



Chemung County
Habitat
for Humanity®

WINTER 2026

THE BLUEPRINT NEWSLETTER

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New Habitat home brings stability and hope for the Thomas family

In March, Chemung County Habitat for Humanity celebrated the completion and sale of its newest home, welcoming the Thomas family as Habitat homeowners.

Jessica purchased a home that will provide her family with the safety and stability she has worked hard to achieve. The home represents the culmination of months of preparation, partnership, and perseverance.

From the beginning of her journey, she remained committed to the process and the goal of creating a stable home for her children. “My path to homeownership hasn’t been easy, but it’s been worth it,” she shared. “Becoming a homeowner represents persistence and growth.

It reflects years of preparation and choosing long-term stability for my family.”

Like all Habitat partner families, Jessica invested significant sweat equity hours helping to build her home and supporting Habitat’s mission. Working alongside volunteers and staff was both meaningful and rewarding. “The part about helping build your own home is when you think, ‘Wow, this is the home I will raise my children in,’” she said.

The Thomas home was made possible through the combined efforts of dedicated volunteers, generous donors, local businesses, and community supporters who contributed time, materials, and financial support throughout the building process. Their efforts reflect the heart of Habitat’s mission—bringing people together to build homes, communities, and hope.

For Jessica, the new home represents more than a roof over their heads. It is a place where her children can grow, create memories, and feel secure. She looks forward to many family traditions ahead, including celebrating their favorite holiday together. “My first memory I’m imagining is Christmas,” she shared. “Now we can celebrate it in our own home.”

Jessica also expressed deep gratitude to those who helped along the way. “Because of the volunteers, donors, and supporters, I now have more than a home. I have a safe place to grow, reset, and build a future with my children.”



Emily Barrett, *Executive Director*, presents keys to the new homeowner.

Upcoming Events & Volunteer Opportunities:

See our Website or Follow us on Facebook for details

Website

www.ChemungCountyHabitat.org

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/ChemungCountyHabitatforHumanity>



Credit Fitness: April 29th, 5:30 pm

This one-hour class, part of our Building Knowledge free education series, could change how you manage your credit. Presented by Alternatives Federal Credit Union, you'll learn:

- What is credit? • Why is your credit so important?
- What are credit reports? • How are credit scores calculated?
- How can you improve your credit score? • And much more!



Women Build: May 9th, 9 to Noon

Women Build is a special kind of girls' day out where women empower themselves and one another by learning new skills while working on Habitat homes. Work side by side with 50 other women to help build a Habitat house together!



Affordable Housing Forum:

May 20th, 3 to 6 pm

We're bringing housing advocates together in one place to show you multiple pathways to affordable housing. Talk to housing agencies and lenders about how you can take steps toward housing stability for you and your family.



Building Hope Community Clean-Up: June 26 & 27, 9 to Noon

Volunteers are needed to help with trimming hedges, cutting weeds, trash pick-up, minor repairs, and painting. Join more than 100 volunteers working to improve our community.

Thank You FOR YOUR SUPPORT

We are proud to recognize the organizations and grant funders whose support empowers us to keep building and create lasting change in our community. Thank you to the following:

- Tioga Downs Regional Community Foundation
- Odd Fellow & Rebekah Benefit Fund
- Twin Tiers Christian Holistic Living Grant
- First Pres. Church of Elmira
- Waterfall Donor Advised Fund
- Diven Elementary Students
- City of Elmira HOME Grant
- Countless individuals who donated during our Annual Appeal fund drive throughout December



We are continually amazed by the many volunteer who give their time and talents for others. Thank you to those who show up time and time again.

A special thank you to Chemung County Habitat for Humanity's core volunteers, Gary, Rick, Steve, Mike and Carl for their craftsmanship and constant commitment to serving our cause. These five gentleman account for 55 or more hours every week, dedicating their time and skills for the families we serve.

We appreciate our volunteers!



Building Hope Together

By Emily Barrett, Executive Director

At Chemung County Habitat for Humanity, every home we build represents something far greater than lumber, nails, and paint. It represents stability, dignity, and opportunity for families in our community. Each project is a testament to what can happen when neighbors come together with a shared purpose: helping one another build a better future.

Today, I'm especially proud to congratulate our newest Habitat homeowner on the purchase of their home right here in Elmira. This milestone is the result of many months of dedication—partner families invest hundreds of hours of “sweat equity,” working alongside volunteers and staff while preparing for the responsibilities of homeownership and obtaining a mortgage. It's a powerful reminder that Habitat homes are not simply given; they are earned through hard work, perseverance, and partnership.

Moments like this are possible because of you—our volunteers, donors, and community partners. Every person who swings a hammer, makes a financial gift, or spreads the word about our mission plays a role in changing lives. Your support ensures that families in Chemung County have the opportunity to build strength, stability, and self-reliance through affordable homeownership.

As we look ahead to the coming months, we are excited about several upcoming events and build opportunities that will bring our community together in support of this mission. Whether you've volunteered with us before or are considering getting involved for the first time, there are many ways to participate. Whether it's participating in construction days or attending fundraising events, every act of support helps us continue building homes and hope.

If you're looking for a meaningful way to give back, I encourage you to join us. Volunteer for a build day. Attend one of our community events. Make a donation that will help purchase materials for the next home. Even sharing our work with friends and neighbors helps expand the impact.

Together, we are doing more than building houses—we are building stronger families and a stronger Chemung County.

On behalf of our Board of Directors, staff, and partner families, thank you for believing in this mission and for continuing to stand beside us. With your support, we look forward to welcoming many more families home in the years ahead.



With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Emily Barrett". The signature is fluid and matches the name of the Executive Director mentioned in the text.

Ramp Crew celebrated at annual kick-off breakfast



In February, Habitat hosted a volunteer kick-off breakfast at Curly's Chicken House to celebrate the incredible work of our Ramp Program volunteers. In 2025, this dedicated team built 28 ramps and contributed more than 1,000 collective hours building accessibility ramps for neighbors in need throughout our community.

Volunteers who attended the breakfast included Al Draht, Jim Palmer, Tim Belloma, Dave Silvernail, Robert Cook, Harry Fitzsimmons, Tom Alexander, and John Slechta. Interested in joining this remarkable volunteer crew? Email info@chemungcountyhabitat.org to learn more.

Corn Hole for a Cause raises funds for ramps



Participants enjoy friendly competition during the 3rd Annual Corn Hole for a Cause fundraiser hosted by Elmira Elks #62. The event brought together 28 teams for an afternoon of fun and community spirit while raising more than \$2,000 to support Chemung County Habitat for Humanity's Ramp Program. Thanks to the generosity of local businesses that donated raffle baskets and prizes, and special appreciation to the Elmira Elks and Justin Faulkner for helping coordinate another successful event.

HOW YOU CAN HELP BUILD HOPE

DONATE

No gift is too small. Make a one-time donation or set up a recurring monthly gift of \$5 or more on our website at:

www.chemungcountyhabitat.org/donate, or scan one of the QR Codes below, or mail a check to:
Chemung County
Habitat for Humanity
PO Box 3110
Elmira, NY 14905.



Chemung County Habitat Donation Website



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VOLUNTEER

Skilled and unskilled volunteers are invited to work at our build site. Give us a call at (607) 734-1361 or visit our website at www.chemungcountyhabitat.org/volunteer

REFER A FAMILY

If you know a family that might benefit from our homeownership program, send them our way... www.chemungcountyhabitat.org/homeownership