



# HELPING HANDS

E-EDITION, JANUARY 2017

"The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice."

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

## Bending the Arc

By Cathy Collins

When I was seven years old, I read a book about Martin Luther King Jr. and was immediately captivated. In 1972, that was unusual, particularly in a small town in Arkansas. I also did my high school senior thesis on him. To say he has had a profound influence on my life would be an understatement.

Nearly three years ago, when a team of staff members went to the Habitat on the Hill conference in D.C., we visited the newly opened Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial. As I walked along the granite wall engraved with quotes spanning his lifetime, I came to this one and tears began welling up. It was a quote I was not familiar with. In preparing for this column, I read the sermon in which this quote is found. It comes at the end of a very powerful sermon, a sermon that I feel could have been written for today, this new year that we have entered.

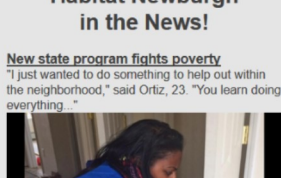
It is a sermon based on Moses and the people of Egypt leaving behind the darkness of Egypt and seeking the Promised Land. He points out that 3 groups emerged from this story. Those that wanted to go back to Egypt because the roads to the Promised Land were too difficult, those that were willing and ready to move forward and the challenges and difficulties to the Promised Land, and those that wanted to stay out of Egypt, but not move towards the Promised Land. The sermon focuses on this last group and calls them into action and out of complacency. He puts forth the symbolic mountains that we have rested in for enough time—practical materials, racial injustice, indifference, violence and hatred.

The sermon concludes with his undying belief that we will get to the Promised Land. He quotes the spiritual *We Shall Overcome*, following it by saying "And I believe it because somehow, the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice." He then does a recitation of examples of where this has occurred. If he were visiting Habitat Newburgh today, he would have a long list of people bending the universe towards justice. Those same people, and the new ones who will join us, will continue this work in 2017 as we complete the 4 Ann Street homes, tackled 2 more properties on S. Miller Street, look to recycle 2 houses on Henry and Carson Street, make plans to take on several properties on William, Johnston, and Lander Street all in partnership with families who will bring strength, stability, and self-reliance as homeowners of these transformed properties.

I know of no other organization that better embodies my favorite MLK quote (which is actually found in this same sermon). "We are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. And what affects one directly affects all indirectly. For some strange reason, I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. And you can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be." Thank you for all that you do to help each of us become more of what we ought to be and just that much closer to the Promised Land.

[Read the entire sermon](#)

## 10th ANNIVERSARY!



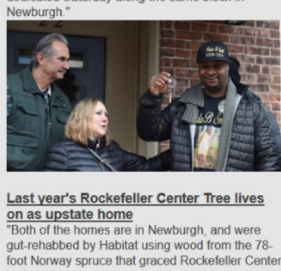
Sunday, January 8, 2017  
3 PM

St. Mary's Tuxedo Park

## Habitat Newburgh in the News!

### New state program fights poverty

"Just wanted to do something to help out within the neighborhood," said Ortiz, 23. "You learn doing everything..."



### Local Rockefeller Center Christmas tree lives again in Newburgh

"Keisha Smith had no idea where her father Keith was taking her Saturday morning. A few steps later, she was standing in front of a new single-family home, fireplace and all, that her father had spent months working to secure through Habitat for Humanity's homeowner program. "This," she said, "is a major gain for us, for our whole family." So it was that Keith Smith became a first-time owner of a newly renovated home, one of two dedicated Saturday along the same block in Newburgh."



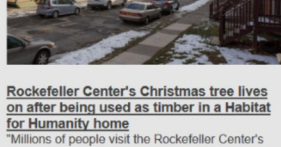
### Last year's Rockefeller Center Christmas tree lives on as upstate home

"Both of the homes are in Newburgh, and were gut-rehabbed by Habitat using wood from the 78-foot Norway spruce that graced Rockefeller Center last year. In a way, it's a homecoming for the stately tree. The spruce had been cut from the front yard of Nancy Fuchalski and Al Asendorf in upstate Gardner just 16 miles away."



