

SPRING 2026

blueprints

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growing our
Habitat community

read
online



Monroe County Habitat for Humanity
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Photo by Lorena Roman Photography

Habitat Celebrates at the 47th Annual Stroudsburg St. Patrick's Day Parade

On March 22, 2026, Monroe County Habitat for Humanity was proud to once again participate in the 47th Annual St. Patrick's Day Parade in Stroudsburg, hosted by the Pocono Irish American Club (PIAC). The annual parade is a beloved local tradition that brings together organizations, families, and community members from across the region to celebrate Irish heritage and community spirit.

This year, Habitat's team rode proudly on a float truck generously donated for the day by Papillon and Moyer. The float was beautifully decorated by our Volunteer Coordinator and a dedicated group of volunteers with Habitat signage and plenty of festive green decorations. A dozen Habitat staff members and volunteers filled the float, sporting Habitat hard hats and plenty of green as they waved to the crowd and handed out candy to parade-goers along the mile-long parade route.

Leading the way in front of the float was our brand-new ReStore donations box truck, proudly displaying its fresh vinyl wrap for the first time in a parade appearance. We were also grateful to host friend of Monroe County Habitat for Humanity, Lorena Roman Photography, on our float.

Lorena captured professional photos throughout the day, and many of those images are now available to view on her Facebook page.

We extend our sincere thanks to the many volunteers who helped decorate the float, prepare for the event, and represent Habitat along the parade route. We are also grateful to the Pocono Irish American Club for inviting us to participate once again in this wonderful community celebration.



View photos of the **47th Annual Stroudsburg St. Patrick's Day Parade** online.



When a family slides that key into the lock of a house they've helped build, they're unlocking more than just the physical front door to their new home. They're unlocking their fullest potential. And where does that lead? Health. Education. Opportunity. Community."

-Jonathan Reckford, Habitat for Humanity CEO

Together, we can ensure that **everyone** in Monroe County has a safe, affordable, & equitable place to live.

Words Matter: Critical Home Repair Program

We at Monroe County Habitat for Humanity were evaluating the language we use as words do matter. We have been referring to our Home Repair Program as "Home Preservation" projects. We will now be referring to those now as "Critical Home Repair" projects to better reflect what we do.

In addition, the clients that we assist are always required to do "Sweat Equity" which is volunteer hours on someone else's home and on their own. We require this so the client has some skin in the game as this is a hand up not a handout. This will now be called "Partnership Hours."



Visit habitatmc.com/services to learn more about the programs we offer for families in Monroe County.

a message from our president



Suzanne Young-Mercer,
President of the Monroe
County Habitat for
Humanity Board of
Directors



Whether you
volunteer,
donate, shop, or
advocate
alongside us,
your involvement
makes a
meaningful
difference. We
truly cannot do
this work
without you.”

Dear Monroe County Habitat for Humanity community members,

As spring arrives, it brings renewed hope, growth, and possibility—values at the heart of the work we do every day at Monroe County Habitat for Humanity. This season reminds us that brighter days are ahead, especially for members of our community who are working toward safe, stable, and affordable housing.

Advocacy remains an important part of our mission. In both February and April, we had the opportunity to speak on behalf of our community in Washington, DC, and in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. These visits allowed us to engage directly with legislators and advocate for the financial support needed to continue building homes, strengthening neighborhoods, and expanding opportunities for families in need.

We are also excited to announce the return of one of our most popular and spirited fundraisers—“She Nailed It!”—scheduled for May 3, 2026. This event brings together community members for a day of fun, friendly competition, and purpose, all while raising critical funds to support our work. We look forward to another successful and enjoyable event that highlights the power of community coming together.

And, of course, our ReStore remains a cornerstone of our efforts. Located at 2610 Milford Road, East Stroudsburg, it offers a wide variety of gently used furniture, building materials, appliances, technology, and other unique finds—all at affordable prices. Every purchase helps support our mission and keeps usable items out of landfills.

As always, we are deeply grateful for the continued support of our community. Whether you volunteer, donate, shop, or advocate alongside us, your involvement makes a meaningful difference. We truly cannot do this work without you.

