My View FROM KIM HERMAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

A unique, “inside” perspective on housing and community development from the executive director of the Washington State Housing Finance Commission.

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Habitat for Humanity in Washington: 36 local success stories, one overarching belief in making decent, affordable housing available for all

I have wanted to feature our Washington State Habitat for Humanity affiliates in My View for some time. They work mightily to implement a highly complex but very successful homeowner-ship model that serves very low-income families. All told, they’ve helped to build more than 1,000 affordable homes. Each affiliate has their own story, and I’ll highlight four affiliates in this issue to demonstrate their innovative efforts to build affordable homes across the state. I’ve also interviewed Maureen Howard, the executive director of their statewide organization, Habitat for Humanity of Washington State (HFHWA), which provides resource development, technical assistance, training and an advocacy voice for the local affiliates. It’s a good story, I hope you enjoy it!

Last month, COMMISSION EMPLOYEES volunteered in Bremerton for a day on a Habitat for Humanity of Kitsap County home.
Habitat for Humanity in Washington

Creative approaches for a difficult-to-serve niche

There are currently 36 locally based Habitat affiliates building in Washington State. Each affiliate has a different approach to making the Habitat “sweat equity” model work to meet the needs of their community. The range of creative applications of this self-help model in our state is exciting. Some affiliates depend solely on local volunteers; some apply a “work camp” model with volunteers coming in to work from across the state, region, and world. Many are now building townhouses and multiplexes to keep costs down. Several are working in partnership with community land trusts (CLTs) or applying their own land-held-in-trust model. A few affiliates are working with their local housing authorities to access affordable land and infrastructure; other affiliates partner with other nonprofits in accessing land. Many are forging new efforts in sustainable building practices.

What they all hold in common is their dedication to the Habitat International model: Serving qualifying families who have the greatest need for decent housing—as Habitat says, not with a handout but with a hand up.

Habitat holds a special place at the affordable housing table, Maureen Howard explains: “Homeownership for households who are between 25% and 60% of the area median income (AMI) is a very special and difficult-to-serve niche. We can only do it because of the incredible support that we get from the community.”

A 0% mortgage. A 0% downpayment. And mortgage payments that are capped at 30% of a family’s income. That is setting a very high bar to achieve for very low-income families. “That’s our place,” says Maureen. “And other nonprofit housing organizations recognize that and it allows us to work together well.”
Habitat International: A successful model since 1976

I can’t think of any homeownership model that serves the working poor more effectively than Habitat for Humanity. It is highly complex in that it requires so many different contributions from so many. This includes of course the sweat equity poured in by the future homeowners themselves, but that’s just the beginning.

Labor, capital, loan instruments, donated supplies, government grants, and pro bono expertise are built into the mix by future homeowners, volunteers, paid staff, corporate and nonprofit sponsors, HUD, state and local governments, service agencies, community partners: the list is endless. And that’s the beauty of it, because despite this complexity, Habitat works.

As in any endeavor, success breeds success. Habitat is certainly helped by its international profile, and its prominent support from a former U.S. president. This has aided the organization in getting major international attention and backing from corporations like Lowe’s, Whirlpool, and Home Depot, and a raft of sponsorships for local Habitat organizations.

Even with all this support, however, it’s always a challenge. Building and financing even one home for a family earning 25% to 50% of AMI is, quite simply, daunting. The glue that holds this together is the collective desire of Habitat supporters that this family will be enabled to have a better life, thanks to their ability to secure a stable, decent home that they can afford.

Cultivator, advocate, broker

I’ve known Maureen Howard for some years now. We co-chair the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance’s (WLIHA) Homeownership Committee, and she is active on WLIHA’s state and federal legislative committees as well. Maureen began working with the statewide Habitat group in a consulting capacity from Habitat International in 2003 and was hired on as executive director in mid-2006.