### PHOTOS: Habitat unveils 2 homes

"Two families have new homes for the holidays. Habitat for Humanity unveiled newly renovated homes Saturday at 22 and 26 South Miller Street in Newburgh. Both homes were built using lumber milled from this year's Rockefeller Center Christmas Tree in New York City."



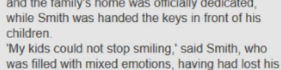
### Rockefeller Center Christmas Tree finds new homes in Newburgh, literally

"The tree that delighted hundreds of thousands of visitors to Rockefeller Center a year ago, had its roots in the Hudson Valley, and to the valley, it returned."



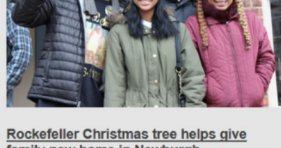
### Once vacant Newburgh homes get second chance

"He gestured across the street to three once-vacant houses turned into glittering single-family homes by Habitat for Humanity of Greater Newburgh. His words were short in quantity but long in depth. "It speaks for itself," he said. "It's beautiful..."



### Rockefeller Center's Christmas tree lives on after being used as timber in a Habitat for Humanity home

"Millions of people visit the Rockefeller Center's Christmas tree every year but many do not know the famous attraction continues to bring joy well after the end of festive season..."



### Habitat Dedicates Two Homes on South Miller

"Homeowner Keith Smith wanted to do something amazing for his three children. Not only did he apply for and was awarded the opportunity to participate in the building and education of his first home through Habitat for Humanity of Greater Newburgh, Smith also somehow managed to keep the entire year-long venture, which included 240 sweat equity hours, a secret from his kids. That was until Saturday, when the 'gift' was revealed and the family's home was officially dedicated, while Smith was handed the keys in front of his children."



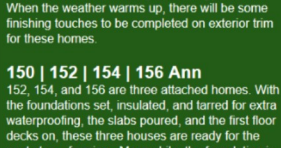
### Rockefeller Christmas tree helps give family new home in Newburgh

"'Lucky. Fortune to finally have a home if our own. It gives more meaning to Christmas time.'" Anyeli Talamante "I always wanted a house for my kids... I worked my behind off just to make sure that they have a better life. It's a great experience, to see them happy, to see them smiling... They always say that nothing good comes out if the hood. I was born in raised in Newburgh for 37 years, and this proves that something awesome comes out of the hood, and I'm a product of that." Keith Smith



### St. Mary's Church in Tuxedo to host Twelfth Night celebration on Jan. 8

"Local musicians and area choirs, including the Jubilate Chorus of Warwick, will perform their Christmas best music from the holiday season under the direction of St. Mary's music director, Jimrae Lencer."



## CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

### 22 | 24 | 26 | 30 South Miller

Demo is almost complete at 30 S. Miller. Next up will be masonry repair (when weather allows) and interior framing. Two doors down, volunteers are completing punch list tasks at 26, 24 and 22 S. Miller, such as installing a half-way basement door at 26 and insulating the attics for all three houses to make them cozy and energy-efficient. When the weather warms up, there will be some finishing touches to be completed on exterior trim for these homes.

### 150 | 152 | 154 | 156 Ann

152, 154, and 156 are three attached homes. With the foundations set, insulated, and ready for extra waterproofing the slabs poured, and the first floor decks on, these three houses are targeted for the next step—framing. Meanwhile, the foundation is being dug for 150 Ann Street, a freestanding home directly next door.

### 58 Henry

This recycled Habitat house was sold back to Habitat Newburgh when homeowner Virgin remarried and moved in with her husband. After raising her children in the home for over 10 years, she is happy that the house will be a fresh start for another Newburgh family. Volunteers are about halfway done with the smaller rehab project in this home—including installing new flooring and updating the kitchen and light fixtures.

### 131 Carson

Volunteers are about halfway through the demolition on this rehab/recycle project. We have the building permit, and work will continue to complete the demo down to the studs.

