

Honor President Carter's Habitat legacy, donate



President James "Jimmy" Carter

Thirty-ninth US President James "Jimmy" Carter is a hero to Habitat for Humanity International and began volunteering for our philanthropic organization in 1984. It's because of his efforts to bring awareness and publicity to the mission that builds strength, stability, and self-reliance through shelter, that millions have benefitted through volunteering or homeownership. Today, we honor him, his legacy, and send prayers to his wife Rosalynn and their family. President Carter recently entered hospice care.

President Carter is often confused as being the founder of Habitat. He is not. He is a staunch and avid volunteer. Since March 1984, he and Mrs. Carter have been involved in many quick-turnaround construction projects known as "Carter Work Projects." Their first was in New York City's

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Local experts guide Habitat toward success with its first-ever ICF build



Local Integraspec distributor Steve Bogle (left) speaks with Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity Construction Manager Sheri L. Green at the Chestnut Street build site in Holyoke.

Construction for Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity's (GSHFH) first-ever insulated concrete form (ICF) home is coming together. The project, which uses foam panels and concrete as a binding agent to create the home's framing, is a significant change from the traditional wood frame. Habitat's success in assembling the frame is due, in large part, to Integraspec local distributors Steve Bogle and his wife Cheryl, who have educated the GSHFH team on the product. The team from Swansea – in Bristol County, south of Boston – have collaborated with GSHFH

Construction Manager Sheri L. Green since the early stages.

To create the home's framing, GSHFH uses 2.5-inch foam blocks manufactured by Integraspec. The pieces are separated by webbing, or plastic insert spacers, and are stacked much like children's building blocks. Once assembled, concrete is poured between the foam pieces. The 6-inch concrete core along the foam blocks creates an insulated and resilient frame. The ICF system will be used for all of the exterior walls from the foundation to the second story.

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Women Build 2023

Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity hosted a weeklong annual event that provides an opportunity for women to take a proactive step in serving their communities and volunteering at a build site. Any woman who wants to learn how to build and construct a home is invited to join us. No experience is necessary. Volunteers work under the guidance of construction professionals, and also alongside other volunteers and future Habitat homeowners. Whether you are learning new skills or simply adding a few to your tool belt, this is a rewarding experience for all involved, and improves the community that you share. This year, women joined us from Springfield's Roger L Putnam Vocational Technical Academy, Holyoke's William J Dean Vocational Technical High School, Green Thumb Industries/RISE, and Restoration City Church.

Volunteers worked on the Chestnut Street, Holyoke, build site preparing the second floor for framing. To learn more about this particular build, visit habitatspringfield.org/post/gshfh-introduces-build-with-strength-to-community



Eleventh grade students from Springfield's Roger L Putnam Vocational Technical Academy on March 8 helped build the second level's sub-floor.



Volunteers from RISE ventured to the build site March 9 to help build a staircase that connects the first floor to the second floor.



Middle and above: Holyoke's William J Dean Vocational Technical High School seniors on March 10 place rebar between foam blocks to provide additional support to the structure after concrete is poured in.

Volunteers of the Month



Restoration City Church in Springfield, MA

In March 2022, Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity (GSHFH) welcomed new volunteers onto one of its build sites. The team from Restoration Worship Center, now Restoration City Church, had such a great experience, they return monthly to volunteer.

Ron Gendron, a Western Massachusetts native from Easthampton, said he learned about GSHFH after looking online for local outreach opportunities. He and his wife, Brenda, are staples on the build sites, but are often accompanied by other church members.

"I love the people we work with – Habitat for Humanity staff and future homeowners – and learning new things," said Brenda Gendron, who calls Easthampton home, but lived in



Brenda Gendron (left) and Ron Gendron (right) of Easthampton, MA

Holyoke until she was 3. "Best of all, I love helping others to



Members of Restoration City Church hanging out in a park across from the Jackson Street, Holyoke, build site. From left: John Richards, Lynn Budd, Becky Symmons, Ron Gendron, and Brenda Gendron (front).

fulfill their dreams of becoming a homeowner."

In their own words ...

Brenda

What's the greatest lesson you've learned about yourself since you began volunteering at GSHFH? I've definitely learned that I'm stronger than I ever realized and I can be taught new things, still!

How many pillows do you sleep with? Three pillows! There is almost enough room for my husband in the bed.

Toilet paper: over or under? Why is this even a question? Everyone knows the toilet paper should **ALWAYS** be over!

Has your favorite color changed over the years? Yup, it used to be lavender. Now I love the color teal.

Ron

What's the greatest lesson you've learned about yourself since you began volunteering at GSHFH? And old dog can learn new tricks ... and remember some of them.

What's your favorite movie? "Top Gun: Maverick"

How many languages do you speak? Just one

What three things do you think about most each day? Am I making the best use of my time? What can I learn today? How can I make a difference?

What's the best color for a car? Red, black, or blue



Cheryl Bogle, Integraspec local distributor; assistant and liaison to her husband Steve, sits in the front passenger seat of their car and does work while Steve and Sheri L. Green, Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity Construction manager, talk about the project on the build site in Holyoke.

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“It’s very impressive. Sheri is a real professional,” said Steve, who is an engineer by trade. “This product is designed to be relatively easy to install, but there’s always a learning curve with a new product.”

