

AIKEN COUNTY HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

Volunteering: A Family Affair



John and Kathy Ormerod have been faithful volunteers for Aiken Habitat For Humanity since they moved to Aiken about 10 years ago. John works with the Friday Crew building houses, and Kathy works on the Family Support Committee serving as a shepherd to prospective homeowners.

John is originally from England and worked in Nigeria and Barbados before moving to New York in 1973. Then in 1979, he met Kathy who is a "Jersey girl". They moved to the Chicago area in 1987, raised two children there, and retired in



2008. John spent his career in the corporate insurance business and Kathy worked as a freelance writer for several corporate clients and also did some work doing web sites for small businesses. As they approached retirement, they planned to visit several locations across the southeast looking for a nice warm weather location. After they visited some friends who had retired to Aiken, they didn't look any further. They were captivated by the beauty and charm of Aiken.

"I thought I would play a lot of golf when I retired," recalled John. "But things haven't turned out that way." He met Al Miskulin who was a long time Habitat volunteer with the Friday Crew. John went with Al to work on house #76 and was hooked. "I learned a lot and had a lot of fun with the endless banter and humor of the volunteers," said John.

Kathy remembers a picnic in 2009 that the Habitat Volunteer Relations Committee organized. There she met Mary Bunch who, together with her husband Jim, were on the Family Support Committee. "Mary gave me the hard sell to join the Family Support Committee," said Kathy. One of the main purposes of that committee is to "shepherd" each Habitat homeowner to guide them through all the preparations for becoming a homeowner. Kathy has just finished shepherding her sixth homeowner. "You're there alongside them from sweat equity hours to closing, and to help if they hit a bump in the road," she said.



Kathy Ormerod with homeowner Shondra Cook

John and Kathy both see the benefits of the Habitat ministry. They remember one of the Habitat homeowners calling her house her "forever" home. "Having a secure home makes a difference in a family's life," observes Kathy.

"We've been blessed with everything you could want in life," says Kathy. "And volunteering is one way we can give back." John adds, "The Lord puts you in places, and this is one of the places that we've been put. We never really think of it as service. We really enjoy it. All the volunteers are there because they want to be there."

Building Homes and Changing Lives In Christ

House #106 Dedication



On February 24th, house #106 was dedicated to Shondra Cook and her son completing her dream of homeownership. Shondra's family and friends filled the yard and driveway flowing into the home and backyard excited for their daughter, niece and friend.

Pastor William Tyler, III, father of Shondra, opened the day with prayer for his daughter and grandson. Her

mother shared some of her favorite Bible verses blessing this home with her words. Tim Hasty with Aiken First Baptist Church presented Shondra and her son with a handmade quilt by the Prayer Quilt Ministry of First Baptist and quilt rack made by First Baptist's Royal Ambassadors (made up of elementary school children).

Tears flowed as Shondra expressed her gratitude and love for those who built her home and gave of their time, talent and treasure to make her house a home.

Thanks to all the sponsors that made this home a reality: Rotary Club, First Baptist Church of Aiken, St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic Church, Bank of America Foundation, St. John's United Methodist Church, and the Habitat ReStore.

WE THINK YOU'RE KIND OF A **BIG DEAL!**
Thanks for Volunteering With Us

Volunteer Appreciation Night!

Aiken Habitat ReStore
Thursday, April 19
4:00 - 6:00 p.m.

All Habitat volunteers.... Join us to celebrate National Volunteer Week at our Habitat ReStore on Park Ave. from 4:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. A casual meal will be served. Enjoy special after-hours shopping at the newly expanded ReStore. All items will be 50% off just for our volunteers.

We hope you will join us to celebrate our shared spirit of volunteerism and to make a new memory with your Habitat Family & Friends!

The Habitat Volunteer Relations Committee

The Women Are At It Again!!

February proved to be a special month for Tiffany Daniels as she broke ground for her Habitat home. This house is #107 for Habitat and the 11th Women Build.



