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HOMES: Townhomes will be built in ClearPine

Continued from page 3

Habitat volunteers and staff have spent hours preparing for the launch of the project.”

Weed also spoke of the history of the purchase and gave an explanation of the Land Trust model.

All the funds needed for construction of two of the four homes have already been raised. In 2019, donors James and Sharon Richards provided a \$100,000 challenge gift to Habitat. Numerous donors stepped up to the challenge.

The ClearPine subdivision was named in honor of the history of the property. It was the site of a lumber mill, last operated as the Lundgren Mill, which featured the milling of old-growth ponderosa timber to produce knot-free “clear” pine lumber, which is highly-valued in carpentry.

After the lumber industry's demise and closure of the mill in the early 1960s, ownership passed to Sisters School District. The school district realized that the parcel was not big enough to site both the high school and the middle school. So, in 2005 they sold the land to Peter Hall, who began the process of creating a housing development.

During the zone change process, the City of Sisters recognized the great need for affordable housing and negotiated a development agreement with Hall that included the commitment to provide eight designated affordable homes in the ClearPine neighborhood.

Sisters Habitat began talking with Hall about partnering to build six of them. Hall was willing to sell the lots to Habitat at



PHOTO BY JERRY BALDOCK

Heart of Oregon broke ground on new homes the YouthBuild program will be working on.

below market value, but Habitat still needed to come up with the funds.

That's where Habitat for Humanity of Oregon and Oregon Housing and Community Services assisted.

The state legislature approved LIFT funding for homeownership and charged Oregon Housing and Community Services with developing a program to get the funds out to Oregon communities. The program included a provision that the homes built with LIFT funds be perpetually affordable.

Proud Ground, a community land trust, has provided technical assistance regarding the land lease. Sisters Habitat's grant proposal was funded in 2018. Habitat closed on the property in October 2019. Jason Todd Design donated his time to create the plans for the homes.

The Executive Director of Oregon Housing and Community Services, Margaret Salazar, sent congratulations to Sisters Habitat and Heart of Oregon: “At a time when housing

instability has taken a toll on so many across our State, it's wonderful to see more families achieve homeownership. On behalf of Oregon Housing and Community Services, we wish you a heartfelt congratulations!”

Thomas Felix, a Heart of Oregon YouthBuild student, spoke to the gathering about what this project meant to him. He said he and the YouthBuild team want “to be a part of something bigger than ourselves” and they are “proud to build homes for families who are looking for one.”

Felix said, “Why am I a part of YouthBuild? To make a difference in my community and myself.”

David Vosgien, construction manager for Heart of Oregon, said it is important to him that families “will no longer have to worry about a landlord selling the homes or raising the rent — offering stability” to the families.

Mike Anglea, Sisters Habitat volunteer site supervisor, summed up the event, saying, “We are always excited to start a house, and even more excited to finish it!”

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