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New habitat for humanity group in Edwardsville

By [Larry Ingram](#)

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A new Habitat for Humanity chapter has formed that will serve the Edwardsville and Glen Carbon area with the goal of building a house for a deserving family every two years.

But that will depend on community and corporate giving to the effort, according to Chris Azar, acting chairman for the new chapter.

The Edwardsville chapter is a result of momentum generated by a Habitat for Humanity house that was built last year on Hill Lane, and dedicated on Oct. 22. The Rotary Club of Edwardsville partnered with the Wood River area Habitat for Humanity Chapter to build the house on Hill Lane. The Rotary Club donated heavily for the last house, giving more than \$25,000 toward the effort.

The effort had major support and corporate donations from the community, as well as sizable in-kind gifts of materials and labor.

A group of people, including members of the Rotary Club, formed the new chapter in



[Larry Ingram](#) photo -- Officers of the newly formed Edwardsville Habitat for Humanity are pictured at a Business after Hours event in Edwardsville in January. From left are Darlene Azar, fund-raising co-chair; Chris Azar, acting chairman; Trish Cheatam, public relations chairwoman; and Diane Schwind, secretary chairwoman. All are volunteers with the new chapter.

December.

The new chapter continues to have support from members of the Rotary Club, including John Mikes, building chairman, and Harry Windland and Diane Schwind.

All three were involved in helping to build the house on Hill Lane.

The board of directors for the new chapter is made up of: Cheatam, Chris Azar, Schwind and Windland. Darlene Azar will serve as fundraising co-chair for the new chapter. All of the officers are volunteers.

"Rather than have another chapter build another house in our area, we formed a chapter so that we could complete this house and additional houses," said Chris Azar.

The new Ed/Glen Carbon Area chapter will be under the umbrella of the Lewis and Clark affiliate and will join the Wood River, Alton, Collinsville, Highland, and Greenville chapters.

The goal of the Ed/Glen chapter to build at least one home every two years.

But Azar's goal is more ambitious.

"I would like to see another house built every year, depending on corporate community support."

Another lot on Hill Lane has been donated by Joseph Meyer and Associates, an Edwardsville firm, to build a second Habitat home in Edwardsville.

"In my mind, this chapter will be 'formed' by local churches, the community and corporate commitment," Azar said.

A member of the Junior Service Club, Cheatam discovered the opportunity to serve when Schwind gave a talk at the club.

"I thought about it -- it's always something that I've wanted be involved in," Cheatam said. "I've always been one of those people who gets involved. All of a sudden I became the (public relations) chair (of the new chapter)."

"It's hard for people to not be excited about helping others help themselves," she said.

Cheatam said her job is to "get everyone fired up."

"We want people to feel good about supporting Habitat for Humanity," she said. "My greatest hope is that we could get enough community support to build a house ever year."

The local community has proven to be extremely generous with building the house on

Hill Lane, she said.

"I think people will come out and help," she said.

Azar said the effort is essentially a Christian building ministry that helps people living in substandard housing a way out of their situation.

"We are beginning to raise money to build another house next door," Azar said. "We are going to begin a letter writing campaign, to try to get corporate support."

The corporate benchmark for contributing to the effort is \$1,000 or more in funding.

Members of the community can donate to the new chapter by visiting Culver's of Edwardsville, from 5 to 8 p.m. Feb. 21, when a percentage of purchases will be donated to the new chapter.

"This is a way for the community to get involved," Azar said.

On average, about \$65,000 in cash, goods, and services is needed to construct a Habitat home.

The chapter will become official in February, when the chapter is approved by the Habitat for Humanity Lewis and Clark Affiliate.

Currently there are 30 completed Habitat homes that have been built in Madison and Bond counties.

For more information, contact Azar at 659-0975 or Cheatam at 692-7692.

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