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Greater Springfield
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NEWS

June 2021 



Helen enjoys a meal in mid-May on the new ramp at her Ludlow home.

GSHFH gives back during Military Appreciation Month

The past several weeks have been busy at Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity (GSHFH). During May's Military Appreciation Month, the Habitat began two home preservation projects for veterans. Both are expected to have a June completion date.

Helen
The most recent of the two projects supports Helen, a 100-year-old Navy veteran who

served in World War II. She later went to work in the Office of Naval Intelligence handling classified material. These days, the Ludlow native is retired and windowed, but not alone. Helen has three children, four grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren. Even though she is legally blind and hearing impaired, she has chosen to age at home and receives care on a daily basis. When GSHFH heard Helen was in need of

"Thanks to the generous efforts of everyone involved, Helen can continue to age in her home with comfort and peace of mind."

- Deborah O'Mara
GSHFH
Family Services
manager

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a new screen door and ramp, roof, and chimney repairs, the affiliate knew it was the least it could do for a woman who has given so much for the United States. Recently, GSHFH did just that and through the home preservation program replaced the trim on her doorway, removing the rotted wood. It also partnered with local contractors Owens Corning and Vista Home Improvement to replace the roof. Then, GSHFH teamed up with Roussel and Sons Masonry to repair and update the chimney.

“It has been our pleasure to work in partnership with Owens Corning, Vista Home Improvement, Roussel and Sons Masonry, and Helen’s family to repair a few problem areas in Helen’s home,” said Deborah O’Mara, GSHFH Family Services manager. “Thanks to the generous efforts of everyone involved, Helen can continue to age in her home with comfort and peace of mind.”



Continued on Page 3 Helen’s new roof on her Ludlow house.



Bob (left) and Phyllis stand by the back of their Westfield house before the renovation work began.



Phyllis dusts a new window sill on her Westfield house after siding went up.

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Bob and Phyllis

In 1989, former Marine Lance Cpl Bob and his wife Phyllis purchased a house built in 1880. Previously owned by Phyllis’ mother, the two-story house in Westfield has been filled with many sentimental memories and history. Now, the house’s exterior needs work and has been selected by GSHFH’s home preservation program to receive assistance during the 2021 Veterans Build event sponsored by The Home Depot Foundation. Associated Building Wreckers and LAKAY Building And Remodeling Inc, the companies contracted to work on this project, will remove the siding and asbestos from the exterior. The house will receive new vinyl siding plus a hand rail to the side entrance.

“We are happy to have been given the opportunity, community partnerships, and funding allowing us to make the rest of the repairs that the Bronson home was in need of that we could not do back in 2017,” said Aimee Giroux, GSHFH executive director.



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Congratulations, Ana!

Homeowner purchases new GSHFH house

Ana closed on her first house May 28. She purchased a newly constructed two-story, four-bedroom house in Springfield from Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity (GSHFH).

Having her own home has been a dream of Ana's for as long as she can remember. Now, it's an opportunity she will not waste.

"We've been blessed," said Ana in April at the house dedication ceremony, which celebrates the completion of construction. "My kids will be able to play outside, which they haven't been able to do; I'll have my grandson grow up and roam the house."

When Ana became a mother as a teenager, 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 job. As their family grew, Ana never lost focus of her goals. Now, the 46-year-old single mother of nine children, was determined to achieve her last goal: own her own home.

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 in April 2018. She was not selected for homeownership. She reapplied in early 2019 and was selected to purchase a soon-to-be built home.



Ana (left) accepts her new house keys from Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity (GSHFH) Family Services Manager Deborah O'Mara on May 28 after signing the mortgage documents at the closing.



Photo credit: Marie Ciosek

Ana (second from right) stands with her family on the front porch of their new home.

Ana and her four youngest children moved into their new house in May. Ana's middle three children live on their own, and her two oldest children have passed away.

Despite the tragedies Ana has suffered, Ana looks forward to the future. In this new home, the three youngest children no longer have to share a bedroom nor will anyone have to 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.

"My hope is that every lower-income family that wants to own their own home knows about the GSHFH homeownership program," said Deborah O'Mara, GSHFH Family Services manager.

Welcome to the team, Tiffany

Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity (GSHFH) Board of Directors recently welcomed a new member to the team.

Born and raised in Springfield, Tiffany Tranghese wanted to give back to her community in a hands-on way. She saw an opportunity through GSHFH.

"Habitat gives everyone the opportunity to have a safe place to live while bringing communities together," Tiffany said. "Knowing that you helped to make such a positive impact on someone's life is both motivating and gratifying. This organization changes the trajectory of people's lives for the better."

In October 2020, Tiffany organized and participated in a corporate build for her full-time employer, the financial services company Northwestern Mutual. After the event and meeting the family that would eventually move into the home on Bloomfield Street in Springfield, Tiffany said she knew she wanted to continue with the GSHFH mission. Tiffany joined the team in April.

As a member of the GSHFH Board of Directors, Tiffany will help assess the direction and strategy of the Greater



Tiffany Tranghese

Springfield Habitat affiliate, provide direction, and govern the organization.

In addition to her work at Habitat, Tiffany has also organized a fundraiser within Northwestern Mutual and raised \$1,000 for Baystate Children's Hospital 94.7 WMAS Radiothon in March.

GSHFH Board President Anne Eisenman said she's excited to have Tiffany join the team.

"Tiffany's passion for philanthropy, her commitment to the community, and her fundraising experience make her an excellent addition to our board of directors. I look forward to working together to further our mission."

SPOTLIGHT ON Tiffany Tranghese Board member of Enfield, CT

If your hometown was a food, what would it be? Pizza

What board game are you absolutely amazing at and why? Monopoly because I like to set a goal for myself and exercise my strategic abilities, discipline, and determination to drive the outcome of my desire.

If you had to work at an amusement park or famous landmark for the rest of your life, which would you choose? The Statue of Liberty because it serves as our country's landmark commemorating freedom and is seen as a symbol of hope for people immigrating to the US looking for a better life. As someone whose own family immigrated from Italy to the United States, I feel a deep personal connection to the symbolism of what the statue means.

What song's lyrics will you never forget? "I Want it That Way" - Backstreet Boys

Cost of Home celebrates 2nd anniversary



The Cost of Home five-year advocacy campaign is celebrating its second anniversary. The campaign empowers local Habitat organizations, partners, volunteers, and community members across the country to together so 10 million people have access to an affordable home. For more information, go to habitatspringfield.org/support

Join us for the next webinar titled "+You: Advocating for home affordability" at 4pm (EST) June 14. During the virtual event, experts will discuss the increasing momentum for housing policy solutions and recognizing the campaign's progress to date.

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