



January-February 2011 | Office: 641.424.8978 | ReStore: 641.423.1688 | [www.habitatnci.org](http://www.habitatnci.org)

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# Habitat Happenings

## Thrivent Continues Sponsorship, Principal Joins Habitat "Family"

Two companies - one a long-time sponsor, the other a new sponsor - will provide funding for two Habitat for Humanity homes in Mason City in 2011.

Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, through its Thrivent Builds with Habitat for Humanity initiative, will sponsor its sixth home in the area in the past several years. The Thrivent Builds Foundation will provide \$54,698 towards the construction of a home in Mason City this spring, and the local Thrivent Chapter will assist with additional fundraising efforts.

Principal Financial Group, a global financial company with offices in Mason City, is partnering with Habitat North Central Iowa in 2011 for the first time. The firm will be contributing \$40,000 for a home build in Mason City. Principal has sponsored homes in Des Moines several times as well as in Grand Island, Nebraska. This will be the first Principal house sponsorship in Mason City.

"It's something we've been pushing for for a couple of years," said Gary Pyle, Director of Retirement Services at the local Principal office. "We proposed it from a local perspective and started discussions about a year and a half ago. The corporate office in Des Moines makes the decision, and we were excited when they said 'Yep, we can do it!'"

Groundbreakings for the Thrivent and the Principal houses are



our organization!

## Help Change a Life!

[DONATE NOW!](#)

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### Your investment in Habitat can help buy:

- \$10 = Box of nails
- \$35 = Roof shingles
- \$75 = Window
- \$100 = Kitchen sink
- \$150 = Front door
- \$300 = Lighting
- \$500 = Bathtub
- \$1,000 = Siding
- \$2,000 = Flooring

If everyone pitched in to support the purchase of one item, a new family could experience the joy of a safe and secure Habitat Home!

### Put Your Faith Into Action - Volunteer Now!

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Volunteers are needed to  
work on the three Habitat

planned in the spring, and the houses will be built right next to each other on donated lots on 17th Street NE near the Highland Golf Course. Both Gary Pyle and Steve Meyer, Thrivent Chapter Specialist, say the goal is to complete the homes before next winter.

"Volunteers from the area will be working with the goal that construction will be complete in time for the family to enjoy Christmas in their new home," Meyer says.

Pyle says that in addition to funding, Principal - with 465 local employees - will also provide labor for their build. "Our employees get eight hours a year of VTO - "Volunteer Time Off" - to do volunteer activities throughout the community. This year, we expect a lot of that to be at Habitat and we think that many employees will also donate their own time in addition."

Pyle says team-building is an important focus at Principal, and the actual physical labor of employees working on a house together reinforces that concept - in an environment different from the office. "There are tremendous benefits", he says. "From a very personal perspective, it raises your awareness of needs in the community."

Community need is part of what prompted Principal to partner with Habitat. "We just thought it was the right thing to do. It's a very visible part of the community. After the floods of 2008 and seeing the problems with availability of housing, it just seemed like an important focus."

Thrivent's sponsorship with Habitat has included four homes in Mason City and one home in Belmond over the past several years. The award this year is one of seven houses sponsored by Thrivent throughout Iowa.

Thrivent also provides labor for their builds, and some of that labor comes from their clients. Meyer says their continued commitment with Habitat offers their members the opportunity to get involved in a community project in a hands-on way, and they've seen how Habitat benefits the community.

Families interested in applying for these home opportunities, or anyone who would like to volunteer, donate, or become involved with these or other Habitat projects, should call the office at **641-424-8978** or visit the Habitat website at [www.habitatnci.org](http://www.habitatnci.org).

## Habitat Makes Home Ownership Dream Come True for Mother of 4

Owning a home has been a dream for Suzanne Ford, and that dream will come true this spring, thanks to Habitat for Humanity and the NIACC Building Trades Department.

"Obtaining housing has been on my mind for a long time," Suzi says. "We had always rented in the past and I have been determined to get that squared away. I just know the benefits of owning a home compared with renting."

Currently, Suzi and her children, Collin, 7, Tyler, 6, Evan, 5, and

homes now in progress in  
Mason City:

- 204 7th St. SE
- 527 S. Tyler
- 836 6th St. SW

Build hours during the winter are irregular, and hours and location may change due to the weather.

Volunteers should call the office at 641-424-8978 to confirm build hours, location and project for a particular day.

Volunteers of all skill levels are welcome and training will be provided if necessary!

## Mark Your Calendars

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*Come and visit our  
booths at the following  
events:*

March 4th - 6th:  
North Iowa Home  
Improvement &  
Landscape Show  
Cerro Gordo County  
Fairgrounds, Mason City

March 12th  
Family Fair,  
10 a.m. - 3 p.m.  
Southbridge Mall

Madeline, 4, rent a three-bedroom apartment in Clear Lake. Late this spring, they will move into a four-bedroom home at 204 Seventh St. S.E. in Mason City.

Suzi works at Willow Pointe Senior Living Center and is a full-time student in the nursing program at NIACC. Her new home will be built by fellow students - those in the Building Trades class.

