



Clockwise, from the top left, nine new Habitat-NYC homes on Halsey Street, Cheryl Layne cuts the ribbon to her new home; Tonya Cooper and her children conduct their home blessing; the Harold family proudly displays their Habitat-NYC homeownership certificate.

Homes for the Holidays

Habitat-NYC dedicates nine new homes on Halsey Street

“This has transformed me,” 18-year-old Anthony Gillespie described his experience with Habitat-NYC.

Anthony’s family was one of the nine joy-filled families who dedicated their new Habitat-NYC homes on Halsey Street in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn, in December.

“I didn’t think this dream could be a possibility for me,” said Anthony’s mom, Jacqueline Harold, who works as an education assistant in the city’s public school system. “But with Habitat, it became a dream come true

for me and my family.”

Homeownership wasn’t a dream that came easily for the nine Halsey families. Together, they put in about 4,500 hours of labor, digging out rubble, raising the walls, tiling the bathrooms and painting—to name only a few of the construction tasks they took on with enthusiasm and energy.

And it was a dream built with the help of about 4,000 volunteers, who worked with the families as they built their own homes.

The December dedication drew

families and their friends, volunteers, funders and community leaders. And although the celebration was held on a blustery cold day, all kept warm inside the new homes, thanks to the buildings’ well-insulated, “green” construction methods.

These homes are among the first buildings in New York City constructed of very energy-efficient Insulated Concrete Forms (ICFs). The homes also feature ENERGY STAR appliances and light fixtures, high-

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Habitat for Humanity - New York City
*transforms lives and our city by
uniting all New Yorkers around the
cause of decent, affordable housing
for everyone.*

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111 John Street, 23rd Floor
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From the Executive Director

Happy New Year! Here at Habitat-NYC, we couldn't be more excited about the work ahead of us in 2008: building more homes than ever before, partnering with incredible families and hosting thousands upon thousands of New Yorkers on our construction site.

Speaking personally, this has been a particularly dynamic time. As you may know, I was appointed Executive Director of this great organization in November. I am humbled and inspired to be leading this affiliate at such an historic time. After spending a decade in private-sector real estate, I came to Habitat-NYC last year as the Chief Operating Officer and was immediately struck by the commitment and passion of Habitat-NYC's staff, Board of Directors, volunteers and supporters. More than once, I have been able to witness firsthand those magic moments that occur on our construction sites when a volunteer meets a family partner and each grasps the significance of the remarkable work they are undertaking. I have also been moved by this organization's special relationship with the faith community. Growing up in rural upstate New York, my family would often follow my minister father as he substituted for absent preachers at various congregations in the community. One Sunday we would be Presbyterian, the next Episcopalian, the next Unitarian. I'm often reminded of those experiences at Habitat-NYC, as our committed staff partners with diverse faith groups of every conceivable denomination and religion in our efforts to give a voice to those thousands of New York City families living in dangerous and unaffordable conditions.

And it is the families themselves that give our work such power. We are grateful that we here at Habitat-NYC can offer hardworking families a "hand up" to help them break out of intractable and desperate circumstances. In 2007, so many of you helped us to succeed in this important and powerful work. We offer our heartfelt thanks for your time, your gifts and your support. It is truly appreciated—we couldn't do it without you and we can't wait to continue our partnership with you in 2008!

Habitat-NYC to Merge with Staten Island Affiliate

Once the merger agreement is completed, we hope to be building anew on Staten Island and adding more projects to the three existing Habitat homes on Maple Road. We are exploring some exciting possibilities in the Stapleton area on the North Shore, and the Staten Island Foundation has supported Habitat-NYC by funding an organizer for the Island, empowering us to reach out to schools, faith groups, businesses and individuals to promote affordable housing development in

Staten Island and citywide.