Cheryl agreed.

“Sheri is doing such a good job that Steve is impressed and he’s not easily impressed,” she said.

Steve said he and Cheryl have been out to the build site approximately five times and think there will be two more visits before the framing is finished. When they do visit, Steve checks the bracing, ensures the joints are sealed, and offers Sheri tips for the next step of the process. He also answers any questions Sheri might have. Cheryl acts as a liaison between Sheri and Steve. She schedules meetings and trips to the build site, and supplies Sheri with whatever she may need from Integraspec to get the job done.

“I couldn’t do it without them. Their leadership is immense and they’re just phenomenal,” Sheri said, enunciating “phenomenal.” “I appreciate them and their generosity. I won’t ever do an ICF project without them.”

The husband-wife duo said they have worked with Integraspec foam panels for the past 18 years and are even using the ICF product to create an addition on their own home. ICF offers several benefits to a builder. For starters, the foam blocks are made from recycled material, are resistant to mold, moisture, and rot; and contain a flame retardant. Also, due to the rising cost of lumber, this method significantly reduces the need for wood. Furthermore, ICF doesn’t need sheathing.

ICF also offers many benefits to a homeowner. Since an ICF house has foam on both sides of the concrete, its wall temperatures won’t change throughout the day. This means

it’ll cost less to heat and cool the home, which leads to energy savings. Also, foam and concrete walls insulate sound better than wood-framed walls so an ICF home will likely be quieter than a traditional house.

“The house will be quiet, even if it’s windy and stormy outside,” Steve said, “and it’ll stay nice and toasty inside.”

The ICF project is a collaboration between the National Ready Mixed Concrete Association and Habitat for Humanity International to build 50 insulated concrete form homes across the country. To see the progress on this house, visit habitatspringfield.org/projects



Volunteer comes to GSHFH from Easterseals Mass.

Behind a closed door, he sang along to the metal band music coming from his ear pods. When the door opened, inside was a young man sitting at the conference table, dismantling a binder and sorting its papers.

If you stopped by Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity’s (GSHFH) administrative office recently, you may have noticed a new face. Twenty-year-old Chicopee native Alan Orchulek volunteered part-time from Easterseals Massachusetts. He began volunteering in January and spent a few hours three days a week in the office.

“It gets me out of the house,” said Alan, who dreams of one day working in law enforcement. “I hope, after here, I get part-time work then full-time work eventually.”

Alan said his plans for the future include moving out into his own place somewhere in Massachusetts or building one if it’s not available once he has stable income.

Alan has been associated with Easterseals Massachusetts since he was at Chicopee Comprehensive High School. The Pre-Employment Transition Services (ETS) program helped him find an internship and he worked at a local shoe store interacting with customers and organizing inventory. Now, Alan is employed through a grant Easterseals Massachusetts received from Comcast NBC Universal. The grant supports young adults – aged 18-24 – with disabilities to build digital literacy skills and gain additional employment experience.

“Alan is a bright, funny, and



Alan Orchulek disassembles a binder of white paper at the Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity administrative office in West Springfield.

engaging young man with a bright future ahead of him,” said Linda Manning, Pre-Employment Training Coordinator with Easterseals of Massachusetts for Western Massachusetts. Linda began working with Alan in January 2023 when she joined the organization. “I enjoy working with him and appreciate his hard work and enthusiasm. Our goal for Alan is for him to continue to build his work stamina, gain skills in following directions, completing projects, and improve working with others.”

As Alan’s coordinator, Linda offers counseling in job exploration, work readiness training, self-advocacy, and work-based learning experiences, which Alan gains through GSHFH.

“People think volunteering with Habitat is limited to construction, which is not the case,” said Aimee Giroux, GSHFH executive director. “There are many ways to volunteer with us. We are happy to work with programs, such as Easterseals, to help provide job



Linda Manning, Easterseals Massachusetts Pre-Employment Training coordinator, catches up with Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity volunteer Alan Orchulek while he works in the administrative office in West Springfield.

skills to the youth in our area. Alan has been a great volunteer helping with clerical tasks and to organize tools in our warehouse. We hope that he has learned skills with us that will be helpful to his future employment.

To learn more about volunteering at GSHFH, visit habitatspringfield.org/volunteer

Volunteers wanted

Be a part of this Habitat's history.
Help us build our FIRST ICF house.
No experience necessary.



habitatspringfield.org/volunteer
(413) 739-5503

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Top: President James "Jimmy" Carter
Bottom: President Carter and his wife, Rosalynn Carter.

Lower East Side to renovate an abandoned building for affordable housing. Every year until 2020, the Carters volunteered with Habitat and more than 104,000 volunteers across the country and in 14 other nations to build and repair Habitat 4,390 homes.

Because of President Carter's advocacy, our affiliate has thrived. To date, Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity has constructed 74 homes in Hampden County and repaired 49 homes. Approximately 435 volunteers engaged in more than 13,000 hours of service in fiscal 2021.

We thank President Carter for his work and contributions. Help us to continue his legacy by supporting our mission. Help us empower more low-income families reach their dream of affordable homeownership.



We support
Greater
Springfield
Habitat **and**
affordable
housing.

You can too.