### 15 1/2 Overlook

Our latest gut rehab project is just around the corner from the bluff and Wednesday Coffee Break. We are once again partnering with the Newburgh Community Land Bank on this property, which is currently undergoing abatement for asbestos and lead. Once the abatement is completed, we hope volunteers will soon be able to begin clean-out and demolition.

SIGN UP TO VOLUNTEER  
<http://newburgh.volunteerhub.com>

**Thank you to the volunteer groups that came out to build with us this month!**

Mercy College  
Marist College  
Catholic Daughters  
Washingtonville High School  
Phillipstown Presbyterian Church  
Allstate  
NYANG

If you would like to schedule a Team Build day, please contact Volunteer Coordinator Matt Arbolino at (845) 568-6035 x110 or [marbolino@habitatnewburgh.org](mailto:marbolino@habitatnewburgh.org)

**Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood Tour**  
Join us for a FREE coach bus tour and learn how Habitat's work in Newburgh. Tour in-progress rehabs and new builds, and see a completed Habitat Newburgh house.  
**All are welcome to join!**  
Tours begin at our office  
125 Washington St., Newburgh, NY  
10:45 AM Sign-in & refreshments  
11:00 AM Tour begins  
Call (845) 568-6035 x105 to RSVP

**Tour Dates:**  
Wednesday, February 8  
Saturday, March 4

**Keep up with the latest Habitat Happenings!**  
FIND US ON FACEBOOK  
[facebook.com/habitatnewburgh](https://www.facebook.com/habitatnewburgh)  
AND ON TWITTER  
[twitter.com/habitatnewburgh](https://twitter.com/habitatnewburgh)  
AND ON INSTAGRAM  
[instagram.com/habitatnewburgh](https://www.instagram.com/habitatnewburgh)

ANNUAL

## MLK Day of Service

Make it a day on, not a day off!

**Life's most persistent and urgent question is 'What are you doing for others?'**

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Join us this January 16th for a day of service in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. All are welcome to volunteer (age 16+); there will be tasks for all experience levels.

Register on [Volunteer Hub](#), then join us at your site in the morning. Work for the day will range from demolition to painting and clean-up. All tools and materials will be provided. Please wear appropriate construction site clothing and shoes.



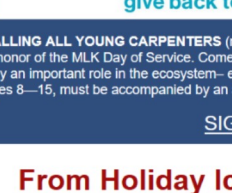
MONDAY, JANUARY 16, 2017

8:00 AM—12:30 PM

followed by a complimentary lunch for all participants

at Calvary Presbyterian Church

[SIGN UP NOW!](#)



## MLK DAY OF SERVICE

Monday, January 16, 2017

10:00 AM - 12:30 PM

125 Washington Street, Newburgh, NY



Are you looking for a way to get your kids involved with volunteering?

Are you a young person who wants to give back to your community?

**CALLING ALL YOUNG CARPENTERS** (no experience needed) to give back to your community in honor of the MLK Day of Service. Come build and paint a bat house for Stonykill Farm! Bats play an important role in the ecosystem—eating up pesky mosquitos and pollinating plants. Ages 8—15, must be accompanied by an adult.

[SIGN UP NOW](#)

## From Holiday Icon to Habitat Homes

On Saturday, December 10, Habitat for Humanity of Greater Newburgh celebrated with future homeowner families and dedicated two homes containing lumber from the 2015 Rockefeller Center Christmas Tree. The iconic tree will live on as a part of these two beautifully rehabbed homes that are a part of 4-house gut-rehab project on this block in partnership with the Newburgh Community Land Bank.

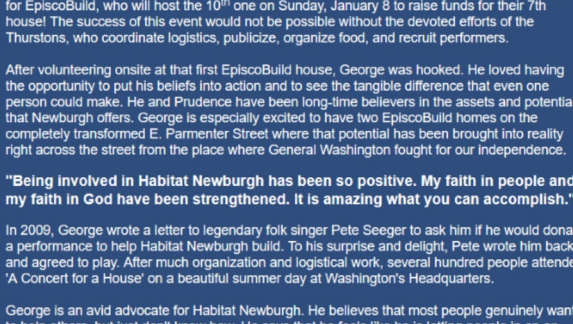
In a nearly decade-long tradition, Tishman Speyer, the owner and manager of Rockefeller Center, has donated lumber from the tree to Habitat for Humanity. In addition to donating the lumber, volunteers from Tishman Speyer joined Habitat Newburgh and helped to frame the walls with the special boards. This is the second time that this holiday symbol has become part of a Habitat home in Newburgh. Lumber from the 2010 Rockefeller Center Christmas Tree is now a permanent part of a home in Habitat Newburgh's E. Parmenter Street Neighborhood.