In the meantime, Habitat-NYC will be reaching out to Staten Island volunteers—both old and new—and meeting with community leaders, faith groups and elected leaders to seek their help in revitalizing Habitat in the borough. Recently, Staten Island groups from the College of Staten Island, Wagner College and the U.S. Coast Guard have volunteered on-site. With these new partners, we look forward to a future Habitat-NYC development on Staten Island.

Founded by Millard and Linda Fuller in 1976, Habitat for Humanity is a Christian organization that welcomes people of all beliefs to join in its mission.

Family Partner Finishes His Home – Then Builds 41 More

Helping to build his own home was such a great experience for Halsey family partner Anthony Thompson, 22, he didn't want to stop. So after his home was completed, he signed on with AmeriCorps and now builds homes for other families at Habitat-NYC's Atlantic Avenue complex in Ocean Hill-Brownsville, Brooklyn.

Anthony has had a long love affair with Habitat-NYC, starting when he regularly dedicated his Sundays to helping his aunt build her Habitat home on nearby Willoughby Avenue.

Anthony's mom, Edna Thompson, sent in their application for a Habitat home when Anthony was 19. He was the oldest of four children, and they and their mother had been living in a cramped two-bedroom apartment. At the time, Anthony was well aware of the 300 hours of sweat equity he'd be required to give and the realities of construction work—and he was excited! "I learned new skills," said Anthony, who

is pursuing a bachelor's degree in architecture at City Tech. "In school, that's something I wanted to do." The hands-on training he received by building his own home "fit into my major."

Anthony was often one of the youngest family partners building on the site, and many Habitat-NYC staff members were delighted by his enthusiasm and dedication.

"He was always engaged, always asking questions," said Paul Thibault, Habitat-NYC's Director of

Construction and Real Estate. "I was impressed by his curiosity and interest in how buildings get built."

Paul said that though Anthony was a family partner, he was closer in age to many of the AmeriCorps with whom he worked. He learned quickly, mastered tasks easily, and was often called upon by Habitat staff and AmeriCorps members to teach others and lead volunteer groups. Anthony saw Habitat's concepts of community development in action. And he embraced them.

"I'm happy about moving into the home I helped build, but I'm even happier about helping other people move into their own new homes."

—Anthony Thompson

The Halsey Street home dedication was the culmination of the hard work and dedication of so many, and Anthony was overjoyed. "I can say to people, I've helped build my own building, and I just really enjoyed myself. This is one of the greatest things that's happened to me."

But Anthony didn't spend much time resting up. His AmeriCorps training started at the beginning of January, right after his home was completed.

"I'm happy about moving into the home I helped build," said Anthony. "But I'm even happier about helping other people move into their own new homes."



Anthony Thompson hard at work during last year's Martin Luther King Jr. Day build.

Brokers Raise Funds and Hammers for Habitat-NYC

Like most people, New York City's real estate brokers like to get a bang for their buck—and that's just what a group of 30 generous brokers got when they raised at least \$500 apiece for Habitat-NYC's Atlantic Avenue complex. In return, they were invited to spend a couple of days on-site, hammers in hand, to help build affordable homes.

The broker-volunteers included top New York City real estate leaders who are mem-

bers of Brokers Build, an organization that has raised nearly \$120,000 to date for 11 homes in the Atlantic Avenue project.

"Brokers have been benefiting from the real estate boom, and we want to create a boom in affordable housing," says Stan Ponte, President of Coldwell Banker Hunt Kennedy Previews International and Chair of Brokers Build.

Our high-energy brokers may be more accustomed to working the sales offices of

luxury condos, but they quickly adapted to the rigors of operating circular saws, framing walls, and installing windows.

Represented over the two-day build were Brown Harris Stevens, Coldwell Banker Hunt Kennedy, Corcoran Group, Edge Capital Advisors, Halstead Property Development, Prudential Douglas Elliman, Sotheby's International Realty, Stribling & Associates, Wells Fargo Private Mortgage Banking and Wohlfarth & Associates.



