



J. J. Swinney helped direct a crew at the wallraising for the home sponsored by Thrivent Financial for Lutherans. He continues to work with the volunteers who come out to build every Saturday.

Meet J. J. Swinney: *Habitat's High School Program Shapes Future*

Like a lot of high school students, J. J. Swinney didn't know what he wanted to do with his life. Growing up in the small town of Sahuarita, he and his friends had taken to partying for entertainment and weren't invested in their education.

Then he met Chuck Gallagher, a teacher at Sahuarita High School who convinced him to sign up for carpentry classes and participate in the Habitat for Humanity Tucson school build project.

Little did J. J. know then, but Mr. Gallagher and Habitat would permanently shape the course of his future.

Mr. Gallagher "was one of the best teachers I've ever had," J. J. said. "He took us under his wing and taught us something useful."

"I think he likes a challenge," he added jokingly.

Carpentry classes became something J. J. looked forward to every day because it was tangible and he enjoyed working with his hands. Seeing progress on the Habitat home was also motivation to attend class.

Nearly 10 years later, J. J. is a professional homebuilder who has framed over 100 homes for companies such as AmericaBuilt Communities and Johnson Manley. He has passed along his knowledge to his two younger brothers, who now both work in construction. And today, J. J. has returned to work for Habitat for Humanity, serving in a leadership capacity and overseeing crews of volunteers building homes.

What's unique about working for Habitat, J. J. said, is that the homeowners are so excited to move in—they really appreciate the sweat that goes into each one. That isn't always the case with other homeowners because, as J.J. has found, "it's really hard to make people happy."

J. J. likes the challenge of working with volunteers, especially those who have had no construction experience at all. Through Habitat, J. J. has also worked with the women inmates from the Arizona Department of Corrections, a partnership that provides them with some basic skills so they can more easily return to the workforce upon release.

Carpentry is physically demanding work, but J. J. said he's impressed with the women's tenacity. "It's exciting because they're stepping into something brand new," he added.

While holding down his full-time job with Habitat, J. J. attended the University of Phoenix, graduating last May with a bachelor's degree in criminal justice. He plans to pursue a master's degree in business with the dream of starting his own construction company one day. In his free time he enjoys the company of his wife, Amber, and their 2-year-old daughter, Katelyn.

"The school build is very important," J. J. added, reflecting back on his high school years. "Had I not been given that opportunity, I would have headed in a different direction—maybe a downward spiral."

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From The Director



Michael McDonald

The proposed tax-payer bailout of the mortgage industry caused an industry analyst to have an epiphany: in good times profits are privatized and enjoyed by the relatively few, while in bad times losses become socialized and burden the many.

This is not news. Realists, including Bill Gates, know that it takes all three sectors of our society and economy - for-profit, non-profit and government - to make things work for the greatest good, to provide the kind of opportunity and quality of life that all deserve. Perhaps that realism – that vision - sounds naïve (though I doubt anyone could accuse Bill Gates of being naïve) but I see evidence every day that the deepest human desire is not “me, me, me and mine, mine, mine” but “us, us, us and ours, ours, ours.” If we could expand “us and ours” to include people and institutions beyond Habitat and like-minded organizations, then perhaps more win/win socioeconomic outcomes could be achieved for more of our friends, neighbors and the people in need we will never meet. Until then, half of the world will continue to live on less than \$2 a day and, closer to home, 20% of the children who call Pima County home will be living in poverty.

As the holidays draw near and we begin to think about making New Year’s resolutions, consider joining me in contemplating the answers to these questions: “What am I most grateful for in life?” “Through my intentions, actions, and behavior, what message am I sending about what matters most to me?” “What might I do with the remaining gift of my life to become the person I was created to be, and am still capable of becoming?”

Habitat is honored to be a part of your life journey as you seek to fulfill your potential. May we continue to be the place that provides you with the opportunity to be and become your best self, and to build a more compassionate and just world, one in which both economic rewards and losses are more equitably shared among our community’s diverse members for the greater good of us all.

Michael McDonald
Executive Director

Lester Street Mortgage Has Been Paid Off

We want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who sent in a donation in response to our Burn The Mortgage campaign. We are pleased to report that the effort to retire the \$160,000 mortgage on our Lester Street offices has been successful! Habitat was fortunate to be able to sell a piece of property to the City and the County that did not lend itself to home construction – it will now remain open space.

We will use the proceeds to make up the difference between what our generous donors contributed and the amount owed on the mortgage. Interest payments alone were in excess of \$900 every month so retiring this debt frees up monies that can now be used to purchase supplies for construction! Thanks again for helping to make this possible.

Building Freedom Day 2008

On the anniversary of the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, Habitat for Humanity Tucson honored hope and the American dream by raising the walls on four new homes in the Corazon Del Pueblo neighborhood at its 7th annual Building Freedom Day event.



Community members, representatives from local businesses, congregations, members of the military and Habitat homeowners – more than 350 people - joined together to help make the dreams of four families come true.



