

# Merrimack Valley Habitat for Humanity

## Volunteer With Us!



“Everyone deserves a simple, decent  
place to live on terms they can  
afford to pay.”

Millard Fuller, Founder  
Habitat for Humanity  
International

60 Island Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor East  
Lawrence, MA 01840  
978-681-8858 978-681-9357 fax  
[www.merrimackvalleyhabitat.org](http://www.merrimackvalleyhabitat.org)

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## Merrimack Valley Habitat for Humanity Volunteer With Us!



### Habitat for Humanity International

A world where everyone has a decent place to live.

Habitat for Humanity International is a nonprofit, ecumenical housing ministry that seeks to eliminate poverty housing and homelessness around the world. Founded in 1976 by Millard and Linda Fuller, and through the work of Habitat and its affiliates, thousands of low-income families have found new hope in the form of affordable housing. Churches, community groups and others have joined together to successfully address a significant social problem—decent housing for all.

Today, Habitat has helped build or repair more than 800,000 houses and served more than 4 million people around the world.

### Merrimack Valley Habitat for Humanity

Merrimack Valley Habitat for Humanity brings people together to build homes, communities and hope.

Founded in 1985, Merrimack Valley Habitat for Humanity (MVHH) is an affiliate of Habitat for Humanity International. Founded on the conviction that everyone should have a safe and decent place to live, we build decent, affordable homes for low-income families in need of housing in 22 communities in the Merrimack Valley of Massachusetts and southern New Hampshire. Our programs bring people together, both at the community level and in the broader society (government, civic organizations, the general public, etc.) to build homes to be owned by families in the communities we serve.

MVHH is a 501(C)3 non-profit organization.

### Habitat Homeownership

The homes MVHH builds in partnership with prospective Habitat homeowners and volunteers are sold to approved Habitat homeowners at no profit with a no-interest, 20-40 year mortgage.

Criteria to determine eligibility:

- Currently living in substandard housing
- Applicant pays more than 35% of their income on rent
- Overcrowding
- Economic Disadvantage - the family must be unable to obtain a conventional or government-assisted mortgage
- Income and Ability to Pay - Ability to cover housing costs of approximately \$650/\$700 per month
- Willingness to participate in the MVHH program

MVHH's Family Selection Committee reviews all applications. Those who meet all the selection criteria are interviewed in their homes by Family Selection Committee members. The Committee identifies the families who are most in need and best meet the qualification guidelines and presents them to the MVHH Executive Board for consideration.

Selected Habitat homeowners are required to:

1. Attend an informational meeting
2. Participate in all Habitat home educational workshops
3. Contribute between 240 - 360 "sweat equity hours" by building their own or another MVHH homeowner's home
4. Pay closing costs (about \$2,800)
5. Participate in the management of a condominium association where applicable
6. Participate in and support MVHH events and programs

As of 2014, we have built 71 homes and rehabbed 11 others in the Merrimack Valley, and have 16 homes in the pipeline for building.



The Reyes Family on the front porch of their new home.

## Volunteer Opportunities

Our volunteers come to us from all walks of life, sharing a commitment to make a difference in their community. Some volunteers have the time and energy for major, ongoing responsibilities. Others can help occasionally. Volunteers are needed in all aspects of our work.

We welcome you to build on the construction site, serve on committees, partner with families, work at the ReStore, donate professional services, organize a corporate build day, or support administrative work. We need all types of volunteers, such as: construction/building, graphic artists, finance experts, writers, applicant interviewers, computer tech experts, and retail sales.

Construction takes place every Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday. Volunteers 18 years and older can work at any task assigned at a site. Youth who are 16 and 17 must be accompanied by an adult and may participate in restricted build activities. No one under the age of 16 is allowed on our active build-site. All volunteers, regardless of age, must sign a release/waiver prior to being on the site.

If retail, resale and the do-it-yourself movement is of interest to you, join us in creating success out at our ReStore! The ReStore is a home-goods retail outlet managed by Merrimack Valley Habitat for Humanity. By supporting the ReStore as a volunteer in areas of sales, warehouse maintenance, product pick-up, or merchandising, you enable us to deliver on our mission of building safe and affordable homes through our earnings. The MVHH ReStore is open Wednesday through Saturday.

If you're not sure where you could be the most help, our Volunteer Coordinator would be happy to tell you about our current needs and where you might fit in.

**Volunteer Coordinator** 978-681-8858 ext. 16  
info@merrimackvalleyhabitat.org

### Construction and Project Support Opportunities

General Construction- We need individuals with all levels of experience, or simply a willingness to learn about the full range of construction you may encounter on our sites. Everyone is welcome and training is provided. We build new construction or rehabilitate homes - work can range all the way from foundation to the roof.

Licensed Contractors and Construction Professionals - MVHH is always delighted to hear from plumbers, electricians, heating contractors, roofers, plasterers, site and foundation professionals (the sorts of things we cannot do with volunteers) or other building professionals who wish to donate their time or services or offer a Habitat-friendly price for a quality job.

Site Supervisor- MVHH is always looking for experienced building volunteers who are willing to supervise the construction of a MVHH home through one or more phases.