Suzanne Young-Mercer

President

Monroe County Habitat for Humanity Board of Directors



a message from our executive director



Scott J. Fabian,
Executive Director of
Monroe County Habitat
for Humanity



We believe that every person deserves not just shelter, but a home that reflects dignity, safety, and pride.”

Why Everyone Deserves a Place of Dignity: Rethinking “Nice Things”

There’s a quiet but persistent belief in our culture that “nice things” are something to be earned only after reaching a certain level of success. Too often, that belief extends to how we view families living with limited financial means. The assumption—sometimes spoken, often unspoken—is that people who are struggling should simply be grateful for the bare minimum.

At Monroe County Habitat for Humanity, we see things differently.

We believe that every person deserves not just shelter, but a home that reflects dignity, safety, and pride. The idea that “poor people deserve nice things” isn’t about luxury—it’s about humanity.

Dignity Is Not a Reward – It’s a Right

A safe, well-maintained home is more than a roof and four walls. It’s a place where children can do homework without worrying about leaks or cold drafts. It’s where families can gather without fear of unsafe wiring, failing roofs, or inaccessible spaces. It’s where health improves because mold, structural hazards, and extreme temperatures are addressed.

When we invest in quality repairs, thoughtful design, and lasting materials, we are saying something powerful: you matter. Dignity should never be conditional.

“Nice” Means Safe, Functional, and Lasting

When we talk about “nice things” in the context of Habitat’s work, we’re not talking about extravagance. We’re talking about:

- A sturdy roof that doesn’t leak
- Windows that keep out the cold

← continued from the previous page

- A bathroom that is safe and accessible
- Flooring that isn't a tripping hazard
- Heating systems that work reliably
- These are not luxuries.

These are essentials that many of us take for granted—but for many families, they are life-changing improvements.

Breaking the Cycle of Inequity

When people are forced to live in unsafe or deteriorating conditions, the impact reaches far beyond the home. Health issues increase. Financial stress grows. Opportunities shrink. Providing quality repairs and stable housing helps break that cycle. Children perform better in school. Adults can focus on work and family instead of constant crisis. Neighborhoods grow stronger. “Nice things,” in this sense, are not indulgences—they are investments in people and communities.

Partnership, Not Charity

One of the most important aspects of Habitat's work is partnership. The families we serve are not passive recipients. They contribute partnership hours, invest in their homes, and work alongside volunteers. There is deep pride in that process. When a homeowner sees their repaired home—fresh siding, a solid porch, a safe entryway—it's not just a physical transformation. It's a reflection of their effort, resilience, and hope.

Changing the Narrative

It's time to move away from the mindset that people must “earn” dignity. Everyone deserves to live in a space that is safe, welcoming, and built to last. When we provide “nice things” to those in need, we are not giving more than they deserve—we are finally giving what they have always deserved. At Monroe County Habitat for Humanity, that belief guides every repair we make, every home we build, and every family we partner with. Because a nice home isn't a luxury, it's the foundation for everything.



Scott J. Fabian

Executive Director

Monroe County Habitat for Humanity

events in the community



Hammer Home the Cause at “She Nailed It!” 2026!

Monroe County Habitat for Humanity is excited to announce the return of our annual fundraising event, “She Nailed It!”, taking place on May 3, 2026, from 12 PM – 4 PM at the beautiful Shawnee Inn & Golf Resort. This fun and energetic event brings together teams of women from across Monroe County for a day of friendly competition and community spirit, all in support of Monroe County Habitat for Humanity’s mission.

At “She Nailed It!”, teams of four ladies compete for our coveted Bronze, Silver, and Gold Hammer prizes in a series of timed nail-hammering challenges. Competitions include both individual and team categories. Throughout the day, guests can enjoy an emcee, music, food, dancing, and plenty of activities that make this event one of the most exciting and unique fundraisers in the Pocono region.

One of the highlights returning this year is our large Tricky-Tray basket raffle, which was the biggest in the Poconos last year — and we expect it to be even bigger in 2026. Raffle prizes include incredible items such as stays at local hotels, waterpark passes, gift cards to area restaurants, golf outings, ski passes, and many other fantastic experiences generously donated by local businesses and community supporters.