Charge!

The first shift started construction at 6:30 that morning.



Up, up and away!

Terri Figueroa, future Habitat homeowner, and a team of volunteers raise the first wall on her home.



Team Work

Volunteers from all over the community worked together to get the job done.



A Special Boost

U of A Women's Head Basketball Coach Niya Butts and some of her team members brought a much needed burst of energy to the third shift as they lent some sweat - and height - to the construction of Terri's home.



Thank you!

Habitat, Bank of the West and the Davis Monthan Honor Guard helped wrap up a long day of building with a special thank you to all who participated. Everyone enjoyed special gifts from Cox, dinner, music, Retreat of the Colors and Taps.

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Home Dedications

Habitat for Humanity Tucson has dedicated 12 homes since January 1, 2008. Home dedications are very special celebrations, and these photos capture the joy each family genuinely feels on the day they cut the ribbon and receive the keys to their new home.

It takes more than 2,000 volunteer hours and \$100,000 to complete each of our homes. Habitat is proud to partner with many local organizations, businesses, individuals and foundations, along with hundreds of volunteers and the Arizona Women's Correctional Team to make the American dream of homeownership a reality for deserving families.



The Ngang's family partner, Sandy Giannini, hands their new house keys to their oldest daughter, Adit, at the dedication of their home held on June 26, 2008. This ceremony marked the completion of the Balboa/Laguna Habitat neighborhood, a cluster of 39 homes.



As family partner Lori Bable (left) looks on, Lisa Bejarano hugs her oldest son after she proudly presents her new Habitat home to her family at their dedication on July 30, 2008.

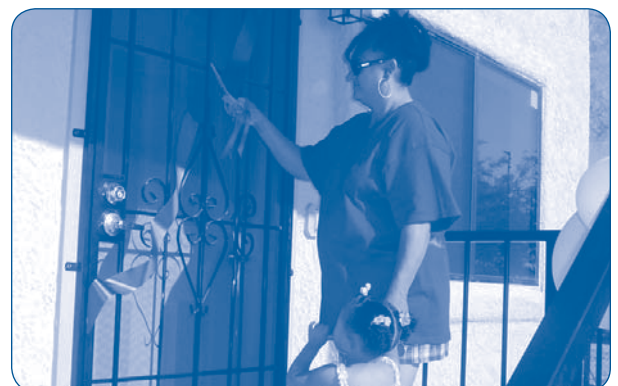


The Araza Family cuts the ribbon on their home on June 30, 2008. Their unique home, designed by University of Arizona architecture students, was made possible by the Marshall Foundation, The Micek Family, Thomas Warne/Community Foundation for Southern Arizona, Wildcat Habitat for Humanity, American Institute of Architects, Pepper Viner Homes, William and Celina Valenzuela, and Farmers Investment Co.

On April 29, 2008, the Porrás and Machado Families celebrated the dedication of their homes built by the students enrolled in the High School Build program at Sabino and Santa Rita High Schools. These homes were built in partnership with the City of Tucson. Other major sponsors include The Gordon Foundation, JP Morgan Chase, The Jim Click Automotive Team, John and Helen Murphey Foundation, Southern Arizona Home Builders Association, U.S. Bank and The Wings Like Eagles Foundation.



The Machado Family poses in front of their home.



The Porrás Family cuts the ribbon before entering their new home.

On September 11, 2007, Habitat for Humanity Tucson raised the walls on seven homes at their 6th Annual Building Freedom Day event. These homes were dedicated at one large celebration held on June 24, 2008.

Housewarming gifts are presented to every family at the dedication. Special thanks to Martha DeWarf (bible or other faith text), Lutheran Church of the Risen Savior, Voyager Quilters and Tucson Quilters Guild (quilts), Liz's Pantry (a basket of food), Community Church at SaddleBrooke (tool kit), Jeannette and Dean Packard (Ben's Bells), M. Craig (decorative tile), Melba Cope (framed nature picture) and Earthtones (house numbers). Food for the guests is provided by Bashas' and Two Men and A Truck move every family into their new home.



Evangelina Valenzuela and her granddaughter, Gianna, admire the keys to their new Habitat home. This home was sponsored by TMC Foundation, Fennemore Craig Foundation, and Northern Trust.



Orfaldia Acosta and her two children stand in their new kitchen with their family partner, Chris Leon. The HabiStore and Long Realty Cares Foundation sponsored the construction of this home.



After cutting the ribbon and receiving the keys to her new house, Anna Lopez welcomes her guests into the home for the first time. The construction of the Lopez Family home was sponsored by Anderson Painting, Ashton Company, Beach Fleischman & Co., CAID Industries, CTI, Inc., Desert Metals Recycling, Division II, Ferguson Waterworks, Fluoresco Lighting & Sign Corp., Lang Wyatt Construction, Lovitt & Touché Inc., M3 Engineering & Tech Corp., The Mahoney Group, Quadna Inc., and Sundt Construction.