Maureen’s role previous to Habitat was as a U.S. Foreign Service Officer. Public diplomacy certainly has its affinities with her current responsibilities and efforts. She’s a terrific cultivator of partnerships and collaborations, of bringing various organizations and resources together to serve the common good. She has done a wonderful job of reaching out to donors and volunteers, Habitat affiliates, and other affordable housing partners.

Affiliates work in their local community in whatever way works best. “Part of my role,” she says, “is to help them see opportunities they might not have seen before.”

There are a number of partnerships that HFHWA has helped to develop on the building supply side, for example. ProBuild is one. The Habitat affiliates have access to a special Habitat pricing level from ProBuild and other vendors for the homes they build. “We act more like a broker,” says Maureen. “We don’t guarantee to a partner that the affiliates will buy x amount. And we don’t purchase in bulk. But we say: here’s the relationship, here are our needs—what would you like to do to help and what’s the easiest way to make this work?”

HFHWA has built a similar relationship with other resource and assistance providers in our state. Maureen helps the Habitat affiliates to access the Housing Trust Fund (HTF) as well as technical assistance and resources available through statewide organizations like Common Ground, Community Frameworks, and Impact Capital. “It’s all about understanding the role of other players in our affordable housing community—because together we’ll accomplish more than any of us can individually,” she says.

It’s a great climate for encouraging fresh approaches to time-honored challenges. Here are some recent new activities that have begun under Maureen’s watch:

Construction Managers’ Network. In April 2004, two Habitat construction managers asked Maureen if she would convene other Puget Sound-area construction managers;
they wanted to bring down costs by 10%. Out of that first meeting, they’ve built the Northwest Construction Managers’ network, which convenes quarterly. It is attended by managers from Washington, Oregon, and Idaho, with interest now from Montana, California, and B.C. as well. Jerry Fugich, an HFHWA volunteer, manages the Network, the Habitat partnerships, and provides technical assistance to the affiliates.

The construction managers meet to get training and trade ideas. The meetings have been a boon for sharing information about opportunities for new partnerships. “We follow up on those,” says Maureen. “Someone may say: ‘This company’s interested in working with us. We think it would be really good for everybody.’ We’ve ended up with special pricing partnerships with Milgard Windows, North Coast Electric, Great Floors ….”

**Sustainable Building Specialist.** As part of The Home Depot Foundation and Habitat for Humanity–Partners in Sustainable Building pilot program, HFHWA now has a sustainable building specialist on staff, Ed Brown, beginning August 1.

**Mainstream Green.** “Our Construction Managers’ Network gave us a base to move forward on green building, because we had this direct relationship: We knew exactly what each affiliate was doing—who was doing radiant heat, for example,” she says. “When the state legislature adopted a green building requirement for HTF grants, we knew many affiliates were already doing green building; we also knew 11 Habitat affiliates would need to comply because they already received HTF money.”

HFHWA’s Board has adopted CTED’s Evergreen Sustainable Development Standard as state Habitat policy. “We work for the local affiliates, so we can’t say you have to do this, what we say is that we think this is good policy; we’ll help you understand it and implement it.” HFHWA will sponsor the two-day conference, Mainstream Green, on October 3 and 4 in Tacoma. Mainstream Green will help participants implement the new Evergreen Standard; CTED is using Mainstream Green to provide education on the Evergreen Standard to all interested homeownership organizations. For more information on the conference, contact HFHWA: mainstreamgreen-conference@habitatwa.org.

Maureen says she’s particularly proud of our state affiliates’ efforts to lend a hand to one other. “They work together extraordinarily well in Washington State irrespective of their size,” she says. “Whether they’re rural or urban, large or small, paid staff or all volunteer—there’s a spirit of collegiality and collaboration. Not that that doesn’t exist elsewhere in other organizations and among other Habitat affiliates across the country. But I feel really good about what’s going on here: people are truly generous—with their knowledge, experience, time, and resources.”

