

Habitat for Humanity

BY DAN DAVIS

You may not be aware that Habitat for Humanity has been in the Rogue Valley for 21 years and has completed 33 houses for low-income families in need of housing. Some people have thought of this as a giveaway program; however, nothing could be further from the truth. Habitat for Humanity is a hand up—building homes and building hope for families who need it.

We qualify and approve our families at income levels between 30% and 60% of the federal median. Applicants must show a need for housing, their living conditions must be substandard and/or overcrowded, be homeless, or paying more than 50% of their income on rent. They must show ability to pay the mortgage and be willing to “partner” with Habitat, with at least 500 hours of sweat equity toward the construction of their home.

Habitat families are hard-working people who will take advantage of the hand-up opportunity. Although Habitat for Humanity was founded as a Christian-based organization, there are no religious requirements for a Habitat family and we are proud that we have provided homes for families of various faith persuasions.

The houses are built largely by volunteer individuals, companies and contractors and are sold to the family with a no-interest 30-year mortgage for the cost of construction, with a formula in place to protect Habitat in case the family decides to sell their home or refinance. The mortgage is held by Habitat with the proceeds put into a revolving fund used to build more houses. The organization exists because of the many donations from individuals, churches and businesses that generously give cash and gifts of in-kind materials and services. The national Habitat for

Humanity sets standards and policies we must use, but does not financially support us. An important point is that funds given to the national organization are not shared with us locally.

Our ReStore, a new and used building material store at 160 N. Fir Street in Medford, is constantly being improved and upgraded with new and different items each day and reduced prices. The store is now open Monday-Saturday from 10:00 am-5:00 pm.

By recycling building material, we estimate the ReStore is saving 600,000 tons of trash from the landfill each year!! In addition, we offer a valuable service to many people with low-cost home-improvement needs. Remodelers find pieces to match an older product. Crafters find items for their creations. And ReStore is a treasure trove for landlords. In these economic times you might not be able to pay the price of a new appliance, sink, furniture, door, tiles, lighting fixture or any of many other items. The Habitat for Humanity ReStore is perfect for many needs, and we hope you can find the time to visit us.

The ReStore accepts donations of new and used building materials. This includes doors, windows, appliances, tile, paint, roofing supplies, fixtures, as well as many other items that can be used for home improvement. The items are resold at a fraction of the new price. Proceeds from the ReStore essentially covers our overhead, so that donations to the local Habitat affiliate all go directly to the cause of providing homes.

Please visit us at 160 N. Fir Street in Medford in our bright aqua-colored building (across from the *Mail Tribune*),

Sanctuary One site chosen for women veterans retreat

Sanctuary One, also known as Double Oak Farm and located in the Upper Applegate area, is to be the site of a weekend retreat for a group of women veterans the weekend of April 10-12.

This gathering has been planned by Stacy Bannerman, nationally known advocate and dedicated worker for veterans and their families. Seed money for this pilot program has been received from Cow Creek Umpqua Indian Foundation. In addition, a Benefit Reception was held on February 27 at Woody's Pub and Grill in Medford to raise funds for this nonprofit veteran's organization, Sanctuary One.

Stacy Bannerman, the wife of an Iraq War combat veteran, has long recognized the unmet needs of our veterans, and has brought together a talented and concerned staff including Sara Rich, MSW, a trauma informed counselor “with a passion for creative and spiritual healing”; Amber Gray, clinician and creative arts therapist; and Susan Avila-Smith, a US Army veteran who has founded women's veteran's groups. All have deep family ties to the military service.

Goals of the retreat include opportunities for sharing experiences, help with VA claim forms, tools for dealing with service-related stress, including yoga, massage therapy, journaling and other aids. One of the important aspects of the gathering is the opportunity to have community with other women veterans in the relaxed and natural setting of the Applegate Valley, and help adjusting to the return home.

Women veterans will be lodged at the Applegate River Ranch Lodge. More information about the background of this program and Stacy's work can be read at www.stacybannerman.org. Persons interested in supporting Sanctuary One can go to their website at sanctuaryone.org.

Ruth Austin • 541- 899-7476

or call the ReStore at 541-773-9095 if you have questions regarding a donation, inventory, or if you'd like to volunteer. When needed, we can also pick up donations at your location and deliveries are available as well.

We have relocated our administrative offices to the ReStore building to save additional overhead costs and dedicate more of our scarce resources to our mission. We are very responsible stewards of our donors' money.

If you'd like more information about Habitat for Humanity, you can visit our web site at www.roguevalleyhabitat.org. Or schedule yourself to join us

on our monthly HabiTour. The first Saturday of each month we load a bus at the ReStore to show off some of the work we've accomplished, as well as our current projects. The Habitat for Humanity Rogue Valley office phone number is 541-779-1983.

The true reward for us comes as we dedicate a new home and watch a new family with children take possession of their new home, knowing that this is going to make a huge difference in their lives and have major impacts on the future success of those children. That is the reason I am there.

Dan Davis • 541-779-1983

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