From left to right: Stan Ponte, left, with Family Partners Mirian Rodriguez and Miguel Baez; Robin Reardon, center, and Whitnie Wood, right, receive instruction on using the circular saw; Sue Goldman, left, Brian Lewis and Matt Hemberger measure wood for window framing; and Kinnaird Fox and Kathryn Prickett take a moment out of their busy day to pose for a picture.

Nine New Homes for Hardworking Families

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efficiency boilers, insulated windows and sustainable, non-toxic building materials—all of which will add up to lower energy bills and healthier environments.

Built on a long-vacant lot at the corner of Halsey Street and Marcus Garvey Boulevard, the \$2.5 million complex was generously funded by city, state and federal sources and foundation, corporate and individual donors.

“These new homes represent the best of New York City—people from every walk of life coming together to create decent, affordable homes for families who need a hand up,” said Josh Lockwood, Habitat-NYC’s Executive Director.

Tonya Cooper, one of the new homeowners, was near tears with joy as she accepted the key to her new home. “This Habitat home will help us live the American dream of having a home of our own, so our children will have something in the future,” she said. Tonya, a bank teller, and her husband Sean Milan, who works for a messenger service, currently share an overcrowded apartment with their four children.

“It’s a thrill to see Habitat-NYC once again helping Brooklyn families reach the ‘promised land’ of home ownership—this time in vibrant Bedford-Stuyvesant,” said Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz.

After ribbons were cut on each of the three buildings, windows lit up. The nine new homes filled with people and received their first blessings. Though temperatures outside were well below freezing, inside each apartment felt like home.



Family Partners, Habitat staff and public officials gather in excitement before the ribbon-cutting of the first of three Habitat buildings on Halsey Street.

Young Professional Singles Build

Do you want to make a difference, have fun and meet other socially-conscious New York City singles? Habitat-NYC has just the ticket—our first Young Professional Singles Build, which will be held on **Saturday, March 22**.

Twenty-five men and an equal number of women (aged 21 to 40) will spend the day putting ideals into action by helping to build affordable homes at our 41-unit Atlantic Avenue complex in Ocean Hill-Brownsville, Brooklyn. Our volunteer builders will get to know each other as they frame walls, hang drywall and perform other construction tasks. No experience necessary. We’ll also provide lunch, a tee shirt and lots of mingle time.

To keep the event balanced, we ask participants to sign up with an unattached friend of the opposite sex.

When you and a friend sign up to build, you also commit to raise a minimum of \$300 (per pair), which will help finance the construction of Habitat-NYC homes. Raising your sponsorship is easy with our online fundraising program. This tool enables you to create simple e-mail campaigns to reach out to friends, family and colleagues for support.

To ensure site safety, we can only accommodate 25 volunteer pairs on site. So if you’d like to be part of this build, register now. Go to www.habitatnyc.org and click on the Events button. Or call Deborah Nocella, Director of Volunteer Programs, at 212-991-4000, ext. 310 or e-mail dnocella@habitatnyc.org.

How Sweet It Is: Children Learn Joy of Volunteering

It’s never too early to introduce children to the good feeling that comes with helping others.

That’s why Habitat-NYC has designed a very special “building” program for children aged 6 to 12, constructing edible flower boxes. No dangerous hammers, saws or drills needed: Our small builders will use pound cake, lady fingers, icing and candy to make this delicious treat that symbolizes the joy of having a safe and decent home.

Children can take their edible art home to enjoy. They also will create special greeting cards for Habitat-NYC’s family partners and will learn about the importance of affordable homes.

Called *Home Sweet Home*, this program

will be held on Saturday, April 26, during National Volunteer Week.



Children aged 6 to 12 can construct edible flower boxes.

Participating children and their parents will also learn the art of fundraising, as they challenge friends and family to help raise a \$50 contribution, which will be

used to pay for construction supplies for the 41 homes at our Atlantic Avenue complex in Ocean Hill-Brownsville, Brooklyn. Fundraising is easy, with the help of our online funding program that enables you to create simple, individualized e-mail campaigns.