Crew Leader- An individual who is experienced in a particular phase of construction can lead a group of volunteers under the guidance of the site supervisor.



Volunteer Site Crew Supervisors enjoy lunch with our volunteers.

### Merrimack Valley Habitat for Humanity Programs:

#### **Women Build**

Women Build is a Habitat for Humanity International program that encourages and trains women to make a difference by building homes and communities. MVHH holds Women Build days throughout the year. Check our VolunteerUp calendar for dates.

#### **Veteran Build**

Our Veteran Build program offers our community veterans the opportunity to be both engaged in service to others, as well as exploring becoming MVHH homeowners themselves. Veterans Building focuses on the inter-related areas of: affordable veteran homeownership, volunteer mobilization, education through leadership and new skill development, and honoring our veteran's serving within their communities.

#### **Youth Build**

Youth Build encourages 14 - 15 year olds in activities such as preparing lunch for a build crew, site clean-ups and working at our ReStore. Youth 16 + can be on the construction site accompanied by an adult (with some restrictions to use of equipment and tools).

#### **Nickels For Nails Fundraising**

Youth raise funds to support the building of MVHH homes. This program is educational and inspirational, involving young people beyond the MVHH build site, while engaging their communities in the MVHH mission.

#### **ReStore**

Work in a fun, safe retail home-goods environment that supports MVHH's mission of building affordable homes. A wide variety of work always needs to be done at the ReStore including: moving furniture and supplies (ability to lift over 40LBS) or retail/customer service and merchandising.

**Merrimack Valley Habitat builds every Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. - join us!**

All volunteers must pre-register with the Volunteer Coordinator in advance of each build day. The Volunteer Coordinator works with the Building Director to determine the number of volunteers that can safely and productively work on the site each build day.

We try to inform volunteers of the projects/tasks they will undertake on their volunteer day beforehand, but construction plans can change last minute. Please be flexible and open.

Construction volunteers must be at the site by 8:00 a.m. It is important that volunteers be prompt. The Build Director or a site supervisor will address the volunteers at 8:30 a.m. regarding work assignments, safety and overall construction at the start of each work day.

Plan to work until 3:30 p.m. with cleanup and departure from the site at 4:00 p.m. Please let the site supervisor know if you need to leave the site before 4:00 p.m., and sign-out.

Note: Build day tasks are designated by the Building Director and site supervisors who decides on the appropriate number of volunteers needed for those tasks.

Please remember to bring your own snacks, lunch, and water bottle. Be prepared to work rain, snow or shine.

- + Bring a hat and work gloves if you have them
- + Bring a raincoat
- + Bring extra warm clothes
- + Wear boots or sneakers - no open-toed sandals or shoes
- + Bring sunscreen
- + Dress in layers

Please help us keep our sites clean and organized. Before you leave for the day, please make sure all the tools, electrical cords, and materials that were used are returned to the proper locations.

## Non-Construction Volunteer Opportunities

There are always non-construction volunteer jobs available as well. Our needs change year by year, but regularly we find need for additional volunteers in areas of:

### Volunteer Greeters

A short greeter training will enable you to provide all the necessary information to volunteers as they check in on the build site on Saturdays at 8:00 a.m. Expect to be at the site for about one hour.

### Lunch Preparation

Individuals or groups are encouraged to provide lunch, snacks or drinks to build day volunteer groups.

### Technology

Input data in fundraising or volunteer databases, help create reports or mailing labels. We also occasionally need people with various computer software and database experience.

### Administrative and Leadership

As a leading affordable housing non-profit, professional volunteer services in areas of housing law, engineering, architecture, finance and IT are always welcome. Please inquire into our various board committees as well.

### Office Support

Some tasks require a few hours per week; others need occasional hours. Some work must be done in the office; other projects can be done at home on your own schedule.

### Other

Opportunities include public relations work, grant writing, creating printed materials, documenting archival information, running errands, making telephone calls, organizing our tool shed and warehouse, transporting materials. Don't forget our ReStore. We can always find a way for you to support our great work!

## Community Service

MVHH welcomes community service volunteers from civic groups, schools community assistance programs, and the judicial system. It is the community service volunteer's responsibility to maintain an accurate time sheet and to ensure that it is signed off at the beginning and end of each day by a MVHH supervisor or duly appointed person. Hours worked but not recorded or signed off at the end of each day of service will not be counted. For appropriate placement within our organization, MVHH reserves the right to know the offense related to court-ordered community service volunteers. Such individuals will be treated and held accountable to the same standards as all other volunteers.



Corporate Build Partner ADP summer 2014

## How to Sign-up to Volunteer

Volunteers are the heart of our organization. Each volunteer brings new vitality and strength. Experience is not necessary, and as noted earlier, volunteers are able to get involved in a number of a different ways. Merrimack Valley Habitat can put you to work!

There is no minimum time commitment for volunteers. You can volunteer one time or make it a regular commitment. Volunteers who regularly work on the build site often find that they increase their skills and comfort level in construction work. Volunteering regularly at our ReStore or at our business office can give you valuable experience with a notable non-profit for future employment. Our returning volunteers often provide continuity and serve as mentors to new volunteers.