Building Trades students have helped on several Habitat homes in the past, but this is the first time they have been the primary builders and built a Habitat home from start to finish.



The Groundbreaking for the home was held in September, and construction is expected to be finished by early summer. Between now and then, Suzi will juggle her school schedule, her "mom duties," her job at Willow Pointe, and logging "sweat equity" hours for Habitat. To fulfill the Habitat hours obligation, Suzi says she has been working at the office and in the ReStore, and she's been recruiting family, friends and church members at Clear Lake Evangelical Free church to help out.

While the children are too young to log any hours, Suzi says they are already thinking about colors for their bedrooms. "They're definitely excited," she says. "At the groundbreaking, they just couldn't stop digging!" She says she's paired each child with a relative and a room so they can plan how they want their room to look.

Having their own bedroom is just one benefit to owning a home. Suzi said it had been difficult to find suitable housing for her family with her financial situation, so when she heard an ad about Habitat's homeownership opportunities on KJCY, the local Christian radio station, she didn't waste time and applied right away.

"I thought it would be a good chance for us to own a home," Suzi says. "It's a great opportunity all around. It's been an answer to prayer."

## Interested Families Need to Apply Now for Thrivent and Principal Home Opportunities

With funding in place from both Thrivent Financial and Principal Financial, Habitat will now select two Partner Families before construction begins.

Interested families must complete an application form, which is reviewed by a volunteer Family Selection Committee. Families who

Mason City



## ReStore Info:

### ReStore location:

1411 S. Taft Ave.

*(at the end of Commercial  
Park Rd. off of S. Taft Ave.)*

### Store Hours:

Mon. - Fri.:

**8:30am - 5:30pm**

**Sat.: 9am - 4 pm**

### Additional Drop-Off

Location

in Clear Lake:

**Woodford Lumber and  
Home Co.**

**210 N 4th St  
Clear Lake, IA 50428  
(641) 357-2134**

**Please call for an  
appointment.**

*For more information  
about the ReStore, call*

**641-423-1688.**

qualify have an opportunity to purchase their home with a 1% down payment and a 0% interest loan - saving them thousands of dollars throughout the life of the loan.

Applicants must have a need for affordable housing, must be unable to qualify for a traditional mortgage, and must have a steady income that falls between 30% and 60% of the area's median income. The financial requirements are adjusted depending on the number of members in the family, and can be viewed by [clicking here](#).

Families chosen to partner with Habitat must be willing to provide "sweat equity" by either working on home construction or other Habitat projects, such as at the ReStore or in the office. For each adult over 18 years old, 250 hours are required and half of these hours can be completed by friends & family.

For more information or to obtain an application, please call the office at **641-424-8978**.

## Habitat Receives \$30,000 for Materials to Assist with Flood Salvage Efforts

Habitat for Humanity of North Central Iowa has recently been awarded two grants totaling \$30,000 to help fund flood salvage efforts in the months ahead.

The awards came from two sources: Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) awarded the agency a grant for \$20,000, and United Way awarded Habitat NCI a Venture Grant for \$10,000. The money from both awards will be used to purchase materials to help with Habitat's efforts to salvage items from homes ravaged by floodwaters in Mason City in June 2008. That will include items such as generators, heaters, lights and other tools that will be used in the salvage process.

It is a process that's expected to continue for at least two years. Salvage efforts began last summer and seven homes were completed before winter. The salvage project is slated to begin again in late spring, with another 90 homes still on the salvage list.

The salvage project brings with it a need for additional storage space, as well as a lot of volunteers. Anyone able to help with those needs, should call the office at **641-424-8978**.

## ReStore Adds Helper Through Experience Works Program

The new year brought a new staff member to Habitat for Humanity of North Central Iowa, and a new job for Larry Warren of Mason City.

*Special thanks to the*



*Church of Christ in  
Mason City  
for helping to sponsor  
our  
e-newsletter!*



Habitat for  
Humanity  
NCI is a United  
Way Partner Agency.

Larry joined the Habitat staff at the start of the year, and provides manpower in the ReStore that Habitat operates on Commercial Park Road.

He works part-time and his duties include shelving items that come into the store, cleaning, maintenance, construction and "whatever else needs to be done," Larry says. "I like it real well," he says. "They can always use an extra hand."

Habitat found Larry through the Experience Works program. Larry says a friend had told him about the program and the job at Habitat was one of the opportunities available.

Experience Works is a national, charitable, community-based group that helps adults ages 55 and older get training and find jobs in their communities. The organization sponsors work for their clients at non-profits throughout the nation. Larry is the third worker Habitat has been provided through the Experience Works program.

Larry recently graduated from Kaplan University as a PC Systems Specialist, a field he hopes to get back into in the future. In the meantime, when he's not at the ReStore, he enjoys computer work, hobbies and keeping busy.

The ReStore sells new and "gently used" building materials and home improvement items to the public at a fraction of retail prices. All materials and supplies sold at the ReStore are donated. For more information, call **641-423-1688**.