Teams can participate through workplace sponsorships or by registering independently and fundraising together. Each team of four raises \$600 collectively, or \$500 for college teams. As Monroe County Habitat for Humanity’s largest annual fundraising event, every dollar raised through “She Nailed It!” directly supports our Critical Home Repair and Home Partnership programs, helping families and individuals across Monroe County find and maintain safe, affordable, and equitable housing.

Purchase Tickets Online for this Year’s Tricky-Tray!

Our Tricky-Tray Basket Raffle will once again be a major highlight of this year’s She Nailed It! event, and tickets are available to purchase online now through the day of the event. Participants can purchase tickets for \$5 for 1, \$10 for 3, or \$20 for 10, and place them toward any of our exciting raffle baskets and prizes. This year’s raffle will feature an incredible variety of items, including stays at local hotels and resorts, golf passes, gift cards to local shops and restaurants, and many other great experiences and prizes generously donated by community partners. Best of all, every ticket purchased directly supports Monroe County Habitat for Humanity’s mission, helping us continue our work building, repairing, and improving homes for families throughout Monroe County.



Image from *She Nailed It!* 2025. Photo taken by Monroe County Habitat for Humanity partner Lorena Roman Photography.



learn more
online



Learn more about our She Nailed It! 2026 at the QR code, or at habitatmc.com/she-nailed-it



Second Annual Award Breakfast

Monroe County Habitat for Humanity is excited to announce the return of our **Annual Award Breakfast on May 27, 2026**, building on the success of last year's inaugural "Blueprints & Breakfast" event. Our first breakfast brought together community members and supporters to recognize Weiler Abrasives for their continued partnership and support of Habitat's work in Monroe County. The event was a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the local businesses that help make our mission possible.

This year, we are proud to honor **Lowe's Home Improvement**, a longtime supporter of Habitat for Humanity both locally and across the country. Lowe's has been a valued corporate donor to our affiliate, generously contributing products to support our ReStore and helping strengthen our ability to serve families in Monroe County. The breakfast will celebrate Lowe's ongoing commitment to Habitat's mission and the many ways the company supports Habitat organizations nationwide.

The breakfast will take place from **8:30 AM – 9:30 AM at the beautiful Camelback Resort**, where the conference room has been generously donated for the occasion. Community members, partners, and supporters are all invited to attend this special morning event. Breakfast tickets will be available for **\$45 per person** and can be purchased online through our website.

We invite everyone to join us in celebrating an important community partner and showing appreciation for the organizations that help advance Habitat's mission right here in Monroe County. All proceeds raised from the breakfast will directly support our Critical Home Repair and Home Partnership programs, which help local families find safe, affordable, & equitable housing. Additional details will be shared on our social media pages as the event approaches.



Follow us on **Facebook & Instagram** to get the latest news on this event and more!



upcoming events for Spring 2026

This upcoming Spring 2026 season has plenty of events in store for Monroe County Habitat for Humanity. Be sure to follow us on Facebook to see any updates or event changes!



events calendar for Spring 2026

April 2026

Apr. 2: FREE photos with the Easter Bunny at the Monroe County ReStore | 2 PM - 4 PM

Apr. 10: She Nailed It! Practice Event | 4 PM - 6 PM, at the Monroe County ReStore. Open to anyone interested in She Nailed It!

Apr. 18 & 19: The Greater Pocono Home & Outdoor Living Show Kalahari Resorts & Conventions | 745 Main Street, Suite 203 Stroudsburg, PA 18360

May 2026

May 3: She Nailed It! 2026 | 12 PM - 4 PM Shawnee Inn & Golf Resort | 100 Shawnee Inn Drive, Shawnee on Delaware, PA 18356

May 3: She Nailed It! Tricky-Tray | Live drawing at 4 PM Shawnee Inn & Golf Resort | 100 Shawnee Inn Drive, Shawnee on Delaware, PA 18356

May 27: Second Annual Award Breakfast | 8:30 AM - 9 AM Camelback Resort | 301 Resort Drive, Tannersville, PA 18372

June 2026

June events TBA.