1. Individuals - get started by going to our volunteer data management site VolunteerUp, create a profile, and then visit our volunteer calendar  
<https://www.volunteerup.com/ProjectCal.asp?o=79>
2. Groups - contact our Volunteer Coordinator to discuss group build days, a program specific build, and ReStore volunteer opportunities. We will get you started on a schedule and activity that works for you. Call 978-681-8858 ext. 16

## General Information for All Volunteers

**Quality Standards and Accountability:** Staff and volunteers alike join in the important work of MVHH because of our dedication to our mission. We strive to provide volunteers with the training, guidance and support to do the best possible job in any responsibility they have accepted. Please contact us with questions or if you have need of additional support.



**Unexpected Absence or Need to Step Down:** We are counting on you, but realize that personal circumstances can change unexpectedly. If you cannot fulfill a commitment to a build day or other assigned task, please communicate with the volunteer coordinator or appropriate staff person as soon as possible.

**Volunteer Job Satisfaction:** If you find that you have been “misplaced” within our organization, please contact the volunteer coordinator so we can find the best match for your unique talents and time you have to offer. Similarly, if you have questions or concerns about your volunteer experience, don’t hesitate to let us know. We are committed to making your volunteer experience pleasant, satisfying, and rewarding.

**Job Site Safety:** Our safety policy relies on all volunteers taking responsibility for maintaining a safe job site. The site supervisors and greeters will provide specific instructions related to safety that must be followed. Hard hats, safety goggles, and other safety devices must be used as instructed. Make safety your first priority. Please immediately report any safety concerns you observe to a site supervisor.

**Waiver of Liability:** All volunteers are required by our insurance company to sign an annual Waiver of Liability before participating with us in construction. Volunteers under the age of 18 must bring their waiver signed by a parent or legal guardian. No one under the age of 16 is allowed on the active build-site.

**No One is Alone:** No one may work alone on a Habitat job site, or be on the site at times that have not been authorized by the Building Director.

**Job Attire:** For the sake of your safety, we require that no open-toed shoes, loose clothing or hanging jewelry be worn on construction sites. We ask that men and women keep their shirts on, even in hot weather.

**Name Tags:** All volunteers and visitors at our construction sites are required to sign-in and sign-out, and wear a name tag throughout the day. This is important because of insurance and safety concerns and contributes to fellowship among volunteers.

**Confidentiality:** All volunteers, including board and committee members, family services volunteers and database assistants are required to adhere to agency standards of confidentiality regarding any information they may have access to in their work for MVHH.

**Habitat’s Volunteer Insurance:** MVHH carries a policy of medical and short-term disability insurance to protect our volunteers in the case of an accident. This coverage is in place to assist if the volunteer is uninsured, or to supplement the volunteer’s own medical insurance.

**Standards of Conduct:** Paid staff and volunteers are required to maintain high standards of professional conduct while involved in any activity on behalf of MVHH. We hope that everyone affiliated with MVHH will interact with respect, trust, and kindness. Please assume the best about each other and use direct communication to solve misunderstandings.

As a legally formed, non-profit organization, our staff and volunteers are bound by all federal, state and local laws against sexual harassment or any other harassment based on a person’s gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, physical characteristics or any other condition. To report an incident that needs investigation or resolution, please contact the Executive Director.

### MVHH Board and Board Committees

Merrimack Valley Habitat for Humanity success is built on the dedication and commitment of our active board and board committees. We are always interested in the support of enthusiastic individuals and businesses that share in our mission and purpose.

Please contact us at 978-681-8858 with your interest in serving on any of committees listed below.

- Audit and Finance
- Building
- Builder's Blitz
- Development,
- Faith Relations
- Family Partners
- Gala
- Marketing
- ReStore
- Site Acquisition
- Brickman Triathlon
- Volunteer

**Office Hours:** Monday - Friday, 8:30am - 5pm T. (978)681-8858

### Staff:

Randy Larson, Executive Director, ext. 11  
Sharon Mason, Director of Development, ext. 18  
Emerson Dahmen, Building Director, ext. 17  
James Comeau, Asst. Construction Manager, ext. 17  
Ann Folinus, Business Manager, ext. 14  
Roxanna Mota, Family Services Coordinator, ext. 15  
Martha Learned, Faith Relations Coordinator, ext. 13  
Jennifer Hilton, Volunteer Coordinator, ext. 16  
Jennifer Annis, Administrative Assistant, ext. 10  
Steve Cheatham, ReStore Manager, 978-686-3323  
Joe Polenchar, Asst. ReStore Manager, 978-686-3323

### Directions to Habitat office:

Take Rt. 495 to exit 45B, Marston Street. After 1 mile, turn left on Canal Street. Turn left on Union Street (0.3 mile) and park in the lot on the right. Directly across, at the corner of Island and Union Streets, is the Bell Tower Square Building.

Enter at the 60 Island Street door. Take a left and take the stairs to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor and turn left. Or, immediately on your right, take the elevator to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor and exit the elevator, turning right. Follow the hallway immediately in front of you to the end. You will come to an open area. Take the hallway that runs to your right. We are the second door on the left after the bend.

