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**NEWS**



**September**  
**2022**

## Welcome, Greg

### Construction crew gains career carpenter



Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity Construction crew, including carpenter Greg Garfield (front in blue) work to build a front porch on a house in Holyoke.

**G**reater Springfield Habitat for Humanity (GSHFH) recently welcomed a familiar face to the construction team. Community Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program Lead Instructor Greg Garfield, a carpenter by trade, joined the crew part-time.

Greg comes to GSHFH with 47 years of carpentry experience – 26 years working with his own tools and 21 years as a trainer/program director for

a union or pre-apprenticeship program. As a previous Habitat volunteer, Greg said he wanted to work for GSHFH because it's a "great way to introduce people to the construction trades while working for a good cause with good people."

The feeling is mutual.

"He's a good guy and a good teacher," said Sheri L. Green, GSHFH Construction manager and longtime acquaintance of

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# Habitat volunteer likes to stay busy

Lori Taylor is the result of effort and determination meeting. She is a Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity (GSHFH) construction volunteer, who for a time, watched her young grandson before he went to school. These days, Lori balances the renovation of an 1880s farmhouse she recently bought in West Hampton, helping her daughter and son-in-law with their two children, and volunteering.

Despite her busy schedule, Lori said wouldn't have it any other way.

"I've known about Habitat for a long time. My husband and I were flipping houses in our twenties, then we owned a lawn maintenance business, and I wanted to volunteer, but we were just got too busy," Lori said. "When I moved up here, I missed doing house renovations and I like staying busy."

Lori moved to Western Massachusetts from Central Florida in September 2020. Her husband had recently passed following a battle with dementia, and Lori needed a change of scenery. She came to visit her daughter and son-in-law, who were stationed at Barnes Air Force Base, and their two young children. Lori loved the area, blueberry and apple picking, and hiking. She decided to stay.

Soon, Lori purchased a home in Westfield and frequently visited the nearby ReStore to furnish it. There, she met former store manager Mark Rivard and shared with him a desire to volunteer. Mark suggested Lori speak with John O'Farrell,



Lori Taylor, Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity volunteer, helps build the second floor at a house in Holyoke.

GSHFH Fundraising and Volunteer coordinator.

"Our volunteers play an important role in helping to move our projects forward throughout the year," John said. "We are blessed to have such a talented group of individuals come together, united in the focus of helping other people, improving our local communities, and choosing to make a positive difference by volunteering their valuable time with us."

Sometimes, Lori volunteered two to three times a month.

"It's very rewarding to meet the construction crew. You build a bond working with them and helping each other out, and you learn different skills," Lori said. "I've been a landlord a long time and I like seeing



A family picture of Lori Taylor's son-in-law Patrick (bottom in blue), daughter Whitney, and their two children.

people in a position to buy a home. So many of my tenants live paycheck to paycheck. They've given into the fact they'll be renters, but Habitat gives people an opportunity to own and there's something special about owning a home. There's an independence and something special about having to put in the time to take care of your own property."



# FALL FEASTIVAL

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## SPOTLIGHT ON

**Greg Garfield**  
GSHFH carpenter  
of Blandford, MA



**What is your most prized possession?** My eyeglasses – one to read, one to drive. I couldn't do either without my glasses.

**What would you do with \$1M?** The first thing I'd do is get a new pair of shoes. Then I'd pay off all of my bills, buy a nice RV, and do some traveling – the slow way driving and sightseeing, and visiting friends.

**What's a work lesson you had to learn the hard way?** Find out what career makes you happy and stick with it. I took a job once that I hated, for the money, and lasted three hours. I went back to what I loved to do and felt so content and blessed. No amount of money could have given me happiness if I couldn't do what I want to do.

**In your lifetime, what do you think is one of the world's greatest inventions?** The radio. It changed cultures, brought communities and the world closer together.

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Greg. "He's currently helping other staff do major framing work on the decks. He's definitely an asset, definitely."

Greg, a local to Western Massachusetts, said he grew up in Feeding Hills and knew since he was a little boy he wanted to follow his family's footsteps into carpentry.

"My dad, grandfather, and my dad's two brothers were carpenters. I think it's genetic," Greg said. "I started working for a house builder during the summer when I was 15. My last two years of high school, I was on a work/study program and worked for him every day from 11am until 5 or 6pm and on Saturdays."

Greg has been involved with Community Works for the past three years. The pre-apprenticeship program offers Springfield/Holyoke area residents the opportunity to learn and work in the building and transportation industries. The six-week program includes classroom and hands-on learning experiences. Upon completion of the schooling, students may apply for a state-registered apprenticeship program or transportation-industry employment.

In February 2020, Greg said he reached out to the Greater Springfield Habitat administrative office and asked how he could get his Community Works students on a real jobsite to do get hands-on training. Greg was referred to Sheri. Days after meeting on a Habitat build site, the relationship began.

After all these years, Greg said he still loves carpentry.

"I love the action, planning, learning, figuring things out, and then the most fun part is the



Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity Construction crew member Greg Garfield uses a circular saw to cut wood for the construction of a deck at a Holyoke build site.

physical part of executing the plan and building the structure," he said. "It's a very exciting job – mentally and physically."

And he loves working at Greater Springfield Habitat.

"What I would like to accomplish is being an example to folks considering a career in construction. Look at me, after all these years of being a carpenter, it's still fun and challenging and I was able to make a good living."

