

# toolbox

SPRING 2021



Greater Newark  
**Habitat**  
for Humanity®  
Serving Essex, Hudson  
& Union Counties



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# How You Can Help

More than bricks and mortar, an investment in Habitat for Humanity of Greater Newark is life changing and pays dividends into the future. Ways you can donate to our mission:



Secure online contributions (one-time or recurring) [↗](#)



Gifts on behalf of a loved one



Match your gift through your place of employment



Sponsorships



In-kind donations



Estate Giving



Donate your real estate



Donate your car

Interested in donating? Contact Danielle Sanchez at [dsanchez@habitatnewark.org](mailto:dsanchez@habitatnewark.org) for gifts of real estate or estate giving, Alana Davis at [adavis@habitatnewark.org](mailto:adavis@habitatnewark.org) for sponsorships, one-time or recurring gifts, gifts on behalf of a loved one, employee giving, in-kind donations, or donating your car.



Above: click on the video to learn more about our food pantry's work during the pandemic. Cover L-R: Longtime Habitat of Greater Newark homeowner Shirley and her daughter, Rasheeda volunteer at the food pantry.

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

### Pandemic Projects

**Over and over during the past year, families of our food pantry at the West & Central Village Community Resource Hub told us how grateful they were to have access to fresh fruit and vegetables during citywide stay-at-home orders. Your contributions made a tremendous difference as Newark residents struggled with the effects of the pandemic shutdown.**

We would especially like to recognize Bayer Pharmaceuticals in this issue for their \$25,000 grant to the food pantry, which will go a long way to support West and Central Village families as they transition back, like the rest of us, to full-time work and school. Thanks to support from our community, we have distributed 55,511 meals and assisted over 4,780 families.

Thanks to the support we received from corporate donors and people like you, our Critical Repair and Healthy Homes initiative continued its work during the pandemic. Valerie, one of our Partner Families, says that when her adult son became paralyzed from the waist down, their family's home repair needs took on new urgency. Habitat of Greater

Newark's partnership with PSEG Foundation meant that her family received repairs and also upgrades to make it more energy efficient, which will mean lower utility bills and more money for her son's care. Read more about her story on page 4.

With restrictions easing, we've been able to restart our Identification Restoration program at the Hub with 255 IDs re-issued since January 2021. We would like to thank the 241 volunteers who have put in 964 hours on our worksites since reopening on March 16, 2021. If you would like to volunteer as an individual, sign up through our [volunteering calendar](#) or join our Corporate Challenge with your colleagues by contacting Alana Davis at [adavis@habitatnewark.org](mailto:adavis@habitatnewark.org) or call 973-624-3330 ext. 100.

This past year has been challenging for all of us and we want to thank you for your continued support of our mission to address affordable housing, healthy homes and revitalization of the most vulnerable neighborhoods in Essex, Hudson and Union counties.

—**Jeffrey J. Farrell**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Habitat for Humanity of Greater Newark, Inc.



# Food Pantry Distributes Over 55,000 Meals

**A year into the COVID-19 pandemic, New Jersey has recorded nearly 1.2 million cases of COVID-19 and over 26,000 COVID-19-related deaths since the beginning of the pandemic. The pandemic's economic effects hit New Jersey hard: unemployment rose to 17% in June 2020. Business leaders estimate that approximately 30% of the state's small businesses closed for good.**

Newark's residents reeled from the sudden loss or lessening of wages caused by COVID-19. Habitat for Humanity of Greater Newark responded quickly to community need. In April 2020, we opened a food pantry at the West & Central Village Community Resource Hub to provide food assistance for the residents of Newark's West & Central Village.

Karen, one of the food pantry's mobile delivery recipients, is a born-and-raised Central Ward resident. "I still live on the same block!" She says that as caretaker for her 82-year-old mother and a disability recipient herself, she's had to keep her family locked down during COVID-19. "My mom cannot get the shot due to allergies. I have to keep her more or less bubbled. I'm very protective of her."

Karen learned about the food pantry at the Hub from a "very very good old friend" who lost her housing during the lockdown. Karen's friend told her that one of her regrets about moving was losing access to the mobile food pantry—and suggested that Karen's family sign up.

Mobile food delivery, Karen says, enabled her family to limit her mother's potential COVID-19 exposure. "[The delivery people] are very very careful. They ring the doorbell and they're wearing their masks. They either do a handoff or put it down."

Karen continues, "Every little bit helps. There's not much coming in. It's difficult."

Nearly 1.6 million New Jersey workers have sought unemployment benefits since the COVID-19 pandemic forced many businesses to close in March. Millions of people are getting help from food banks for the first time, and the most vulnerable people in our communities need our help now more than ever.

