident the house needed significant work. Over the course of one year, the house underwent a two-phase renovation. The exterior plan replaced the siding, windows, and doors. Upgrades to the stairways and sidewalks were made for safer access into the home. Interior renovations allowed accessibility into the bathroom and kitchen and included hard surfaced flooring, grab bars and a roll-in shower. Upgrades to the electrical system were done to bring it up to code, and GSHFH installed all new Energy Star lighting and fire and carbon monoxide detectors. Following the renovation, John said, "It's beautiful. I didn't know there were people who would do this."



**Help us raise roofs.
Donate today. Your
generosity raises spirits,
hopes, and homes.
[habitatspringfield.org/
support](https://habitatspringfield.org/support)**

Focusing on the future: Our 2021 mission



James Street,
Springfield

Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity (GSHFH) will finish the four-bedroom James Street house this spring and will start building a three-bedroom house on Bay Street. GSHFH will soon start accepting applications for a future project in Holyoke. GSHFH is also accepting applications on a rolling basis for our home preservation program. For more information, go to habitatspringfield.org/programs

To our 2020 donors, thank you!

Donations received between July 1, 2019 and Dec. 31, 2020

\$40,000 and above

The Beveridge Family Foundation
Estate of Pauline Britton
Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts
Habitat for Humanity International
City of Holyoke
MassMutual Financial Group
City of Springfield

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CSX Transportation

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Anonymous Donation
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Purple Heart Homes

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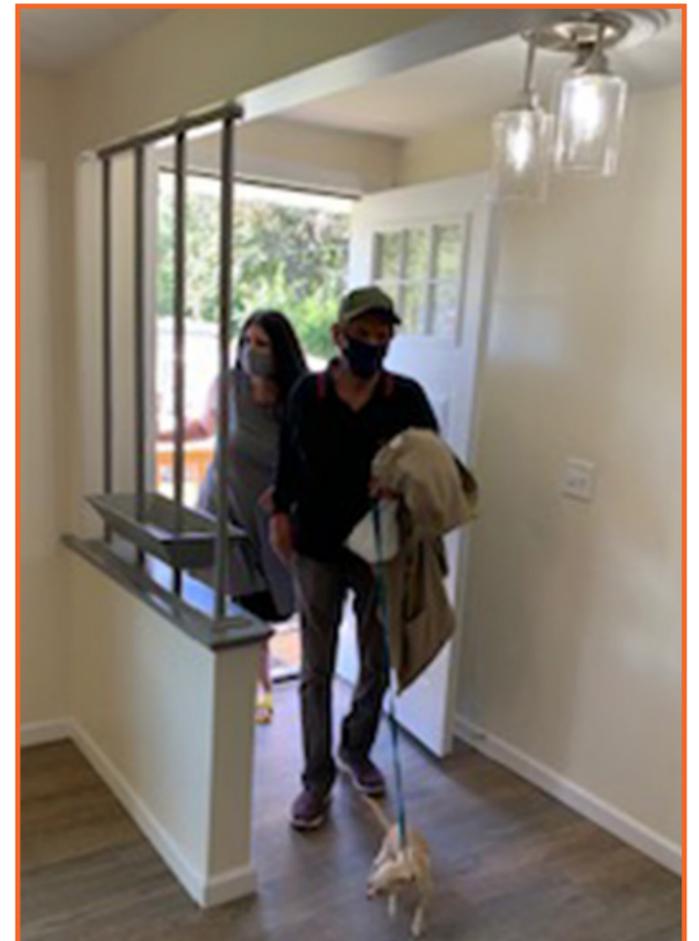
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Bay Street,
Springfield



Continued on Page 12

Thank you to our 2020 donors

Donations received between July 1, 2019 and Dec. 31, 2020

Continued from Page 11

\$1,000 - \$2,499 (continued)

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\$500 - \$999

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\$100 - \$199

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Thank you to our 2020 donors

Donations received between July 1, 2019 and Dec. 31, 2020

\$100 - \$199 (continued)

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****A big thank you to all of our community partners, volunteers, staff, auction item winners, and auction item contributors for your support of our programs. We would also like to thank the many in-kind donors that so generously support our ReStore operations and construction projects throughout Hampden County! Together with your support, we are building brighter futures and stronger communities. Thank You!**



GSHFH maintains youth workforce development initiative by hiring teens

The COVID-19 pandemic shutdown directly affected several Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity (GSHFH) programs, including Youth Workforce Development Initiative and ReStore, GSHFH's secondhand furniture retail store. The Youth Workforce Development program connects the next generation of builders with real-world experience. With schools closed, our program suffered. In the 2019-2020 school year alone, GSHFH received approximately 12,900 volunteer hours from Springfield's Roger L. Putnam Vocational High School students.

When the school's volunteers were no longer able to come out due to COVID-19 restrictions, we asked the teacher to recommend students that might want to stay on as paid construction interns throughout the summer to help us complete the home that they had been working on.

Edgar Herrera, 19, a 2020 graduate of Putnam, was hired along with two other students. In his high school construction class, Edgar worked on Orchard

Street, Springfield, project. Edgar has since stayed on part-time while he continues his education at Springfield Technical Community College (STCC).

The pandemic also forced ReStore to close for several months and GSHFH lost its daily interactions with students participating in the youth workforce development partnership with Community Action Pioneer Valley, which creates access and opportunity for the most vulnerable residents, and builds communities in which all people have the opportunity to thrive. Among its participants are Marcus Camp, 18, and Uriel "Uri" Langley, 17. Uri began working at ReStore in 2019 after school and over the summer. When ReStore reopened,

GSHFH hired him as a part-time staff member, which allowed us to stay connected to the program despite the pandemic. Marcus began working part-time at ReStore in September 2020 through Community Action. He now works full-time with ReStore and is still enrolled in Community Action.



Edgar Herrera



Uriel "Uri" Langley



Marcus Camp



ReStore is a nonprofit home improvement store that accepts donations of new and gently used furniture, appliances, lighting, building materials, and home goods, then sells them to the public at a fraction of the retail value. Proceeds benefit Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity.

Donations must be in full, working, usable condition. Items must be clean and damage free. If you have questions about acceptance of donations, call (413) 642-8990 or email ReStore@habitatspringfield.org with photos of your items.

Join us in our ongoing "Creative Transformation" initiative. For every piece of ReStore furniture you transform, send us the before and after pictures. We'll brag about it on our website, on our social media, and give you a coupon for \$5 off on your next purchase of \$25 or more.





Greater Springfield
Habitat
 for Humanity®

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 West Springfield, MA 01089

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We build strength, stability, and self-reliance through shelter.

** Due to an uptick in COVID-19 cases, we have put a hold on volunteer sign-up opportunities. **

Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity (GSHFH) is a housing ministry dedicated to strengthening communities by empowering low-income families to change their lives and the lives of future generations through homeownership and home preservation opportunities. This is accomplished by working in partnership with diverse people, from all walks of life, to build simple, decent, affordable housing.



**Check out our new website
 at habitatspringfield.org**