Greater Middlesex & Morris Habitat for Humanity®

HABITAT HAPPENINGS

October 2026

Neighbors Helping Neighbors in New Brunswick: Community Revitalization in La Esperanza

At GMM Habitat, we know that supporting strong communities goes beyond building homes. Through our A Brush With Kindness program, we partner with residents, volunteers, community organizations and municipalities to help preserve and revitalize neighborhoods, creating places where families can thrive.

We recently partnered with New Brunswick Tomorrow for a community revitalization project in the La Esperanza neighborhood of New Brunswick. Together, Habitat staff, members of our dedicated Core Crew volunteer team, and community volunteers tackled projects to enhance the neighborhood's appearance and strengthen community pride.

Volunteers repaired fences, participated in neighborhood clean-up efforts, painted planters, and worked on other beautification projects that will help make La Esperanza an even more welcoming place for residents and visitors. While these projects may seem simple, they can make a difference by creating safer, cleaner, and more vibrant community spaces.

The day's success was made possible by the generosity and hard work of our volunteers. We are especially grateful to our partners at New Brunswick Tomorrow for their collaboration. To everyone who volunteered alongside us: Thank you for helping build a stronger, more beautiful community. We look forward to returning to New Brunswick on Oct. 15.

Seven Houses, Two Weeks, One Big Milestone

This month, the Core Crew joined GMM Habitat construction supervisor Luis for an ambitious mission: getting seven homes ready for their building, electrical, and plumbing inspections.

For two weeks, the Core Crew – a group of regular GMM Habitat volunteers -- worked alongside our construction supervisor Luis V. at our Stonewald Court project in the Budd Lake section of Mount Olive. The group helped weatherize the homes and complete a punch list of projects prior to inspection. Stonewald Court will include two 2-bedroom homes, four 3-bedroom homes, and one 4-bedroom home.

There is still construction work to be done on these homes, and skilled volunteers are always needed.

Interested in homeownership, or know someone who is? GMM Habitat is accepting applications for these seven homes and holding mandatory online homeownership information sessions on Oct. 15 and Nov. 4. Random homeowner selections are expected in December. U.S. military Veterans are also encouraged to apply.

Random Selection conducted for Old Bridge Homes

GMM Habitat recently held a random drawing for 12 affordable homes in the Laurence Parkway section of Old Bridge Township. State and local officials participated, including: N.J. State Sen. Owen Henry; Old Bridge Councilwoman Dr. Anita Greenberg-Belli; Samantha Garcia, Middlesex County housing planner; and Rosemarie Rivoli of the Old Bridge Mayor's Health & Wellness Counsel. GMM CEO Liz DeCoursey and Board President Gene Messina spoke about the need for affordable housing, the Old Bridge project, and the homeownership journey.

GMM Habitat received more than 250 applications for the project's 1-, 2-, 3- and 4-bedroom homes, and 126 pre-qualified applicants were included in the drawing. The project includes a veterans' preference, and 10 veteran families were also included in the drawing. Applicants drawn will now be moved to the state's pre-qualification process.

Honor Those Who Serve and Make a Difference at Veterans Build 2026

We hope you will join us in November for Veterans Build 2026, a meaningful month of service focused on supporting those who have served our country. Veterans Build is a national initiative created by Habitat for Humanity International to address the housing challenges faced by U.S. veterans and military service members and their families.

GMM Habitat's Veterans Build Program empowers veterans through affordable homeownership opportunities, critical home repairs, and volunteer and camaraderie-building programs. We will host events and build dates throughout November.

In Morris and Middlesex counties, there are more than 35,000 veterans who face housing challenges.

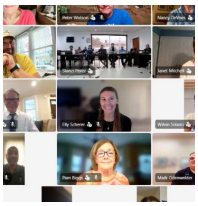
There are several great ways to get involved:

- Sponsor the event to help fund housing solutions for local veterans
- Volunteer on the build site guided by professionals. No experience required.
- Donate to help veterans and their families obtain safe, decent, affordable housing

Your support will help build homes, communities, and hope for those who've served.

Thank you to the sponsors that have already answered the call and are supporting Veterans Build:

Crum & Forster, Lord Abbett, Valley Bank, Vanguard Energy Partners, LLC, Marotta Controls, Barclays and Gene Messina & Family



GMM Habitat Board Member Donna Brightman Leads Effort to Support Habitat Honduras

GMM Habitat board member Donna Brightman will lead "Meaningful Tithe Honduras," an 18-month program between Habitat Honduras and its New Jersey colleagues to support construction of 14 homes.