Demand exceeds the supplies received from other local nonprofits—we consistently run

out of food within 15 minutes on our distribution day! We purchase food directly at local supermarkets but still turn away many hungry families each week.

Corporate donors have helped us continue our work in the West & Central Village, but we still need your help. [Donate now](#) and help hungry families weather this crisis.

**Pandemic Unemployment Means Increasing Hunger in the Newark Area**

Since April 2020, Habitat of Greater Newark's food pantry at the West & Central Village Community Resource Hub has distributed 55,511 meals to 4,780 families.

In 2019, Newark's unemployment rate was 4.9%. COVID-19's economic effects meant not only rising unemployment but also a sharp rise in hunger for Newark residents.

19.3% of Newark's children are projected to be food insecure in 2021—3.8% more than before COVID-19.

15.3% of Newark residents are projected to be food insecure in 2021—a 4.6% jump over 2019 numbers.

**\$4.21**  
Average cost of a meal in Newark.

**15.3%**  
of Newark's residents are projected to be food insecure in 2021.

**1 in 5**  
of Newark's children are projected to be food insecure in 2021.

Newark's unemployment rate in April 2021 was **12.2%**

**Greater Newark Habitat for Humanity**  
Serving Essex, Hudson & Union Counties

**DONATE NOW**

Source: U.S. Metropolitan Area Employment and Unemployment, Feeding America, and Community Foodbank of NJ.

Top: Partner Family member Valerie. Second from top: pipes in her home's basement before asbestos removal. Third from top: pipes in her home's basement after asbestos removal.



## Partner Family Success Story:

# “It Really Is a Great Thing”

**Partner Family member Valerie says that taking out the old oil tank in her home's basement removed one source of worry—but added another in the form of constant leaks in the area it had been.**

Valerie and her husband Jesse Jr. bought their home in Newark's West Ward, where they live with their 31-year-old son Jesse III, ten years ago. After they removed the oil tank, the family noticed that their basement was much leakier than the average basement in their neighborhood. “After a hard rain, ours would get two to three inches of standing water.”

Valerie knew that the basement also contained asbestos hazards. But after paying high utility bills for their uninsulated home, the family had little cash to spare for repairs. She was excited to find PSE&G's Comfort Partners program in 2019.

Through Comfort Partners, Habitat of Greater Newark partners with PSE&G to repair and weatherize homes in Essex, Hudson, and Union counties. After the program's initial home assessment, Habitat of Greater Newark fixes problems such as roof repair, asbestos removal, or poor basement drainage. Next, PSE&G boosts homes' energy efficiency through measures such as:

- efficient lighting products
- water heater insulation
- water heater pipe insulation and energy-saving showerheads and aerators;
- replacement of inefficient refrigerators;
- thermostat upgrades;
- wall/attic insulation upgrades;

- blower-door guided air sealing;
- duct sealing and repair;
- heating/cooling equipment maintenance and other measures.

PSE&G also teaches Partner Families new ways to conserve energy and how to create an Action Plan to support their efforts.

Calvin Ledford, President of the PSEG Foundation, says, “We are pleased to partner with Habitat for Humanity of Greater Newark to provide the necessary repairs that allow for families to live in their homes safely, healthy and comfortably, without having to worry about the affordability of critical repairs in order to have an energy efficient home.” He continues, “Supporting our communities is key and this work with Habitat for Humanity of Greater Newark exemplifies the PSEG Foundation vision to build safe, equitable and prosperous communities.”

In November 2019, the need for repairs became urgent when her son Jesse III became paralyzed from the waist down. Valerie contacted the Comfort Partners program and updated her application with Jesse III's disability status. The application was quickly approved.

Work began in early 2021. “They handled the water in the basement and removed the asbestos. They also covered up an exposed soffit in the driveway.” She continues, “It really is a great thing. I didn't have the funds [for the repairs her basement needed].”

With the water inflow halted, the family can dream. Valerie's family hopes that in the future they'll be able to renovate the basement into living space for Jesse III. Would she recommend the program to other homeowners? “Yes! Apply! Everyone needs help. Don't be



embarrassed—help yourself out! You just need to find the resources, that's all.”

Habitat of Greater Newark's work in the Comfort Partners program is funded by the PSEG Foundation.

Applicants must meet certain guidelines to qualify for the PSE&G Comfort Partners program. For the latest information, or to complete an online application, visit [New Jersey Comfort Partners' website](#) or call 1-800-915-8309.

**CRITICAL REPAIR**

# New Program: Lead Hazard Remediation and Abatement

**Habitat of Greater Newark is pleased to announce a lead hazard remediation and abatement program for Newark homeowners.**

This program, funded by a grant from the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs in conjunction with Community Asset Preservation Corporation (CAPC), is aimed at identification and remediation of lead-based paint hazards.

