

Mayoral Candidate Forum Focuses on Housing

Event spotlights issue of affordable homeownership in Colorado Springs

Pikes Peak Habitat for Humanity is partnering with KRDO NewsRadio to present a forum featuring Colorado Springs mayoral candidates ahead of the city's election April 4. The event focuses specifically on the issue of affordable homeownership, a top priority to local voters.

The forum takes place on Tuesday, Feb. 28, from 5:30-9 p.m. at the Ent Center for the Arts, 5225 N. Nevada Ave., 80918. Attendance and parking are free, but advance registration is required because of limited seating. Tickets will be available online starting Feb. 13. For those unable to attend in person, Gold Hill Mesa is sponsoring live broadcasts of the event on both KRDO NewsRadio and KRDO.com.

Kris Lewis, executive director/CEO of Pikes Peak Habitat, will serve as the event host, providing introductory and concluding remarks. The panel will be moderated by Andrew Rogers, program director and co-host of KRDO Morning News for KRDO NewsRadio, and Bart Bedsole, anchor for KRDO NewsChannel 13.

In addition to responding to questions from the moderators, candidates will have the opportunity to address a limited number of questions posed by event attendees. Attendees can submit their questions at a table in the lobby prior to the start of the forum. Event staff will pre-select those that are posed to the candidates, and due to time constraints and the number of candidates, some issues may not be included.

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Quilts Warm Homeowners and Hearts

Pikes Peak Habitat is blessed to partner with several local quilting groups, who welcome our homeowners to their new residences with lovingly made, one-of-a-kind creations. In this issue, we spotlight two of these groups and the beautiful work they do.



Read about **Quilts for New Beginnings** on p. 6.

Meet the **First Lutheran Church quilting group** on p. 7.

Pikes Peak Habitat Helps Build the Beloved Community Locally

This year, Pikes Peak Habitat offered a three-week series of events and activities leading up to U.N. World Interfaith Harmony Week. Read more on p. 8.



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What's Happening on the Build Site

The Ridge at Sand Creek in Colorado Springs:

In 2022, we completed five homes.

In 2023, we are scheduled to finish another five:

- Fund for Humanity Build in February
- Interfaith Build for Unity in April (two-story)
- Veteran Build in July
- George Hammond Build in September
- Apostles Build in December (two-story)

The 2023 homes will be the first to be fully electric (rather than a combination of electricity and natural gas). In addition, construction staff are working with Colorado Springs Utilities to develop drought-resistant landscaping. Utilities staff are planning a volunteer day in May to focus on landscaping!



2022 Apostles Build Family Comes Home

On Dec. 10, Pikes Peak Habitat for Humanity held a home dedication for sisters Prisca and Noella and Noella's son, Console. Their home in The Ridge at Sand Creek neighborhood was constructed as the 2022 Apostles Build.

Prisca came to the United States in 2017 as a refugee from the Central African Republic. The following year, her sister and nephew joined her. Prisca passed her U.S. citizenship test shortly before their home dedication. (Pikes Peak Habitat requires all homeowners to be U.S. citizens or legal residents.)

"For the first time in America, we will sleep so well and breathe good air and be in a beautiful place that is quiet and calm," Prisca says. "We are excited for Console to have a place to play that is safe and more space."



From left, Pikes Peak Habitat Construction Supervisor Gary Blake presents new homeowners Noella and Prisca with a hammer to symbolize the hours of sweat equity they invested into their new home.

At the celebration. Pastor Steve Stanton of Waypoint Church offered a prayer of blessing for the family, and Pastor Denise Waldon of Colorado Christian Fellowship led participants in the Lord's Prayer.

The Apostles Build (formerly Thrivent Faith Build) is an ecumenical project that brings local churches together to raise walls, funds and prayers to build a house in partnership with a family in our community in need of affordable housing. "Pikes Peak Habitat is so grateful for all of the church congregations that came out to our construction site over the past nine months to help make homeownership possible for Prisca and Noella," said Chloe Henry, Pikes Peak Habitat Faith in Action program manager.



From left, Prisca, Console and Noella pose in front of their new home, the 2022 Apostles Build.