L-R: Susan Andrew & Donna Horvath of Women of Woodside, ReStore Manager Henry Krippner, Women Build Committee members Deb Calhoun & Holly Connelly, co-Shepherd Carol Becker, homeowner Tiffany Daniels, co-Shepherd Mary Yarbrough, and Ellen Scotten of United Way

As the mother of an 18 month-old boy named Zaiden, Tiffany rejoices in the opportunity to build her first home and create a safe, nurturing environment for her son. The Women of Woodside and the United Way Women's Leadership Council have helped to make this dream come true for Tiffany as house sponsors and Women Build supporters.

March was the first full month of construction with a wonderful turnout of new and returning, experienced women volunteers. Thanks also to the Friday Crew "super-advisors" as well as the generous lunch providers who have never failed to impress.

This Women Build kicked off with six, two-hour training clinics given by Lowe's of Aiken. Lowe's is a national partner for Habitat for Humanity's Women Build program. Forty women participated with 15 to 25 women at each clinic. Thirty of the women were first time Women Build participants.



Homeowner Tiffany Daniels (top right) with volunteers (L-R) Deb Calhoun, Carol Brockington, and Lisa Davenport

Gary Leach is a customer service associate at Lowe's who instructs the Women Build clinics. "I supervise and show them how, but it's very important that they do the work," said Gary. Gary laughed at the stories of many wives over the years who have used their new-found knowledge to show their husbands how to build and repair things around the house.

Up Next Is.....

The Home Builders Association of Aiken County will again sponsor a Blitz Build in June. This will be the 10th Blitz Build and house #108 for Habitat.



Friday, April 27, 2018
Aiken Conference Center
on The Alley
6 p.m. — 9 p.m.
\$25 per person
 Ticket sales at habitataiken.org.

blueprints, brews & bbq
 It's time to put down your hammer and pick up a brew, this night's for you!

Aiken County
Habitat for Humanity®

Sponsored by **News Channel 7** and **Woodforest National Bank**

Aiken Ophthalmology, Baker Family Dentistry, Bradley Plumbing & Heating, Johnson, Laschober & Associates, TLC Medical Center

- ◆ BBQ Sampling
- ◆ Beer Tasting
- ◆ Game of Chance
- ◆ Music: Preston & Weston

How Does That Work?

Christine Lewis has met every Habitat applicant for the last 15 years. That's when she started to work at Security Federal and became a member of the Habitat Family Selection Committee. Habitat requires that each applicant attend financial counseling. Christine provides that counseling.

Christine meets with applicants in one hour sessions, typically once per month. On average, an applicant will be in counseling about a year. About 25% of the applicants that come to financial counseling go on to be Habitat homeowners. This all adds up to hundreds of hours in free financial counseling. Security Federal also provides financial counseling to clients of North Augusta and Augusta Habitat affiliates, and to other agencies such as ACTS (Area Churches Together Serving). "This is a very fulfilling job," says Christine. "It's challenging at times, but



seeing some applicants become homeowners means a lot."

Christine first teaches the applicant about their credit report to make sure they understand it. A lot of applicants have never seen a credit report. She reviews all the details of their income and debt. Often, there are problems such as overdue loan payments that have to be resolved which takes some time. Chris-

tine helps the applicant set up a budget and focuses on the importance of a savings account for those emergency expenses that always seem to pop up. Once the applicant's credit is straightened out, the applicant will receive initial approval from Habitat to start their sweat equity hours. At this point, Christine sets up a savings/loan account which gets the applicant in the habit of making a monthly loan payment, similar to a mortgage payment. Making these loan payments also improves their credit rating.

Asked what advice she would give a prospective Habitat applicant, Christine does not hesitate. "No matter how bad you think your financial situation is, go apply. They think their credit situation is too bad and their debt is too high. With most applicants, their financial problems are not as bad as they think they are."

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Habitat ReStore News



ReStore volunteers Agnes Equilbec and Dave Slaunwhite with ReStore Assistant Manager Cindy Nichols in the expanded hardware section

The Habitat ReStore has expanded into the area formerly occupied by construction storage. Construction storage has moved to a new building. Several display areas in the ReStore have been re-arranged. The floorspace for furniture and hardware has been expanded.

Thanks to the many ReStore volunteers who have shuffled material around to fill the new space. And thanks to Brian Supan who moved several walls to utilize the new space.



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