Morris Habitat for Humanity®

LOCAL

Morris Habitat bringing two more affordable homes to Perth Amboy

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Published 9:35 a.m. ET June 17, 2024

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PERTH AMBOY – Morris Habitat for Humanity (MHfH) in partnership with several city organizations has broken ground on two new homes for low- and moderate-income families.

The homes will be at 99 and 101 Pearl Place and have three bedrooms and two bathrooms.

They will each have a private entrance, a porch, a one-car garage and driveway, and will be available for families between three and six.

The homeowners have not been selected yet but will be through a lottery process.

The lottery will contain any low- and moderate-income families who attend a Program Information Meeting at MHfH, but preference will be given to veterans.

Homeowners will qualify for an affordable 30-year mortgage but will also have a minimum 30-year deed restriction.

The homes will be priced at $170,000 each for low-income families and $230,000 for moderate-income families.

Morris Habitat for Humanity breaks ground on two homes in Perth Amboy

Morris Habitat for Humanity partnership with organizations in Perth Amboy has broken ground on two new houses for low- and moderate-income families.

Finally, all selected homeowners will have to put in 300-400 hours of "sweat equity" so MHfH insures this house is "not a hand-out, but a hand-up."

"One of our principles is we want to make sure we aren't giving a hand-out to this family," said Liz DeCoursey MHfH CEO, "The future home buyers have to help build their home and their neighbor's home as well. It brings everyone together."

DeCoursey hopes to have the houses finished by the end of the year, but that is no small task. She relies on the collaboration with her partners and volunteers from all around the state.

"Property doesn't just naturally appear, someone almost has to invite you in and have a shared vision that a community needs affordable housing," said Decoursey, "We collaborate with so many different organizations and have some many volunteers, whether it's groups or individuals. We couldn't do it without them."

These partners were all in attendance at the groundbreaking ceremony on June 13 as volunteers, organizations, and even people walking in town crowded the small lot where two houses would soon be built.

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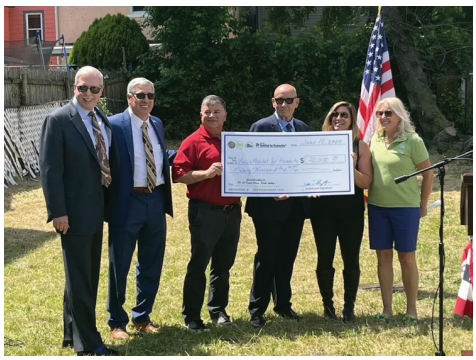
Perth Amboy Mayor Helmin Caba speaks at the Morris Habitat for Humanity groundbreaking. *Ethan Mannello/MyCentralJersey.com*

Mayor Helmin Caba thanked MHfH and all their partners, while emphasizing his views on affordable housing.

"Our commitment to affordable, safe sustainable housing is evident in every detail from the very last nail hammered, to the smallest utility bills save, and the vital pipes that carry water into each home," said Caba, "Through this we are addressing housing issues, and building a more equitable and inclusive city for every resident."

He then gifted MHfH a $187,153 check through the Perth Amboy Home Investment Partnership Program to be used toward the construction of both homes.



The Rotary Club of Old Bridge - Sayreville donates a check at the orris Habitat for Humanity groundbreaking. *Ethan Mannello/MyCentralJersey.com*

Also present at the ceremony were two crucial partners in Lorissa Luciani, an administrator at the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, and Doug Dzema, the Executive Director of both the Housing Authority of the City of Perth Amboy and the Perth Amboy Redevelopment Team for Neighborhood Enterprise and Revitalization or P.A.R.T.N.E.R.

P.A.R.T.N.E.R. has been crucial to MHfH's affordable housing efforts in Perth Amboy.

In 2020, MHfH came down to take over construction of a house Middlesex Habitat for Humanity had left unfinished when it ran out of money and closed.

P.A.R.T.N.E.R. had been working on the house as well, and the town organizations were quickly thrown into collaboration.

Now, they have built six houses in less than four years.

Dzema has been a big part of this effort, but he gives most of the credit to MHfH.

"They (MHfH) have an absolutely fantastic inter core of individuals and a very interested board that puts them above and beyond anything I've seen before," said Dzema, "They have the ability to pull together resources and have many pro-bono professionals at their disposal. We are happy to be a part of the team."

P.A.R.N.T.E.R. was vital in acquiring the property from the Perth Amboy Redevelopment Authority (P.A.R.A) and has helped bring many new partners to MHfH's projects over the years.

One of these partners, the Rotary Club of Old Bridge – Sayreville, contributed $20,000 to the two new houses at the ceremony as well.

Construction on the two houses will begin as soon as possible and MHfH is welcoming anyone who is willing to help.

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