July 2026

July events TBA.



upcoming events



See all upcoming Monroe County Habitat for Humanity events online at the QR Code or at habitatmc.com/events

The Importance of Timely Home Maintenance: Fixing Problems Before They Grow



By Paul Suhrie, Board of Directors, Treasurer

Owning a home is one of life's most rewarding experiences, but it also comes with a continuous responsibility: maintenance. Many homeowners tend to delay repairs or ignore minor issues until they become bigger, more expensive problems. Taking care of small maintenance tasks early not only protects your investment—it also preserves safety, efficiency, and comfort.

Preventing Small Issues from Becoming Major Repairs

A leaky faucet, a discolored ceiling patch, or a door that sticks might not seem urgent, but these are early warning signs. Minor plumbing leaks, for example, can lead to mold growth, wood rot, and costly drywall replacement. Similarly, a clogged gutter that overflows in spring may cause lasting foundation or basement damage if neglected. Addressing such issues promptly almost always costs a fraction of what large-scale repairs would require later.

Boosting Energy Efficiency and Reducing Utility Costs

Routine maintenance improves a home's performance. Changing HVAC filters, sealing window gaps, and inspecting insulation all keep heating and cooling systems running efficiently. When equipment has to work harder due to neglect, energy bills rise—and the useful life of the system shortens. Something as simple as cleaning dryer vents or servicing the furnace annually can produce meaningful savings over time.

Protecting Structural Integrity and Home Value

The longer water infiltration or structural stress goes unnoticed, the weaker the home's framework can become.

Regular roof inspections, siding upkeep, and foundation checks ensure long-term stability. For homeowners thinking ahead to resale, a well-maintained home consistently commands higher offers and reduces surprises during buyer inspections.

Safeguarding Health and Safety

Home maintenance isn't just about financial savings—it directly affects the well-being of everyone inside. Ensuring that electrical outlets are safe, smoke detectors are functional, and ventilation systems are clean reduces risks of fire, respiratory issues, and carbon monoxide buildup. Treating mold or mildew in its early stages also prevents chronic health hazards.

Developing a Maintenance Habit

The best way to manage upkeep is to schedule it just like any other routine. Seasonal checklists—cleaning gutters in the fall, inspecting roofs after winter, testing sump pumps before spring rains—create structure and prevent oversight. Homeowners who track issues in a log or app can see patterns before they escalate into emergencies.

The Bottom Line

Taking care of problems when they begin is not just a matter of saving money—it's a matter of protecting your home's integrity and your family's comfort. A proactive maintenance mindset keeps small problems from turning into big ones, transforming homeownership from reactive stress into lasting satisfaction.

An Introduction to our Public Relations Committee

By Fran Durst, PR Committee, Chair

The textbook definition of public relations is to develop and execute strategic communications that build beneficial relationships between an organization and its publics. Basically that means crafting and delivering messages that matter, engage and drive results.

Storytelling is a compelling way to drive our mission, promote our cause, and to advance our vision, values and goals. And what a story we have to tell! **Providing safe, affordable housing to people disadvantaged by age, income or disabilities changes lives and strengthens communities.** Our work and results are captivating, build emotional connections and trust, and enhance brand reputation.

Building trusting relationships with the media is essential to our effectiveness, allowing us to raise awareness, grow public support and mobilize public opinion – thereby increasing the impact of our work. Social media plays an equally important role in delivering our message - allowing us to share content and connect and build relationships in a more personal and direct way with diverse audiences. Habitat's mission is also conveyed through special events, and the PR committee provides strong



support for She Nailed It! , the annual golf outing and other celebratory occasions like this year's 50th Anniversary observance.

Whether friendraising or fundraising, public relations play a significant role in Habitat's ability to drive our mission. If you're interested in joining the PR committee, please contact our Executive Director, Scott J. Fabian, or **scan the link below.**



Visit habitatmc.com/committees to learn more or signup for a committee at Monroe County Habitat for Humanity.

volunteering with Habitat



Starfish Award Honors Bill Snell and his Team

Monroe County Habitat for Humanity is proud to recognize **Bill Snell & his crew of volunteers, Elaine Forster, Joe Bannon, Paul Layman, and Bob Schock**, as the recipients of our **Spring 2026 Starfish Award**, an honor that celebrates outstanding volunteer excellence in our community. Bill and his crew represent the very best of what it means to serve others through dedication, skill, and compassion.