Veronica Carrizosa and her family admire the beautiful quilts made especially for them by members of the community. Their home was made possible by Citi, Cox Communications, The Home Depot, Tucson Electric Power, Realty Executives of Southern Arizona and U.S. Bank.



Margie Rico and Reverend John Kitagawa hug after John said a prayer and blessed the family and their new home. Margie's home was sponsored by St. Philip's in the Hills Episcopal Church, St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church, and other supporting congregations.



Miguel Ruiz proudly holds up the keys to the home he will share with his wife and their three daughters. The construction of their Building Freedom Day home was sponsored by the Tucson Association of Realtors.



New homeowner Juan Valenton (in sunglasses) poses with his grandmother, brother and family partner, Tim Szott, at the dedication of their home sponsored by Broadway Christian Church.



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A Special Birthday Gift

On May 14, Abbey Alexander turned six years old. And, just as with any six-year-old girl's birthday, invitations were sent, balloons were ordered and cake was prepared. This birthday girl, though, had a very special wish-list in mind.

Instead of asking for dolls, play toys and clothes, Abbey asked that each of her guests bring a donation for Habitat for Humanity.

"I was thinking of people who needed help," she said.

Grandmas, aunts, uncles and friends alike all took her request to heart, bringing donations totaling \$235 so that Abbey could help children and families, like hers, find safe, affordable and decent housing.

"It was her idea," said Abbey's mom. "We're so proud of her."

Despite her specific request, though, Abbey still celebrated her birthday with gifts as many could not resist buying her small trinkets in addition to their donation.



Abbey Alexander stands proudly in the Habitat office with a donation from her sixth birthday party.

Cruisin' for a Cause

We would like to thank Bon Voyage Travel and Holland America for offering an opportunity to those interested in taking a cruise to enjoy a first class vacation experience and benefit Habitat for Humanity Tucson at the same time.

Every time someone books a cruise during the remainder of 2008 and all of 2009 with Terry Oremland, travel consultant with Bon Voyage Travel, a portion of the fare will be donated to Habitat. Make sure you tell Terry when you contact her that you read about this opportunity in the HabiNews newsletter.

"Over our thirty years in business, Bon Voyage Travel has always been involved in supporting the local community and we are delighted to be partnering with Habitat," said Terry. "We applaud Habitat for the outstanding work they do and are pleased we can contribute in a small way."

Call Terry Oremland today at (520) 577-9080, ext 152, or email her at toremland@bvtravel.com for more information. Why not turn your next cruise vacation into an opportunity to support an organization you care about?

Gifts Received January 1, 2008 – June 30, 2008

A big thank you to the donors listed below who gave a gift of \$1,000 or more. We wish we had the space to recognize all of our donors – we are deeply grateful for every contribution we receive.

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(\$100,000.00 +)

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Wildcat Habitat for Humanity
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Donald and Natalie Zook

In Celebration of Birthdays

Abbey Alexander (8)
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Weddings

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Special thanks to the following for construction financing and operational support:

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Northern Trust N.A.
Pima County IDA

We have made every effort to ensure the accuracy of this list. If we have made an error, please accept our sincere apology and let us know so we can correct it.



High School Build Students Honored

The Jim Brodie Award was established several years ago to honor the memory of a long-time Habitat staff member who supervised – and nurtured - the High School Build program. In April, each high school involved in the program selects a student who best represents the characteristics that made Jim so special: kind, considerate, hardworking, a leader among his/her peers, professional, punctual, interested in community service, among many other traits. The recipient is presented with a Home Depot gift card and a certificate.

Chuck Sillence, Howenstine High Magnet School's construction technology instructor, and Tori Bacal, school counselor, selected Stephen Davis as their school's recipient. In his nomination, Chuck wrote:

Stephen Davis has been working on the Habitat house since he was a freshman. His peers recognize his leadership abilities and skills and turn to him often. He has a positive attitude and desire to get the job done. But what really sets him apart is his willingness to do more to help however and wherever he can. He graduated in May. Our habitat build crew will miss Stephen; our school community will really miss him.

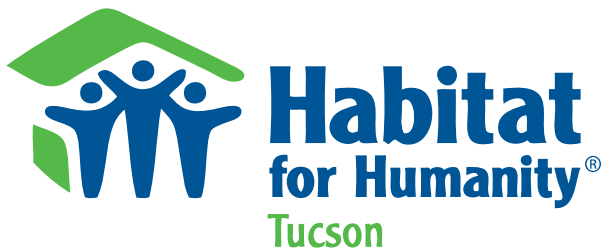
Stephen wrote about his experience in the construction technology class and said,

Watching the family receive the home that I was able to be a part of constructing proves to me that the hard work and effort we all put forth is appreciated. It's the smiles, the "thank you", the hand shakes and hugs that prove community service is a powerful tool. By becoming involved in the community, I have become aware that we all share in the success and failures of our society.



Stephen (right) works with a fellow student to secure the roof trusses.

Congratulations to Stephen and the other Jim Brodie Award recipients.



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