(left to right) Weyerhaeuser employees **SHAWNDA THARPS, MIKKI PIERUCCIONI, MARGARET LARKEY, AND CHRISTINE ANDERSON** volunteered at the Pringle family’s home in Reynolds Park for a “Women Build Friday” in July. The Women Build effort was launched by Habitat for Humanity International in 1998. Tacoma/Pierce County Habitat for Humanity has sponsored Women Build Fridays all summer.
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Habitat is life-changing. It can truly change the cycle of poverty for a family in a single generation. It’s an enormous leg up for parents and for their children.

MAUREEN FIFE CEO of Tacoma/Pierce County Habitat for Humanity

Great energy and ideas in Pierce County

Maureen Fife is the highly effective CEO of Tacoma/Pierce County Habitat for Humanity. Since she joined them in late 2005, this affiliate has spearheaded many exciting strategies in getting homes built. Just three years ago, the affiliate had built its 100th house; last spring, they tapped their 150th family. Does she see this pace continuing? “That’s our plan,” Maureen says.

Maureen had previously worked for about a decade as deputy director with Associated Ministries, a faith-based Christian nonprofit that serves low-income families in Pierce County. She says she had a firm grip on the nonprofit world in helping families with emergency needs. “But building experience I did not have,” she laughs. “It was like drinking from the fire hose. There was a lot to learn my first year.”

As Maureen points out, in applying the Habitat model, an affiliate is the land developer, the builder, the volunteer coordinator, the developer of sponsorships and other fundraising efforts—and also the bank.

For Maureen’s group, as with so many Puget Sound-area Habitat affiliates, one of the biggest hurdles faced is securing affordable land. “We’re in a unique, very small window where the housing market is down, so land prices are down. The downside is that now financing is drying up. It’s a double-edged sword. Here in Pierce County we’re fortunate, though: We have been competing for land with commercial builders, and have been able to continue to snag land for development.”

Right now, this affiliate is finishing up on a development of 16 homes in East Tacoma called Reynolds Park, which sits on a bluff just across the street from Tacoma Housing Authority’s (THA’s) HOPE VI development, New Salishan. They broke ground about 18 months ago, and when we visited last month, work had begun on the last three foundations.

As you can see from the nearby photographs, Reynolds Park, named after a long-time Habitat volunteer, represents a significant commitment of time and dedication from literally hundreds of people. On that day in July alone, there were at least 50 volunteers on the site, including groups from Weyerhaeuser and young adults from all over the U.S., there as part of Habitat International’s Youth Immersion Project. A number of the volunteers...
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are not affiliated with any group—they’re dedicated people who pitch in on a regular basis, like Alison Paradise, who’s been volunteering with Habitat since the early 1980s, and 11-year volunteer John McQuade.

Here are just a few of the activities and accomplishments of this affiliate:

Two Habitat Chapters. There are relatively few affiliates across the U.S. that run chapters—they’re difficult to implement and run effectively. Tacoma/Pierce County has two working under their organizational umbrella: in Gig Harbor-Key Peninsula and in East Pierce County. Maureen’s group provides the administrative overhead, and the chapters are completely run by volunteers. The Gig Harbor chapter is currently building three homes on the Key Peninsula. “The chapter is an amazing group of people, and it’s growing by leaps and bounds,” says Maureen.

Building at the Puyallup Fair. The great news for the East Pierce County chapter is that they’ve finally secured a lot for their first home, in Puyallup. “They’ve been struggling to buy land,” says Maureen. The home destined for this lot will be built at the Puyallup Fair next month. “The Fair came to us wanting to do a partnership. We’ll build a three-bedroom house in a modular home format, and a donor came forward to move the house to its permanent site for free.”