Bill Snell, a longtime volunteer of more than a decade, currently serves as both a Job Supervisor and member of our Board of Directors. Together with his team, he has contributed countless hours working directly on Habitat job sites, supporting both our Home Preservation (now Critical Home Repair) and Home Partnership programs. Their work is often hands-on and physically demanding, taking place right inside the homes of the families we serve.

Most recently, Bill and his crew played a critical role in our Fall 2025 Home Partnership project, where their efforts helped transform a house into a safe and welcoming home. Their work included clearing out the property, rehabbing the second floor, repairing flooring, updating plumbing, converting the home from oil to gas, upgrading the kitchen, replacing electrical outlets, and making the home ADA-compliant with the installation of a ramp and accessible bathroom. They also completed finishing touches such as painting, power washing, and improvements to the home's exterior and garage.

The impact of their work cannot be overstated, and their dedication was instrumental in helping us create a safe, affordable, and equitable home for a Monroe County family. We extend our deepest gratitude to Bill Snell, Elaine Forster, Joe Bannon, Paul Layman, and Bob Schock for their continued commitment and the incredible difference they make in our community every day.



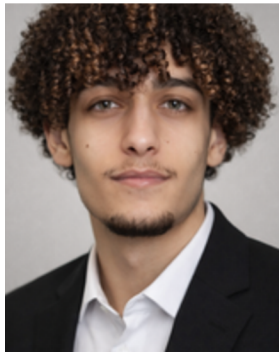
volunteer with us



Learn more about our volunteer opportunities at the QR code, or at habitatmc.com/volunteer



interning with Habitat



Elyas Smida, Spring 2026 Monroe County Habitat work-study

Work-study Highlight: Elyas Smida

Working for Habitat for Humanity represents more than just an employment opportunity. Habitat’s goal is to unite people to construct houses, communities and hopes, ultimately creating a world where everyone will have a decent place to live. As a Subsidized Mortgage Coordinator, I help Habitat achieve the mission to help people from all walks of life become one step closer to homeownership.

As a Subsidized Mortgage Coordinator, I guide individuals who are seeking homeownership through the **USDA 502 Direct Loan Program**. This is a federal program designed to provide assistance to low and very-low-income families residing in qualified rural areas. The purpose of this program is to allow these families to obtain safe and sanitary housing while providing financial assistance so that their monthly mortgage payments may be lower.

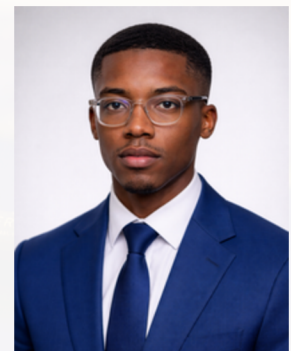
This type of work provides a sense of accomplishment because I know that when families are able to obtain homeownership it changes their lives. **Affordable Housing creates stability, independence, confidence and opportunity for families.** Every time I help someone in taking those first steps to becoming a homeowner, I am reminded of what Habitat states about affordable housing. To me, working at Habitat means more than just completing paperwork or processing loan applications. It is an opportunity **to make a difference.**

Intern Highlight: DeSean Chin

I am DeSean Chin, a United States Marine Corps veteran and student at East Stroudsburg University. Through an opportunity introduced by my advisor, I began working with Habitat for Humanity, where I currently serve as a Subsidized Mortgage Coordinator supporting the **USDA 502 Direct Loan Program**. What initially started as an internship has quickly developed into a meaningful professional experience rooted in service, responsibility, and community impact.

In this role, I work directly with individuals and families navigating the path to homeownership, many of whom face financial and structural barriers that make that goal difficult to reach. By helping guide applicants through the USDA 502 Direct Loan Program, I assist in making safe, affordable housing accessible to those in qualified rural areas. This process goes beyond paperwork; it requires understanding each family’s situation, ensuring compliance, and helping translate a complex system into a real opportunity for stability and long-term growth.

