

*The Prez Says*

January 2016

## Resale Store setting new records

The first six months of our fiscal year have been incredible and the first week that we were open in January was amazing. Special thanks to our donors, the guys that pick up merchandise every Tuesday and Friday, all of our Resale Store volunteers and to Laurie Cushing for her leadership. If you have not been to the store in awhile take a look at the picture below. I think you will agree that it has never looked better!



## New Tax Law

Effective January 1, 2016 all Habitat for Humanity affiliates in the State of South Carolina became exempt from paying sales tax on construction materials used to build or rehabilitate a Habitat home. This will reduce the cost of the mortgages for our future home owners by a few thousand dollars. If you run into Thomas Alexander our South Carolina State Senator or William Sandifer III our South Carolina State Representative please thank them for their support with this bill.

## Construction Update

We have four houses currently under construction. (Pictured below)

#400 BSR...sheet rock was done in record time by the crew, three days!

#402 BSR .. will begin sheet rock work shortly

Across the street, at # 403 and #405, the foundations are in

Based on the completion of sweat equity requirements and the projected construction schedule the homeowners (for 400 &402) will be able to close sometime this Spring.



## Board of Directors News

Thank you to our outgoing board members and the impact they have had over the last several years (Jack Ackerman, Willie Jenkins, Terri Mendonca, Ed Nichols and John Gerhart) We welcome our new board members (Yvonne Scott, Carolyn Karpick and Bob Dubose) and look forward to their contributions during the next few years.

Congratulations to Mike Stevenson on his highly successful term as president. His contributions were numerous and included developing and implementing a safety program and spearheading an effort to attract more applications from qualified families. **Great job Mike!!**

## New Homeowners (a note from their family partner Martha Gerald)

I met this delightful couple, Lucas and Naomi White, on November 21, 2014 when I became their Family Partner. They worked together like a well-oiled machine and completed all the requirements for home ownership on November 18, 2015. It was a pleasure to be involved with them in this process. Their closing on the Habitat home took place on December 15, 2015. What a nice Christmas present to themselves. We expect the dedication ceremony to take place sometime next month.

## Goal for 2016

I recently had a discussion with the Executive Director of all the South Carolina Habitat for Humanity affiliates. He is a huge fan of our business model and wanted us to make a presentation to other affiliates next week at the annual conference in Columbia on how to operate an all volunteer HFH organization. We decided to pass on this opportunity but it made me reflect on the things that make us special. First and foremost is our army of volunteers (200+) that make a difference every day in every facet of our operation. In addition we are a low cost charitable organization. Our primary expenses are the costs associated with running our Resale Store and with building houses (our reason for being). Most of the other affiliates in South Carolina have paid staff so they are not nearly as efficient with their donations and Resale Store revenue as we are. This leads me to our next strength which is an excellent balance sheet that enables us to build houses and fulfill the HFH mission. Finally we have been blessed by having our OCHFH founders and the leaders over the last 30 years develop and fine tune a model that works. There is an old saying that goes "if it ain't broke, don't fix it". So with that said the goal for 2016 is simple.....provide more houses for Oconee County families in need of a quality place to live.

Thanks for making a difference!

Frank Lewis