Tacoma/Pierce County Habitat was one of five U.S. affiliates selected to host week-long youth volunteer groups as part of Habitat International’s Youth Immersion Project this summer. Pictured here at Reynolds Park, left to right, are JULIE from Utah, RILEY from Seattle, and RYAN from Long Island.
Youth Immersion. Tacoma/Pierce County was one of five U.S. affiliates selected this summer to host weeklong youth volunteer groups organized by Habitat International. “Last week we had kids from Paris, Canada, the East Coast, Texas—our volunteer director, Cassandra, is just amazing,” says Maureen. “In the spring, she volunteered our affiliate to sponsor collegiate challenge. We ended up with seven college groups from all over the U.S. during the month of March. They spent their spring breaks with us. Their exuberance, great attitude, and energy level were such a treat for us. Our involvement in Youth Immersion came out of that connection.”

ReStore bounty. The affiliate’s ReStore, which opened at 505 Puyallup Avenue in Tacoma in April 2007, has already netted the group enough revenue to pay for three homes. “It’s a bevy of activity,” says Maureen. “We have had incredible support.”

HOPE VI partnerships. Tacoma/Pierce County has partnered with THA to build homes in New Salishan, THA’s HOPE VI development. They have built six homes in the first phase and will build 22 homes in Phase II, starting next spring.

The median price for a home in Pierce County is roughly $300,000. Generally, with their smaller square footage, a home built by this Habitat affiliate will be appraised between $210,000 and $250,000. The group is then able to get a family’s mortgage down to about $130,000, which is no mean feat. “If a family can’t afford even that, with 30% of their income as their housing allowance, we will roll what they can’t pay into a silent forgivable second mortgage,” Maureen explains.

The Habitat volunteer database for Tacoma/Pierce County numbers more than 3,000. “The list ebbs and flows, but what’s amazing for us is that we don’t advertise for volunteers,” she says. “We have a volunteer orientation twice a month that averages 75 to 100 new people. Essentially, people have to find us. We’re in a very fortunate place—I think that speaks to the fact that the mission of Habitat really resonates with people. When you volunteer it truly makes a difference. And it is tangible—after a day of labor you can see what you’ve accomplished.”

The mission of Habitat really resonates with people. When you volunteer it truly makes a difference. And it is tangible—after a day of labor you can see what you’ve accomplished.

— MAUREEN FIFE
Habitat for Humanity in Washington

My View FROM KIM HERMAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AUGUST 2008

Habitat ReStores: Donated building materials are raising funds to build more homes

Habitat ReStores are a win-win-win. They are raising significant revenues to fund new affordable homes. They’re saving great used and new building materials from ending up in landfills. And they offer a big discount on what these materials would cost at retail to consumers.

Since the first Habitat ReStore was launched in Austin, Texas in 1992, some 500 Habitat affiliates have followed suit. Currently about one-third of our Washington State affiliates operate ReStores, including all four affiliates featured in this newsletter. A walk through your local ReStore is frequently a jaw-dropping experience: brand-new or like-new appliances, plumbing and lighting fixtures, doors, windows, new paint, cabinets, and toilets, new or recyclable lumber—all priced well below retail. They are typically donated by wholesalers, retailers, or suppliers, made available by a home remodel or a building tear down, or are surplus from building projects.

Great deals abound at Yakima Valley Partners’ ReStore.
The Tri-Cities’ ReStore opened in October 2006. “We are so fortunate,” says Theresa Richardson. Her affiliate maintains good relationships with local builders and cabinet-makers; the regional building supplier Ferguson Enterprises has been a very generous donor. “If they have a box dented, they donate it to us. It’s been a huge boost to our sales: jetted tubs, beautiful sinks, and fixtures.” Donated used cabinetry left behind by remodels rarely sits in the store for more than a week.

“Some of our best purchasers are also some of our best donors,” says Mike Nixon. The Yakima Habitat affiliate’s efforts have been acknowledged by the local department of ecology. Yakima Valley Partners’ ReStore will soon be expanding in a new location; they’ve purchased property and will begin rebuilding a donated office building on the land this fall. Mike says that with the expanded space, they hope to double their ReStore revenue over the next few years—from the current net of about $200,000 annually.