"The tradition of the Rockefeller Center Christmas Tree represents so much joy and hope," says Habitat Newburgh Executive Director Cathy Collins. "This spirit will live on in these homes and in this neighborhood that we are building in partnership with homeowner families and community partners. We are grateful to be part of this tradition that takes this special tree from symbol, to lumber, to home."

The 78-foot-tall Norway spruce began its journey in Gardiner, NY in the front yard of Nancy Fuchalski and Al Asendorf. Nancy grew up in the City of Newburgh and currently works at the Head Start of Eastern Orange County. She is so happy to know that the tree is now a part of a home for Newburgh families. "There were four generations in that tree and now it is going into homes for families that will hopefully have generations of love and family in their home too. It is beautiful to see it come full circle."

Keith, future homeowner and single father of three, completed his required homeownership classes and sweat equity hours without telling his children that he applied to become a Habitat homeowner. At Saturday's dedication, he surprised his family by revealing the completed house that he will soon purchase and they will move into. Keith expressed his feelings about what this home will mean for his family. "For my family, celebrating Christmas in our new home for the first time is something that we are already looking forward to, but knowing that our walls contain the lumber from the Rockefeller Tree will make the season even more special."

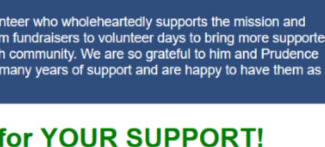
Saturday's festive dedication celebration included carols, holiday treats, Christmas decorations, and a visit from Santa Claus. As the 2015 Rockefeller Center Christmas Tree completed its journey home to the Hudson Valley, two Newburgh families also celebrated the end of their journey to home.



## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT!

George Thurston

When the EpiscoBuild coalition needed a way to raise money to sponsor their first house at 156 Dubois St., George and Prudence Thurston had an idea. For many years, they had celebrated the end of the Christmas season by hosting a Twelfth Night potluck party in their home. Why not host the party at their church, expand the guest list, get free music by asking local choirs to perform, and transform their family tradition into a Habitat for Humanity tradition? The first year was a wonderful success, with beautiful choral music from the different Episcopalian churches, food and drink, fellowship and holiday cheer. Since then, the Twelfth Night concert tradition has lived on as one of the main fundraisers for EpiscoBuild, who will host the 10th one on Sunday, January 8 to raise funds for their 7th house! The success of this event would not be possible without the devoted efforts of the Thurstons, who coordinate logistics, publicize, organize food, and recruit performers.



After volunteering onsite at that first EpiscoBuild house, George was hooked. He loved having the opportunity to put his beliefs into action and to see the tangible difference that even one person could make. He and Prudence have been long-time believers in the assets and potential that Newburgh offers. George is especially excited to have two EpiscoBuild homes on the completely transformed E. Parmenter Street where that potential has been brought into reality right across the street from the place where General Washington fought for our independence.

"Being involved in Habitat Newburgh has been so positive. My faith in people and my faith in God have been strengthened. It is amazing what you can accomplish."

In 2009, George wrote a letter to legendary folk singer Pete Seeger to ask him if he would donate a performance to help Habitat Newburgh build. To his surprise and delight, Pete wrote him back and agreed to play. After much organization and logistical work, several hundred people attended "A Concert for a House" on a beautiful summer day at Washington's Headquarters.

George is an avid advocate for Habitat Newburgh. He believes that most people genuinely want to help others, but just don't know how. He says that he feels like he is letting people in on an awesome opportunity to be a part of something great. He likes to tell people that "even if you can't swing a hammer, you can swing a pen!"

