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# NEWS

January  
**2025**



## Thank you, Mr. President

**O**n Dec. 29, 2024, the world lost, arguably, Habitat for Humanity International's best-known volunteer and advocate. Thirty-ninth President James Earl "Jimmy" Carter passed away at 100 years old. President Carter, and his late wife Rosalynn, began volunteering with Habitat

in 1984. Since then, their involvement and dedication to the nonprofit only grew. "We are deeply saddened by President Carter's passing and our prayers are with the Carter family," said Jonathan Reckford, CEO of Habitat for Humanity

**Continued on Page 2**



A world map showing the impact of the Carter Work Project since 1984.

Photo credit: Habitat for Humanity International

**Continued from Page 1**

International (HFHI). “We are grateful for the incredible impact the Carters have had on Habitat and on the families who have benefitted from their shining example. The Carters put Habitat for Humanity on the map and their legacy lives on in every family we serve around the world.”

Three years after President Carter and Rosalynn, left the White House, the pair ventured to Americus, in their home state of Georgia, to work with Habitat for Humanity. The couple quickly realized Habitat’s mission aligned closely with their own values and soon developed a strong relationship with the nonprofit to combat the affordable housing crisis.

“I think every human being has within himself or herself a desire to reach out to others



Photo credit: Habitat for Humanity International  
President Carter and his wife Rosalynn work alongside future homeowners and volunteers to build 21 homes in Nashville during the 2019 Carter Work Project.

and to share some of our blessings with those who are in need,” President Carter once said. “What’s opened up that avenue for me and my wife and hundreds and thousands of others is Habitat for Humanity. It makes it easy for us to reach

out and work side by side with the homeowner who’s never had a decent house, perhaps. I haven’t been on a Habitat project that I wasn’t thrilled and inspired and wept.”

“Habitat successfully removed  
**Continued on Page 4**

# GSHFH board excited for new opportunities in 2025

**A** New Year often brings a fresh perspective. Members of Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity’s (GSHFH) Board of Directors said they see it and are excited for the possibilities – increasing awareness, donations, corporate contributions, and government grants. But they know it won’t be easy.

The previous calendar year presented a challenging economy with numerous rising costs and a discord in politics. Within the board, there were personnel changes. At the affiliate, there was a decrease in donations. All of this occurred while still trying to serve as many families as possible in Hampden County.

“Affordable housing is a major challenge for Western Massachusetts and surrounding towns. In the next five years, we will need to raise millions if we want to have a material impact on the community,” said Ray Walsh, Greater Springfield Habitat board president. “The material cost, land acquisition price, labor, and borrowing rates have all increased while incomes have remained stagnant. It’s a challenging environment to scale beyond what we’ve traditionally done in terms of home builds and repairs.”

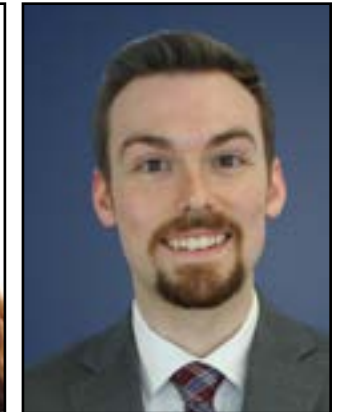
Ian Coddington, board treasurer, agreed and said



Ray Walsh, GSHFH Board of Directors president



Tiffany Tranghese, GSHFH Board of Directors vice president



Ian Coddington, GSHFH Board of Directors treasurer



Michael Clemente, GSHFH Board of Directors clerk



Matt MacDonnell, GSHFH Board of Directors at-large

in 2024, Greater Springfield Habitat received less in municipal funding than in previous years.

“Thankfully, our Building Dreams event proved successful and brought in much-needed funds, but there’s still more work to do,” said Ian.

To make substantial strides, GSHFH board members said they need a different strategy and better organization.

New board member Michael

Clemente recently accepted the role of clerk and will handle many of the administrative duties.

“Our goal moving forward are to grow the organization, help the community on a larger scale, and provide more affordable housing than in the past.

We need to be organized and have

a solid leadership structure to do that,” Michael said.

At-Large member Matt MacDonnell, whose responsibilities include supporting the officers and relaying information to other members said his 2025 goal is to be more present at build sites, bring updates and feedback to the board as a whole so the

**Continued on Page 4**

## Continued from Page 2

the stigma of charity by substituting it with a sense of partnership,” President Carter once said.

The first “Carter Work Project” was in September 1984 in New York City’s Lower East Side to renovate a six-story abandoned building for affordable housing. The Carters led dozens of volunteers to work alongside 19 families.

President Carter hadn’t been active on a build site after 2019, but his namesake lives on. In its 40 years, more than 108,100 volunteers have participated in 14 countries and built 4,447 Habitat homes in quick-turnaround construction projects.

A national day of mourning commemorating President Carter was held Jan. 9. Flags will be flown at half-staff for 30 days, following the president’s death. To see more about President Carter’s contributions to Habitat, visit [bit.ly/4j7IQgE](https://bit.ly/4j7IQgE)

## Continued from Page 3

team can be better informed when making decisions.

Ray said his objectives are to bring on five to eight new board members who are tied to the community and committed to partnering with Greater Springfield Habitat staff to drive results. Within his five-year plan, he hopes to see more consistent support and donations from individuals and corporations.

Board Vice President Tiffany Tranghese agreed.

“One of my primary goals is to enhance outreach and involvement with the local community. By fostering stronger relationships with local organizations, businesses, and volunteers, we can increase support for our projects and initiatives,” she said. “I am passionate about HFH’s mission and I am eager to collaborate with fellow board members, staff, and volunteers to achieve these goals.”