[Left] JOHN FYHR started volunteering in the Tri-Cities’ ReStore in January 2007 and has since been hired on staff two days a week.

He and his wife will celebrate the dedication of their new Habitat home in Pasco on August 30th. “It’s a special one,” he says. “It’s the 50th house for Habitat Tri-Cities.” John clocked in his Habitat sweat equity some time back. “Volunteering is something I’ll be doing for the rest of my life.”
Yakima Valley Partners — still going strong

Yakima Valley Partners (YVP) is Washington State’s oldest Habitat affiliate—it was founded in 1984 and is still going strong. They’ve built more than 120 homes in 11 communities from Yakima to Prosser. In their construction efforts, this affiliate applies a “summer work camp” model, drawing on the support of a one-week commitment from volunteer groups from churches in their community, as well as from churches, and a church high school, in other parts of Washington and Oregon.

Mike Nixon, the executive director of YVP since 2003, had been involved with Habitat for many years before that as missions director of a local Presbyterian church. His dedication and personal commitment to the work come through powerfully. This affiliate is building about seven homes a year. Approximately half of those are going up in the Upper Valley, which includes Yakima, and half are in the Lower Valley south of Yakima, which includes the communities of Toppenish, Sunnyside, Granger, Grandview, and Wapato.

YVP, because it serves people who earn from 25 to 60% of Yakima County’s AMI, works with many farmworker families. “Probably a good half of our Habitat families are connected to the farm economy in one way or another, whether it’s the meat-packing plant in Toppenish, or a significant number who work in fields and orchards,” Mike says. “In the course of the year, they’ll have anywhere from one to six employers. The reality is that’s where the working poor work in the Valley—they tend to be in agriculture. For YVP, about 85 to 90% of the homeowners are Hispanic.”

As a rule, the families who build their Habitat homes continue to live there. “90% of our homeowners are still in the home they built—with some of them it’s been almost 25 years,” Mike says. “And we still carry the contract for about 80% of our homes.” Currently, thanks to relatively affordable land prices in the Valley, this affiliate is able to sell a three-bedroom home to a qualifying family for about $85,000.

Taking into account the appraisal value, YVP writes a second mortgage, forgivable over the course of the 20-year loan as long as the family stays in the home. One of the reasons for this is to protect them from predatory lending. If a predatory lender offers them
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cash at unsavory rates, Mike explains, the family will at least be required to talk through the deal with Habitat—“and we can point out what’s not in their best interests.”

Like every Habitat affiliate, YVP relies on a patchwork of supporters. Mike’s group has had tremendous support from churches in the community over the years. “Some of it is general giving, some churches will come in on a very specific build to help out.” And the Yakima ReStore continues to bring in significant revenues, netting some $200,000 for home-building efforts in the past year. Thrivent Financial, a Lutheran financial services organization that has been a major corporate sponsor for Habitat International programs in recent years, has partnered locally with YVP; the third home fully funded by Thrivent in the Yakima Valley area is just now being completed.

This past spring, a group from St. Matthew’s Lutheran in Beaverton, Oregon came to build in Yakima for their 21st consecutive year. “They come in the space of one week, and will take a house from the deck and footings—they’ll put up studded walls, side it, put up the tresses and roof, windows and doors by the week’s end.”

In mid-July, during the build featured in a few of this issue’s photos—a work group from St. Christopher’s in Olympia—the temperature in Yakima was hovering right around 95 degrees. Now that’s commitment. “We keep the water flowing,” says Mike. “On days like these, we get an early start to beat the worst of the heat.”

Seattle/South King County’s partnerships

Habitat for Humanity of Seattle/South King County is doing great work in a very challenging area. The cost of land for homes in King County continues to rise out of the reach of working families at the low end of the income spectrum. This Habitat affiliate has kept pace in a number of creative ways, establishing partnerships and continuing to secure land and build homes. Along the way, more and more homes are being built as multiplexes to make the entire equation more affordable.