Building Community, Home by Home and Family by Family

*Reflections from Kris Lewis, Executive Director/CEO
of Pikes Peak Habitat for Humanity*

Pikes Peak Habitat for Humanity isn't just in the business of building houses — we also build communities. That's evident at The Ridge at Sand Creek, where we're privileged to watch Pikes Peak Habitat homeowners work on each other's homes, celebrate together, and welcome new neighbors at ground blessings and home dedications. We saw it when Noella's son proudly showed off his room to new friends and when various families and groups crafted exquisite gingerbread homes to support our Veterans Build. We see it when kids share a skateboard on the street, and when future homeowner Karmen describes her sons' excitement after trick-or-treating in their new neighborhood.



Kris Lewis

Community is the theme that runs through this issue of *Coming Home*. The Mayoral Candidate Forum that Pikes Peak Habitat is hosting later this month speaks to the need for affordable homeownership opportunities in Colorado Springs — and to our commitment to advocate for those opportunities throughout El Paso County. Our support of Colorado's Proposition 123, which voters approved in November 2022, reflects this commitment statewide, and so does our presence at Habitat on the Hill, where our staff met with lawmakers to present our work and discuss policies that promote affordable homeownership nationally.

Closer to home, we've just celebrated U.N. World Interfaith Harmony Week with our Building the Beloved Community initiative, which began on Martin Luther King Jr. Day with a volunteer event at both ReStores and culminated in an interfaith panel discussion.

Pikes Peak Habitat's home repair program also builds community. Providing critical home repairs to seniors doesn't only enable aging-in-place — allowing people to remain in beloved homes and maintain their independence, rather than having to move to assisted-living facilities — but it also engages them with our staff and volunteers, and it encourages them to re-engage with their neighbors. The stories you'll read in this issue about the creative ways our homeowners are "paying it forward" will warm your heart.

Speaking of warmth, if you've attended Pikes Peak Habitat home dedications, you've probably seen the beautiful quilts that are gifted to our homeowners. Those quilts are labors of love, and in this issue, we introduce you to two of the local groups who dedicate their time and talent to welcoming our new homeowners and your Colorado Springs neighbors with these unique works of art.

As you read about the many ways Pikes Peak Habitat is building communities, please remember that we couldn't do any of this without your support — your donations, your volunteer time, your love. We are blessed to be part of this community with you.

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Home Repair Program Supports Aging in Place, Community Engagement

Thanks to a partnership between Silver Key Senior Services and Pikes Peak Habitat for Humanity that provides critical home repairs, El Paso County seniors, veterans and other qualifying homeowners now have more opportunities to remain and feel secure in their homes. This program is made possible in part by generous funding from the Myron Stratton Foundation.

“The crux of what we do is empower and engage people using the tool of home repairs,” says Leah Cowles, Pikes Peak Habitat’s home repair program manager.

The partnership doesn’t just make physical changes to a residence – it contributes to social, emotional and physical health as homeowners interact with Pikes Peak Habitat staff and volunteers.

Phig, whose poem is featured on page 5, “would often come outside and join in the discussions because she could hear the laughter and conversations happening,” says Cowles. “She made a point to be out with the team as often as she could during the project and often commented to me that she thoroughly enjoyed the team being there. She loved to hear them laughing and talking while they worked.”

Another homeowner who developed strong relationships with the repair team is Jill. Initial repairs on her home included adding railings outside the door and along the front sidewalk. As Jill interacted with the crew and realized they genuinely cared about her,

she shared issues with her bathroom that had left her feeling vulnerable. After assessing her needs, the team replaced a broken door, installed grab bars, added a handheld shower head, and provided a stool and new curtain.

“It is wonderful to work with kind-hearted people who are so skilled,” Jill says. “I feel safe, free and honored.”

As a result of her involvement with the repair program, she’s found new ways to engage locally, too.

Paying it Forward

Part of partnering with Habitat for Humanity is a willingness to provide sweat equity – an investment of time and labor. For many homeowners, this means helping with the construction of their new residences. But sweat equity looks different in the repair program, since seniors often aren’t physically able to participate with work crews.

“The program promotes community involvement when homeowners ‘pay it forward,’” says Cowles.