### Symptoms of lead poisoning

Lead poisoning occurs when lead builds up in the body, often over months or years. Even small amounts of lead can cause serious health problems. Lead-based paint and lead-contaminated dust in older buildings are the most common sources of lead poisoning.

- Lower birth weight
- Developmental delay
- Learning difficulties
- Irritability
- Loss of appetite
- Weight loss
- Sluggishness and fatigue
- Vomiting

- Constipation
- Hearing loss
- Seizures
- High blood pressure
- Joint, muscle, or abdominal pain
- Difficulties with memory or concentration
- Headache
- Mood disorders
- Reduced sperm count and abnormal sperm
- Miscarriage, stillbirth or premature birth in pregnant women.

Applicants must live in the city of Newark, NJ in a 1 to 4 unit residential home built before 1978, not earn more than 80% of area median income to qualify, and must attend a mandatory orientation.

Work scope includes preliminary lead testing to determine if lead is present on painted surfaces, a lead inspection/risk assessment of the home, remediation of lead-based paint hazards via interim controls, and abatement of lead-based paint hazards.

Interested in these programs? Call Habitat of Greater Newark's Family Services Coordinator: 973-624-3330 x 103 or email: [gbernal@habitatnewark.org](mailto:gbernal@habitatnewark.org) for an appointment to discuss repair needs. Application fee may apply.

# New Jersey's Veterans at a Glance



More than 400,000 U.S. military veterans live in New Jersey.



About 30 percent of New Jersey's veterans are 75 or older.



13.1% of New Jersey's veterans have a service connected disability.



79.2% of New Jersey's veterans own their own homes.



Approximately 86,921 New Jersey veterans live in homes with one or more major problems of quality, crowding, or cost.

Support those who served.

**DONATE NOW**

Source: <http://veteransdata.info>

# cars for homes

Donate your vehicle to Habitat of Greater Newark's Cars for Homes program and help a family build a home and attain strength, stability, and self-reliance for the future.

To donate your vehicle, call or visit:

**877-277-4344**  
[habitat.org/carsforhomes](http://habitat.org/carsforhomes)





# KISLAK FAMILY FOUNDATION

a proud sponsor of



Learn more about the Kislak Family Foundation's support for affordable housing in northern New Jersey with this video.



Jason Pucci, COO of New Jersey-based The Kislak Company, Inc., at the home dedication ceremony for our home at 11 Grand Terrace in Livingston, NJ, on December 3, 2020.

## CORPORATE PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

# Kislak Family Foundation

**While the Kislak Family Foundation is based in Miami Lakes, Florida, the family has deep business and philanthropic roots in New Jersey. What originated as a real estate company in Hoboken in 1906 has grown and evolved for more than a century. The organization's commercial real estate brokerage firm, The Kislak Company, Inc., is based in Woodbridge, New Jersey, and is a well-known market leader, consistently recognized for its investment sales success, customer service excellence, and commitment to community. The Kislak Family Foundation shares in that history and commitment, and became a supporter of Habitat for Humanity of Greater Newark in 2019.**

"New Jersey is a great place to live and work," said Jason Pucci, COO of The Kislak Company, Inc. "Since our company's founding in Hoboken, we've been involved in nearly all aspects of the New Jersey real estate market. We see our continuing support of Habitat for Humanity of Greater Newark as continuing our late Chairman Jay Kislak's legacy of mindful and meaningful philanthropy through supporting home ownership in the state where our company began."

"This grant serves as validation of the work we do," says Habitat of Greater Newark CEO Jeffrey J. Farrell. "It's simply amazing to have our work in affordable housing and home rehabilitation recognized by a philanthropic family that's been active in New Jersey real estate for over a hundred years."

Tom Bartelmo, CEO of the Kislak Family Foundation, said, "In business and in philanthropy, we at Kislak understand how important it is for people to have safe, comfortable homes where their families can thrive. We are proud to support the community-building, family-focused work of Habitat for Humanity."

Interested in having your company participate in Habitat of Greater Newark's Corporate Challenge? Contact Alana Davis at [adavis@habitatnewark.org](mailto:adavis@habitatnewark.org) or call 973-624-3330 ext. 100 to discuss your company's options.

# Trade School Students at Work

**This spring, we're welcoming a new group to the 24 Burnet Street work site: students from New Community Career & Technical Institute (NCCTI).**

Through a new partnership, NCCTI students will contribute a minimum of 20 hours a month on Habitat of Greater Newark sites across Essex, Hudson, and Union Counties. While working on critical repairs and new construction projects, three to five NCCTI Building Trades students per day will gain hands-on construction experience alongside Habitat of Greater Newark staff and volunteers.