What stands out most about this experience is the tangible impact. Homeownership is not just a milestone, it is a foundation for **generational stability, financial independence, and community development.** Being part of that process has reinforced my commitment to service and strengthened my perspective on how structured programs, when executed effectively, can change lives. Working with Habitat for Humanity has not only allowed me to contribute to Monroe County, but also to be part of a broader mission that builds stronger communities through access and opportunity.



DeSean Chin, Spring 2026 Monroe County Habitat intern

a message to all Habitat volunteers

March marked, one year since I stepped into my role as Volunteer Coordinator with Habitat for Humanity... and I can truly say this journey has been nothing short of a blessing.

I give all glory to God for guiding my steps and placing me exactly where I needed to be. Even on the days that felt overwhelming or uncertain, His hand was always present, leading me forward with purpose.

I am deeply grateful to AARP for being a part of that divine path – connecting me to this opportunity through the Senior Training Program. What may have seemed like a simple connection was truly a life-changing blessing.

To every volunteer who has stood beside me – through the ups, the downs, and moments of “oopsies”, thank you for your grace, your patience, and your unwavering commitment. Your willingness to continue showing up speaks volumes about your heart and your faith in this work.

To my colleagues, thank you for your constant support and encouragement. And to Scott, I am especially thankful for your compassion and understanding, allowing me the time and space to care for my family during difficult moments. That kindness has meant more than words can express. This past year has stretched me, humbled me, and pruned me in ways I never expected. It wasn't perfect but it was purposeful.

As I step into this next year, I do so with renewed faith and determination. I am committed to strengthening my role, becoming more organized, and continuing to serve with excellence.

Going forward, my hope is that we grow not only in service, but in connection. Our volunteers can look forward to quarterly gatherings – moments set aside simply to love on one another, to uplift each other, and to truly bond. Because a home is not just a structure... it is something held in the heart. I pray that my volunteers will continue this journey with me, as we continue to build not only homes, but hope, love, and community among our sector.

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” Jeremiah 29:11
With a grateful heart, thank you all. I am truly blessed.



Yvette Irby-Keitt

Volunteer Coordinator
Monroe County Habitat for Humanity



The Monroe County ReStore



ReStore calendar Spring 2026

April 2026

- Apr. 2:** FREE photos with the Easter Bunny at the ReStore | 2 PM - 4 PM
- Apr. 5:** Easter Sunday, ReStore closed
- Apr. 10-12:** April Showers Bath SALE - 30% OFF all bath items
- Apr. 16:** Thrifty Thursday - 30% OFF storewide, with exclusions
- Apr. 20-25:** Garden SALE - 25% OFF all lawn & garden items
- Apr. 26:** Sunday Savings - 25% OFF storewide, with exclusions

May 2026

- May 8-10:** Mother's Day Decor SALE - 50% OFF all decor
- May 14:** Thrifty Thursday - 30% OFF storewide, with exclusions
- May 25:** Memorial Day SALE - 30% OFF storewide, with exclusions
- May 31:** Sunday Savings - 25% OFF storewide, with exclusions

June 2026

- June 8-14:** Sidewalk SALE - details TBA
- June 18:** Thrifty Thursday - 30% OFF storewide, with exclusions
- June 19-21:** Father's Day Tool SALE - 30% OFF all tools & hardware
- June 25-26:** Flooring SALE - 25% OFF all flooring

July 2026

July Sale Dates TBD



Affordable Quality

We offer new and gently used building materials, furniture, appliances, at below standard retail pricing.



Volunteer Operated

Volunteers power daily operations, proving that the ReStore thrives on community support and generosity.



Diverts from Landfills

We diverted tons of usable materials from landfills by reselling quality items at the ReStore.

follow us online



Follow us on [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#) to get the latest ReStore sales & news!





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Thank you for viewing this issue of Monroe County Habitat for Humanity's *Blueprints Newsletter*. Please know it is through community & volunteer support that we are able to continue our mission of creating safe, affordable & equitable housing right here in Monroe County.

If you are interested in supporting us directly, through donations of your time, money, or through charitable ReStore donations, **please contact us through the information below.**



Visit habitatmc.com/contact to contact either the Monroe County Habitat for Humanity Office or ReStore directly, or to learn more about any of the programs mentioned in this issue of the *Blueprints Newsletter*.