They’ve also piloted a program in Federal Way called the 21st Century Challenge. Working alongside numerous partners in a challenged neighborhood called Westway, Seattle/South King County is utilizing the Habitat model to rehabilitate ailing homes so that low-income homeowners don’t lose that precious roof over their heads.

I spoke with Diane Gallegos, who has done a tremendous job in the role of interim executive director of this affiliate; she’d previously worked as associate director and has been with Habitat for about nine years. Martin Kooistra just took on the CEO role on August 4th.

First, here are just a few of the ways in which Seattle/South King County is making the Habitat model work in an area with stratospheric land costs:

Partnerships with local PHAs. Seattle/South King County is working with both King County Housing Authority (KCHA) and Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) in purchasing affordable lots and building Habitat homes in three HOPE VIs: SHA’s Rainier Vista and High Point, and KCHA’s Greenbridge.

Fort Lawton. The closure of this U.S. Army base in Seattle’s Magnolia neighborhood has opened up some developable land for affordable housing. Seattle/South King County will be building three duplexes there.
Partnerships with Homestead Community Land Trust. Working in conjunction with this Seattle-based CLT, Humanity of Seattle/South King County has recently completed its seventh home in Seattle’s Judkins Park neighborhood. The City of Seattle donated the land on which these homes sit to Homestead CLT; thanks to the land being held in trust, these homes will remain affordable for the long term.

Partnership with East King County Habitat affiliate. Land enough for 41 units in Skyway was purchased from a builder facing a slowdown. The two Habitat affiliates will join forces to keep the project’s size manageable.

A decade-old tradition of the Brown family is sponsoring a Habitat home to honor family members upon their passing. Thus far, they’ve financially supported eight homes in California, Minnesota, and Washington State. Relatives come from all over the U.S. to help build a home and participate in its dedication.

BRITISH, DEBBIE, LEISHA, AND JESSE BROWN took part in the construction—and the July 12 dedication—of the Damian home in Reynolds Park, sponsored in honor of long-time Tacoma resident Nathalie Bell Brown, who died in 2007. Nathalie was Brit and Jesse’s grandmother and Debbie’s mother-in-law. The Browns are members of the Laird Norton extended family, well known for their focus on philanthropy.
21st Century Challenge

One remarkable chapter in the Seattle/South King County Habitat’s story is their work on the 21st Century Housing Challenge pilot project in Federal Way’s Westway neighborhood. They are remedying substandard housing within that community. This was a neighborhood that, several years ago, was spiraling into troubled territory. Crime was up, neighbors were fearful, houses were falling into disrepair, and some landlords were refusing to maintain their rental homes. Community leaders, residents, and groups who came to the table included Americorps volunteers and the Federal Way school district, members of the city government, Franciscan Healthcare, the police department, the Multi-Service Center, and United Way of King County.

Everyone has pitched in based on their area of expertise. The police worked on cleaning up crime, and the City put pressure on the landlords. Funding was provided by Capital One, United Way, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, among others. Volunteer architects contributed designs for housing and landscaping. Members of the electric and plumbers unions contributed thousands of dollars of pro-bono work.

Seattle/South King County Habitat has committed itself to rehabilitate and repair some 36 privately owned Westway homes. “We’re going unit by unit with the housing,” says Diane. Westway is one of the few remaining islands of affordability in South King County, but many of the residents, Diane explains, couldn’t afford to keep up with the maintenance. As with Habitat homebuyers, those families whose homes undergo a major rehab will donate sweat equity and sign a no-interest, no-profit note that won’t be acted on unless they sell or refinance.