The ways of “paying it forward” are as varied and creative as the homeowners themselves. Phig is doing 72 good deeds for her neighbors. Others have given plant clippings as gifts, read to children at schools, shared baked goods or prayed for their neighbors. One homeowner created a phone tree so other seniors who live alone can reach out for help when they need to. Another shared produce from their garden with neighbors. Jill is teaching art classes for local children in her home.

Providing a Positive Environment

The program focuses on repairs that are critical for safety, health and accessibility. Homeowners must qualify based on income and other requirements.

The crew notices that repairs lead both to a stronger sense of physical security and to peace of mind and even joy, as a home is transformed from disrepair to a space that reflects caring.

In Jill’s case, mission accomplished! She says, “[Pikes Peak] Habitat for Humanity let me stay independent instead of being relegated to an assisted living facility.”



This homeowner’s porch posed a falling hazard, so the repair crew added steps and railings.

The Restoration

by Phig

Once deep inside
Where the storm
doesn't get to,

I am safe away
in the grey drawn day
while iridescent drops
paint
a scattered
promise, yet to come.

Secure, I dream
all night,
warm and unafraid.
Refreshed by the dawn
and all I believe,

but things change,
slowly
then quickly.

Some intimidating wind
starts whipping along –
chipping off
bits, wearing on
old crooked
seams until
water curls in,
dampness rotting the
bones, slipping around
tiny holes, so
soon they're bursting
and the walls
and I
start crumbling and
falling down.

Gone beyond patching and tacking,
no sealing, no taping, no nailing,
no inspiration. No answer
to come.

Full on defeat.
Blighted in mold.
Full on cold, and poor,
then just
alone.

When from
something asked or
forgotten or lost,
the gift was delivered one morning:

craftsmen, carpenters, engineers
bringing wisdom, stories and tools.
New boards, and honor and humor.
Poetry in the precision of
angles. The buzzing
of serious saws. Chorus
of grace, hammering
from their hearts. They
untangled wires easing
the tension, relieving the
pain, throwing out
bags of shame, redirecting
the path where perils
sneak in.

It stood
again – better
than before.

Through the window
it was clear to see,

what was really salvaged
was truth
revealing what I'd
always known,

Rain is simply prayer
unfolding
into thirsty seeds,

long-ago flowers
soaking, rising
toward a perpetual
sun, growing

such pure
Powerful

love from thick mud.

*This poem is dedicated to [Pikes
Peak Habitat staff and volunteers]
Leah, Phil, John, Stewart, Mike, Linda,
Gary, Ray, Dave and Charlie.*

Editor's note: Phig is a homeowner who partnered with Pikes Peak Habitat for Humanity on critical repairs. The roof of her home lacked an overhang, so water had not only ruined the exterior side wall but had also seeped inside, damaging the

Repair Program Seeks to Partner with Veteran Homeowners

Thanks to a generous grant from The Home Depot Foundation, the Pikes Peak Habitat for Humanity home repair program is looking for El Paso County veterans who own their homes and are in need of critical repairs.

Brian is a local veteran who partnered with us. To help with mobility, the repair team removed an existing walkway in front of his home and replaced it with a concrete ramp.

We're accepting applications now for other veterans in need of critical repairs. Visit pikespeakhabitat.org/homerepairprogram.



Brian, left, chats with a Pikes Peak Habitat home repair volunteer in his garage.

interior and leading to black mold. Phig's pre-existing health issues were exacerbated by these conditions.

The repair team tested for asbestos and air quality, which was found to be extremely poor. They replaced damaged plaster in the walls and ceilings and painted the exterior walls.

Phig now has a much healthier physical environment, and the warm interactions with the repair crew nourished her spirit, too!

Quilters Celebrate New Beginnings

One Sunday, Anita Arends wore a patchwork jacket – which she'd quilted herself – to a church service at Ascension Lutheran, not knowing the far-reaching impact her wardrobe choice would have.

The pastor noticed her jacket and asked if she quilted. That led to a conversation during which she shared her desire to start a group focused on creating quilts for people in need of warmth and love.

“One day he comes to me and he says, ‘You know, my mother-in-law kind of has the same vision you do,’” Arends recalls. “So he gave me Barb’s number, and I called her, and instantly we’re finishing each other’s sentences – we still do it today; we interrupt each other and we finish each other’s sentences – but we had the same vision, so we met and we started the group.”