"To me, Habitat Newburgh is the perfect organization. The staff form the skeleton and the volunteers are the flesh and together we achieve great change. I am very proud to work with Habitat and gratified by the opportunity. It is so much more than a charity; it's a community."

George is a wonderful example of a volunteer who wholeheartedly supports the mission and takes the initiative to organize events from fundraisers to volunteer days to bring more supporters and volunteers into the Habitat Newburgh community. We are so grateful to him and Prudence for everything they have done over their many years of support and are happy to have them as a part of the Habitat family.

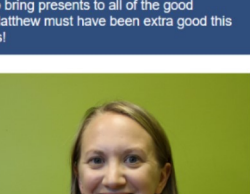
## THANK YOU for YOUR SUPPORT!

At Habitat Newburgh we believe that everyone deserves to have a decent and affordable place to live. A place where they can build strength, security, and self-reliance through homeownership. A place where they can thrive and reach their full potential. But none of it is possible without you!

We were overwhelmed by the amount of support that we received through our year-end campaign, **you gave over \$61,000!** Thanks to the generous support of our donors we will receive the full \$8,000 matching gift.

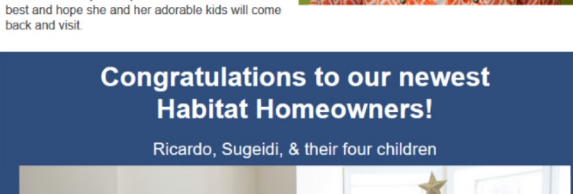
Because of you there are families that will now have a place to call home, a place where they can feel safe and secure, a place where their family will grow.

AMOUNT RAISED  
**>\$61,000**



2016 Year-End Giving

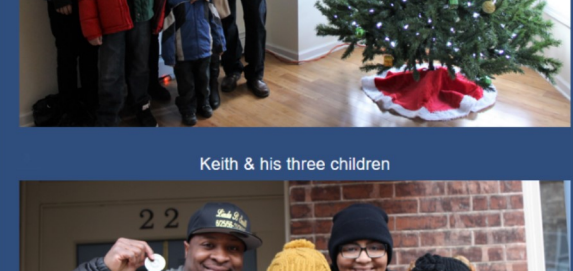
## Santa Visits Coffee Break!



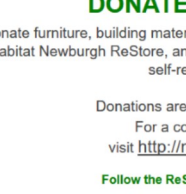
Santa stopped by Habitat Newburgh's coffee break to bring presents to all of the good volunteers. AmeriCorps members Liam, Emily, and Matthew must have been extra good this year—Santa brought them each a stocking full of gifts!

## Congratulations to our newest Habitat Homeowners!

Ricardo, Sugeidi, & their four children



Keith & his three children



## DONATE • SHOP • VOLUNTEER

Donate furniture, building materials, appliances, and home decor in good condition to the Habitat Newburgh ReStore, and you can help local families build strength, stability, and self-reliance through homeownership.

Donations are gratefully accepted Wed-Sat 9:30-4:30.

For a complete list of accepted donations, visit <http://newburghrestore.org/donate.html>

Follow the ReStore on Facebook and Twitter for the latest!

## LOOKING AHEAD

Upcoming events in 2017

Sunday, January 8 Twelfth Night Service

Monday, January 16 MLK Day of Service

Sunday, February 12 The Chris O'Leary Band fundraiser concert

Sunday, April 23 18th Annual Walk for Housing

Monday, May 8 18th Annual Golf Fore Housing



at Washington's Headquarter's Park

## SAVE THE DATE

SUNDAY, APRIL 23, 2017



Like us on Facebook for all the latest news!

**SPONSORSHIPS AVAILABLE**  
[walkforhousing@gmail.com](mailto:walkforhousing@gmail.com) for more info



## SAVE THE DATE

MONDAY, MAY 8, 2017

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[golfforehousing@gmail.com](mailto:golfforehousing@gmail.com) for more info

Please visit our website at [www.habitatnewburgh.org](http://www.habitatnewburgh.org)

Donate to our cause  
Like us on Facebook