

Local Habitat chapter fulfills goals

Rev. Dr. Christopher Ritter, at right, reads a prayer as Chris Azar, Chairman of the Ed-Glen Chapter of Habitat for Humanity, next left, and the Denning family, recipients of what will soon be a new home, bow their heads during a ground blessing ceremony Sept. 6 for the next Habitat for Humanity home in Edwardsville. Photo by Marci Winters-McLaughlin.



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EDITOR'S NOTE – This is the sixth in a series of articles looking back on the top stories of 2008.

Members of the Edwardsville and Glen Carbon communities found a new way to help people this year.

About 30 local residents joined together to start the Edwardsville/Glen Carbon Area Chapter of Habitat for Humanity in February.

The residents got the idea after the Edwardsville Rotary Club, in conjunction with the Habitat for Humanity Wood River Chapter, constructed the first ever habitat house in Edwardsville as part of a service project.

Residents of both communities volunteered to become board members and establish the Chapter as part of the Lewis and Clark Habitat for Humanity. Board Members included: Diana Schwind Chris and Darlene Azar, Trish Cheatham, Harry Windland, John Mikes and Jane McKinney.

After becoming an official Chapter, the organization began accepting donations and hosting fundraisers to raise needed funds to start their first home.

The chapter needed to collect \$65,000 – \$45,000 to start building and an additional \$20,000 to complete the home.

It did not take the community long to start helping the Chapter raise the needed funds to break ground on its first home and Habitat's second home in Edwardsville.

Donations included \$500 by the Center Grove Presbyterian Church and \$5,000 by the Greater Edwardsville Area Community Foundation (GEACF), a charitable trust that receives, manages and distributes tax deductible charitable contributions throughout the local community.

Several restaurants offered fundraising opportunities. Culver's Restaurant donated 10 percent of its total sales during a one-day event in February and there was a "Dine Out For Habitat Day" where local restaurants donated a portion of their sales during dinner time in September. Participating restaurants included: Bigelo's Bistro, Cold Stone Creamery, Denny's, Los Tres Amigos, North Side Dairy Haven, Nori Sushi and Sacred Grounds.

Other donations included Infinite Wellness Chiropractic, Ltd. giving its \$3,000 in proceeds from its Kid's Day America/International event in May.

The biggest fundraiser of the year for Habitat was its First Annual Golf Scramble at Sunset Hills Country Club in July. The organization raised \$14,000.

Other fundraisers by the organization also included the raffling off of a children's playhouse constructed and donated by Joe Russo in October and a jazz concert with performer Erin Bode and silent auction in November at the N.O. Nelson Campus of Lewis and Clark Community College in Edwardsville.

With approximately \$50,000 in the bank, the Chapter conducted a ground breaking ceremony on the location of its home in September.

The home is now almost complete at 310 M Street and soon to be filled by a family of five – a mom, dad and three children.

Public Relations and Vice-Chair Trish Cheatham said the city of Edwardsville donated the property.

"Our Chapter is incredibly grateful to our community for all they have done for us," Cheatham said.

Habitat houses are built with volunteer labor and donations of money and materials.

The homes are simple and decent and finished with the help of the homeowner (partner) families.

Habitat houses are sold to partner families at no profit, financed with affordable, no-interest loans and the homeowners' monthly mortgage payments are used to build more Habitat houses.

Habitat has built 175,000 homes and provided shelter for 900,000 people worldwide since 1976.

The Lewis and Clark Habitat for Humanity Chapter, which consists of six Chapters including Alton, Collinsville, Bond County, Highland, Wood River and Edwardsville/Glen Carbon, has constructed more than 25 homes locally.

To learn more about Habitat for Humanity, visit www.habitat.org or www.edglenhabitat.org.

For more information about the Edwardsville/Glen Carbon Habitat for Humanity Chapter, contact Cheatham at 692-7692 or e-mail her at trish@prthinktank.com. Donations can be mailed to P.O. Box 355, Edwardsville, IL, 62025.