Quarterly “community days of action” hosted by the coalition involve painting and landscaping. During the last community day over 250 volunteers showed up. The second major home rehab dedication will take place on Sept. 13th. “It’s been exciting, to see the community building in this neighborhood,” Diane says. “Neighbors wanting their neighborhood to be better and willing to do the work.”
The Tri-Cities: Sustaining one housing start per month

The Tri-Cities area of Southeastern Washington embraces the cities of Kennewick, Pasco, and Richland. Like Yakima, agriculture plays a huge role in the local economy. Land is more affordable on the east side of the Cascades, but the capital required for infrastructure in developing land for low-income housing can be an enormous hurdle for nonprofits. Habitat for Humanity, Tri-Cities is doing a masterful job of finding ways to finance homes, secure developed land—and develop land on their own.

When Theresa Richardson joined Habitat for Humanity, Tri-Cities as executive director in 2004, the organization was building one home at a time and struggling to keep their momentum. Theresa, who had been working as a development consultant in fundraising and capital campaigns, stepped in—and has truly turned things around. She'll be the first to say that it's always a challenge to keep funding flowing and keep moving forward, but she and this affiliate continue to find a way.

“We’re just at that cusp of being able to build one home a month,” says Theresa. “The effort will be to sustain that. We’ve been very fortunate with our community support. Corporations are supporting and sponsoring houses, as are churches. It takes so much to build a house, and sustaining this pace will be a challenge.”

As with virtually all Habitat homes, a significant financial sponsorship is needed to make up the difference between the actual cost and what a homeowner can afford. In the Tri-Cities, this sponsorship is pegged at $50,000 (that number is frequently higher west of the Cascades, where costs are also higher). “Even with that $50,000, we need to raise additional dollars, because our costs are going up, land costs are going up—but $50,000 seems to be a threshold that corporate and church involvement can wrap their arms around,” Theresa says.

Theresa is a dynamic fundraiser, and has brought great ideas for raising capital and enlisting volunteer support. The Tri-Cities Habitat has sponsored Women Build efforts, a “Walk Home” to a Habitat home, and other benefit events. Their ReStore, which opened in 2006, is providing a steady flow of revenue.

Currently two significant neighborhoods figure largely for this affiliate. The first is in East Pasco. Ralph Broetje, owner of one of the largest private orchards in the world, wanted to provide his workers with a place to live closer to town. He bought 50 acres in East Pasco to develop for 250 homes. “He developed all the infrastructure,” says Theresa, “with the goal of creating a mixed-income neighborhood. He has made all this available for families in the orchard in terms of funding and support.” Habitat has purchased 21 lots, and has completed 11 homes and has four more under construction there. “It has helped us increase our capacity because we have a steady stream of lots at a great location.”

The second project is proving to be a much tougher task, as Tri-Cities Habitat is taking on the role of developer as well. Their vision is for an affordably green community in Kennewick. “We’re putting the pieces of the puzzle together for lots, where we’re potentially developing a neighborhood of 30 homes,” Theresa says. “We want to showcase affordably green techniques. The homes are cottage-style, with front porches, parking around the back, and a beautiful green common area in the middle. And that’s our challenge. We can build homes, identify wonderful families to partner with and
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engage the community with volunteers and sponsorships. But our biggest hurdle is developing the infrastructure we need.”

Right now, this affiliate owns half the land. The other half is surplus City of Kennewick property, and negotiations are continuing. “The support from the HTF has been fabulous,” she says. “It’s been great to work with Jan Navarre of CTED and her staff. With the Kennewick project, we almost meet the minimum green criteria on location alone. We are close to schools, hospitals, buses, and shopping, and the development includes great walking paths and bicycle trails.”

From assisting families, to raising capital, to developing land, to providing a meaningful experience for volunteers, running a Habitat “is like walking on a waterbed,” Theresa concludes. “Something always pops up. So you really have to enjoy this kind of work. Every day presents a different challenge, and you’re always adjusting.”

Broadening the base of believers in decent, affordable housing

Printed on the following page is a listing of all 36 Habitat for Humanity affiliates that are building in Washington State. I wish we had the space to feature the accomplishments of all of them. The Spokane affiliate, for example, is building homes at a tremendous pace. East King County has innovated a unique land trust program for the 50 homes they’re building in the 4,000+ home Snoqualmie Ridge subdivision, to keep these homes affordable in the future. Each affiliate has taken a different path to success.