NCCTI Director Rodney Brutton says, "Students participating in our Construction Building Trades Training Program are gaining valuable experience completing hands-on assignments on Habitat for Humanity's projects. They are able to put into practice the skills and competencies students learn while in the classroom. Skill attainment and the actual experience of working on a construction site will



NCCTI students on the job at 24 Burnet in April 2021. (L-R): Kenneth Weston and Theodore Brown, along with lead instructor Mr. Awich Yustow.

add value to our students' resumes and support their employment goals."

Rick Casaretto, Habitat of Greater Newark's Construction Manager, and Alphonso Richards, our Site Supervisor, anticipate a full spring and summer installing the home's driveway and sidewalk, and indoors, flooring and tiling.

Contact Alana Davis at [adavis@habitat-newark.org](mailto:adavis@habitat-newark.org) or call 973-624-3330 ext. 100 to discuss how your school can volunteer with Habitat of Greater Newark. "Like" and "follow" our social media for the latest updates. Interested in volunteering on your own? Check our [volunteering calendar](#) for available days.

## Volunteering During COVID-19: A Family Story

Looking for in-person volunteering opportunities during summer 2020 was incredibly challenging, Holmdel High School sophomore Ryan Kennedy reports.

He and his family wanted to find something in-person but COVID-safe. They weren't able to find opportunities near home, but, luckily, his father, Brian Kennedy, had volunteered as part of the Corporate Challenge with his employer, Goldman Sachs, and gave us a call!

Ryan says that he liked working with Rick Casaretto, our Construction Manager, and Alphonso Richards, our Site Supervisor. "The time I did sod with Rick it was completely new. It was pretty simple. Rick just taught me how to do it really quickly and he made it fun."

Ryan enjoyed his first few volunteer days so much that he invited a few of his friends to join him on-site. "The



Ryan Kennedy (left) on-site with Site Supervisor Alphonso Richards.

great thing about Habitat is that anyone can do it. It doesn't matter how strong you are or whether you like construction. There is always a task for you—even just running things back and forth to the truck."

Interested in volunteering with your own family? Check our [Volunteering Calendar](#) for available days.





## CORPORATE CHALLENGE

# Grand BK: Volunteering During COVID-19 “Felt Like a Relief”

Habitat of Greater Newark recently hosted volunteers from Grand BK, food distributors for beloved supermarket chain H Mart. We spoke with Human Resources Executive Secretary Jamie Chun and Human Resources Director Simon Lee about the challenges of volunteering during a pandemic, and here’s what they had to say.

### Did you feel safe working on the worksite?

**JAMIE:** We volunteered last year as well. COVID-19 cases were still high during summer 2020, so we were very cautious at first and mainly did outdoor work.

For me, volunteering was more or less a relief. It felt great being able to be out of the office and contributing to the community. This year we have more than twice the number of volunteers as last year.

### What made you choose Habitat for Humanity of Greater Newark as your community service partner?

**SIMON:** We were looking to see different areas we could help out. Community service is important for our employees. Habitat for Humanity supports one of Grand BK’s core missions. As a company, our job is to make people feel at home.

**JAMIE:** I was always interested in Habitat for Humanity. It is very attractive that we

can take our sweat and time to help build someone’s house.

### What did you do when you were on the worksite?

**SIMON:** I was working on the stairs, being a mule and moving things. The concrete took much longer than I thought it would.

**JAMIE:** I did the flooring in the closet and used a nail gun for the first time. It was so loud but fun.

### Do you plan on volunteering for the Corporate Challenge again?

**SIMON:** Yes! Creating a home for someone is important. And it always feels great to put in a good day’s work for a good cause.



TOP: Grand BK volunteers Minji Ko, Jacob Choi, Brian Kwon, April Yoo, Bomi Son, Sean Kim, Vince Colatriano, Jamie Chun, and Nayoung Lee on the job at 24 Burnet, June 2020. ABOVE: Nayoung Lee works the miter saw, April 2021.

## CORPORATE CHALLENGE

# Volunteering in Fresh Air

Habitat for Humanity of Greater Newark takes workplace safety very seriously. We’ve added COVID-19 safety protocols to our existing worksite safety standards so that Corporate Challenge build days can continue.

- Temperature checks at the start of each work day
- Mandatory face masks
- Shortened work day

Want to provide a team-building experience and lasting memories for your employees? Interested in having your company make a difference in the life of a Northern New Jersey family? Please contact Alana in our office at 973-624-3330 ext. 100 or [adavis@habitatnewark.org](mailto:adavis@habitatnewark.org) about how your employees can get involved!

Follow us on social media for the latest information on builds and other Habitat for Humanity of Greater Newark news!



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2021 Fall Corporate Challenge Dates:

# September 14-November 19, 2021