The project is our second "Meaningful Tithe," an extension of Habitat for Humanity's requirement that affiliates donate to HFHI's global work. The program seeks financial contributions as well as a dynamic, collaborative effort to build relationships between our countries.

GMM Habitat will lead the program along with Passaic County Habitat for Humanity and Habitat for Humanity of Northwest NJ. With a combined pledge by the New Jersey affiliates of $90,000, we will underwrite the infrastructure of a new, 14-home development.

Honduras has more than 844,000 homes that need improvements and a shortfall of more than 500,000 new homes, according to Habitat Honduras studies in 2016 and 2020. More than 11 percent of homes have no access to tap water.

Over the next year, representatives from the New Jersey affiliates and a team from Honduras will share information about the housing needs and solutions in our respective countries, while also enjoying a cultural exchange. The program is primarily virtual, but a trip to Honduras is scheduled for September 2027, when we will see first-hand what our donations have made possible.

GMM Habitat Out and About

September was a busy month for GMM Habitat with legislative meetings, organizational gatherings, and relationship building. Highlights include:

GMM Habitat staff attended the 26th Annual Woodbridge Mayors' Breakfast to build and expand local relationships. Our Home Repair and Aging in Place Team will return to Woodbridge for the kickoff of Mayor McCormac's "Tooling Around the Township" program on Oct. 29, when we will complete several projects for local seniors.

GMM Habitat staff visited Assemblywoman Aura Dunn at her Morristown office to continue the affordable housing conversation started at the Morris County Chamber of Commerce Women in Government Breakfast the prior month. Thank you, Assemblywoman Dunn, for listening and sharing innovative ideas.

GMM Habitat staff gave a homeownership preparedness presentation at Gateway Community Resource Center in Boonton with the Housing Partnership and Citizens Bank. The session provided an overview of homeownership and home repair opportunities through GMM Habitat as well as credit preparation, mortgage assistance, and other programs offered by the Housing Partnership.

Gov. Sherill Announces Plans to Boost Housing Production

Gov. Mikie Sherrill recently outlined her administration's housing agenda, announcing plans to accelerate housing production, expand access to housing opportunities, and make it easier for New Jersey families to find and keep homes they can afford, according to a press release from the Fair Share Housing Center.

The governor's Housing Strategy & Progress Report explains that New Jersey needs to build between 350,500 and 406,500 new homes over the next 10 years to close the housing supply gap, accommodate new households, and support the state's economic growth.

Gov. Sherrill emphasized the need to accelerate home construction in New Jersey, particularly near transit and through the redevelopment of vacant and under-utilized properties. She also called for doubling housing production on state-owned land, increasing state investment in affordable and workforce housing, and streamlining permitting.

GMM Habitat CEO Liz DeCoursey welcomed the state plan. "As an organization working on the front lines with families desperate to find a home they can afford, we see every day how urgently New Jersey needs faster, more efficient pathways to increase the production of affordable housing," Liz said. "Pairing smart policies—such as transit-oriented development and the removal of unnecessary barriers—with continued investment in the state's Affordable Housing Trust Fund is essential to turning policy into real housing opportunities for New Jerseyans. We welcome the governor's action to advance and accelerate solutions that deliver the housing New Jersey families desperately need."

Earlier this year, Gov. Sherrill brought state agencies together to form the Housing Governing Council, tasked with identifying ways to speed housing development, coordinating public resources, and expanding access to housing. The council's progress report was the first step. More details are available at the Council's website.

ReStore's Go Green, Save Green Event is Oct. 17

Save the date for the ReStore's 14th annual Go Green, Save Green Sales Event on Oct. 17. Shop for great savings and to celebrate how much the ReStore diverts from landfills while supporting GMM Habitat's housing solutions. In addition to 30 percent off all donated items, the event will feature games, vendors, popcorn, and family fun.

14th annual

Go Green. Save Green

Sales Event & Art Sale

Saturday, October 17th 10am - 5pm

Since 2007, the ReStore has helped fund 45 homes and kept more than 23,800 tons of usable material out of the waste stream. When you donate, shop, or volunteer at the ReStore, you support families in need of affordable housing and help the environment.

The ReStore needs volunteers to help run the Go Green event and throughout our retail operation. We provide training and offer volunteer opportunities for various time commitments and interests. Come join a great team! When you volunteer at the ReStore, you help fund affordable housing solutions and make a difference in your community.