I’m going to have Maureen Fife and Maureen Howard conclude this issue. Maureen Fife makes the very critical point that what Habitat succeeds in doing in the act of building these homes is to transform lives. Maureen Howard touches on the Christian character of Habitat’s mission. As we all know, the essence of Habitat is its notably Christian act of lending a hand to others in need. But this organization’s doors are open to people of all faiths and creeds. And their motives are to make believers out of all of us on the issue of affordable housing for all.

Maureen Fife: “Habitat is life-changing. It can truly change the cycle of poverty for a family in a single generation. It’s an enormous leg up for parents and for their children. I don’t know of another program that does that: raising children out of poverty and bringing stability, education, security—an opportunity to grow up with the same neighbors for your whole life. All of those things that can enable a child to feel safe and loved and see a future for themselves.”

Maureen Howard: “One of the things that’s really important about Habitat is that we’re very clear about our Christian identity. We’re equally clear that our goal is to engage people from the entire spectrum of the community. There’s no expectation about religious beliefs. The commitment is that people need a safe and decent affordable place to live. And we’ll make that happen by actually building homes, educating the community about the need, and doing advocacy that creates resources and creates policies.

“We provide people with an opportunity to directly engage with families who need the housing. They build that housing together. My hope is that the experiences broaden the base of people who believe that we could house everyone.”

Volunteer Mark MacLeod, crew chief, assists Jennifer Cooke with the finer points of measure twice, cut once. Jennifer volunteered for a day at Reynolds Park along with other members of Zombie Club, a horror flick fan group.
Habitat for Humanity Affiliates Building in Washington State

Aberdeen
Habitat for Humanity of Grays Harbor

Bellingham
Habitat for Humanity in Whatcom County

Bremerton
Habitat for Humanity of Kitsap County

Centralia
Greater Lewis County Habitat for Humanity

Clarkston
Lewiston-Clarkston Partners Habitat for Humanity

Colville
Habitat for Humanity - Colville Valley Partners

Davenport
Habitat for Humanity Lincoln County

Ellensburg
Ellensburg Area Habitat for Humanity

Everett
Habitat for Humanity of Snohomish County

Leavenworth
Upper Wenatchee Valley Habitat for Humanity

Longview
Cowlitz County Habitat for Humanity

Manson
Lake Chelan Valley Habitat for Humanity

Moses Lake
Habitat for Humanity of Greater Moses Lake

Mount Vernon
Skagit Habitat for Humanity

Newport
Pend Oreille Valley Habitat for Humanity

Oak Harbor
Habitat for Humanity of Island County

Olympia
South Puget Sound Habitat for Humanity

Othello
Habitat for Humanity Heart of the Basin

Port Angeles
Clallam County Habitat for Humanity

Port Townsend
Habitat for Humanity of East Jefferson County

Quincy
Upper Columbia Basin Habitat for Humanity

Raymond
Habitat for Humanity of Willapa Harbor

Redmond
Habitat for Humanity of East King County

Richland
Tri-County Partners Habitat for Humanity

Shelton
Habitat for Humanity of Mason County

Spokane
Habitat for Humanity - Spokane

Tacoma
Tacoma/Pierce County Habitat for Humanity

Tonasket
North Okanogan HFH

Tukwila
Seattle/South King Co Habitat for Humanity

Vancouver
Evergreen Habitat for Humanity

Walla Walla
Blue Mountain Partners Habitat for Humanity

Wenatchee
Habitat for Humanity of the Greater Wenatchee Area

Yakima
Yakima Valley Partners Habitat for Humanity

Moscow, Idaho
Palouse Habitat for Humanity

Hood River, Oregon
Mid-Columbia Habitat for Humanity

The Dalles, Oregon
The Dalles Area Habitat for Humanity

Habitat State Support Organization
Habitat for Humanity of Washington State