By making this tasty treat, your child will experience the joy that comes with volunteering and helping families and children in need.

If you’d like to be a part of *Home Sweet Home*, register now by going to our website, www.habitatnyc.org, and clicking on the Events button. Or you can call Jaclyn Duran, Volunteer Program Associate, at 212-991-4000, ext 305, or e-mail jduran@habitatnyc.org.

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Ansah Family Honored at \$1 Million Fundraiser

Sam and Esther Ansah were living in a tiny one-bedroom apartment when they learned Esther was going to have quadruplets.

"Habitat-NYC was the answer to our prayers," said Sam, as he accepted the Family Partner of the Year award at Habitat-NYC's Builder Awards.



Sam, Esther, and their four children moved into their Habitat home in the Bronx last year. They were presented the award by Habitat-NYC board member David Bach, who also served as the event's Emcee. The 8th Annual Builder Awards, held at the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine, raised over one million dollars to help build affordable homes in New York City.

Other winners include **United Technologies Corporation** (Corporate Partner of the Year Award), **Al Roker** (Social Justice Award), **Rev. William Tully** and **St. Bartholomew's Church** (Richard Wong Faith-in-Action Award) and **Hedge Funds for Habitat-NYC** (New Partnership Award).

Habitat-NYC Plans New Homes In Harlem and Brooklyn

Habitat-NYC's Atlantic Avenue project will keep us busy through 2008, but we aren't resting on our home-building laurels.

We are in pre-development on two additional projects, one in Central Harlem and the other in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn. Both projects will be green, incorporating many energy-efficient, sustainable and non-toxic materials and features.

115th Street in Central Harlem

This project marks a bold, new direction for Habitat-NYC with our first co-development building, in a unique collaboration with Genesis Partners, Full Spectrum of NY and Karim Hutson.

With the difficulty we now face in acquiring land, Habitat-NYC is looking to this type of co-development model for many of our future homes. It will be exciting—

and challenging—to pioneer a new home-building model.

We expect to begin construction next fall on this \$1.2 million, four-story building, which will include a basement and ground-floor duplex and three floor-through units.



Rendering of 544 Lafayette Street in Brooklyn

514 Lafayette Avenue, and single buildings at 544 Lafayette Avenue and 118 Hart Street).

The four Hart-Lafayette buildings are expected to cost \$5.8 million to build. New York City will sell each of these four city-owned lots to Habitat-NYC for \$1 apiece.

Hart-Lafayette in Bedford-Stuyvesant

Expected to go into the ground in the fall of 2008, this project includes four row houses, each with four stories and four units for a total of 16 units. They will be built on three separate sites (two adjacent at 512 and

State Officials Put Muscle Where Their Money Is

AHC builds with Habitat-NYC

One recent group of Habitat-NYC volunteers has built thousands of affordable homes throughout the state of New York.

Yet for many, their day on-site at our Atlantic Avenue complex marked the first time they'd picked up construction tools.

That's because the volunteers hailed from the New York State Affordable Housing Corporation (AHC), a subsidiary of the state's Housing Finance Agency. Their "day jobs" include providing financial support to develop affordable housing for homeownership by low- and moderate-income families.

The 41 homes at Atlantic Avenue are among 107 Habitat-NYC homes that have received a total of \$3.55 million in AHC grants over the years.

Among their two dozen construction-workers-for-a-day was Priscilla Almodovar, AHC's President and CEO, who was soon sawing wood and framing walls with the best of them.



Priscilla Almodovar, AHC President and CEO, center, measures wood planks to be cut.

"This is bricks and mortar. This is the families who will live here," Almodovar said. "It's great for our staff members to get to see the fruits of their labor."

Almodovar worked alongside Miguel Baez, a future homeowner at Atlantic Avenue. "It's great to have your hands on a home that you are building for yourself and the other families," he told her.