Arends and Barbara Daugherty launched Quilts for New Beginnings almost eight years ago. The group meets every Wednesday, 9 a.m.-noon, at Ascension Lutheran Church, 2505 N. Circle Dr., Colorado Springs, 80909.

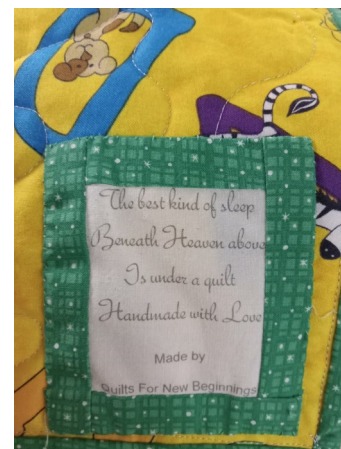
The group embraces new members and emphasizes that everyone is welcome, including men. “We would like more variety. We just have a great group of ladies,” says Arends. “We have two rules, and I do enforce them: We don’t talk politics, and we don’t talk religions.”

While many of the quilters are passionate about their craft, belong to multiple groups and also quilt at home, Daugherty says novices are also invited. “We’ve had people come before who haven’t known how to sew,” she says. “There’s enough people here, and they’re great helpers and mentors.”

One person who initially lacked experience is Cerne Rieves. “I didn’t quilt at all before I retired,” says Rieves, who now participates in five different groups. “I keep finding things to do and fabric to do it with and time to do it with. It keeps us busy.”

At Quilts for New Beginnings, each member specializes in one or two aspects of quilting – cutting, piecing, tying. “I make quilt tops, and somebody else sandwiches them and quilts them,” explains Jeanna Cumnock. “There are several ladies that we don’t ever see here because they volunteer their long-arm quilting machines and their hours and finish off the quilts for us. [There are] the few of us who come in here on Wednesdays, but there are equally as many that we don’t get to see that often.”

For example, Christy Warner also makes quilt tops at home, and a fellow group member estimated that she has probably created two thousand of them. The quilters also offer basic kits for anyone who can’t attend the group or wants to try quilting at home.



Quilts for New Beginnings leaves a message of love for recipients on quilts such as this one for an infant.



Gloria Kinsell, left, and Amy Newton sandwich batting between quilt tops and backs.

Pikes Peak Habitat homeowners aren’t the only beneficiaries of the group’s creativity and generosity. Quilts for New Beginnings has also donated their work to Lutheran World Relief, Mennonite Central Committee, Family Promise Program-IHN, One Nation Walking Together, Bakhita Mountain Home, Special Kids Special Families and Springs Village Care Center.

And just as each volunteer on a Pikes Peak Habitat build contributes their piece to a greater whole, so do the quilters. After quilts are tied or completed with a long-arm machine, the group has a chance to view the finished products. “It’s just astonishing what your little piece can look like when it’s all done,” says Jan Hall, who cuts fabric into squares.

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First Lutheran Quilt Group Provides Fellowship, Friendship and Finesse

The quilters who meet every Thursday morning at 9:30 a.m. in Luther Hall, across the alley from First Lutheran Church, 1515 N. Cascade Ave., Colorado Springs, 80907, start their sessions with a devotion. They say sharing a brief meditation and discussion has helped them develop into a close community.

"We are also a fellowship group," explains Christine Welch, co-leader, "and by doing that kind of stuff and the devotion, it makes a difference."

Ruth Hjelmstad agrees. "I've so much enjoyed it, and the fellowship in this group is tremendous," she says. "We're all becoming really good friends."

"We really mesh together," says Darlene Edwards, the other co-leader. Edwards has been quilting for 30 years and worked in a quilt store, so when the church sought someone to start a group 15-20 years ago, she was a natural choice. "We really know each other pretty well. We all help each other. We all do things for each other, here and outside the group."

Gail Friedly recently moved to Colorado Springs from eastern Oregon to be near family. "I found home. I've never belonged to a quilting group before," she says. "This group has been phenomenal; they're so knowledgeable."

"It's just fun, and I like the camaraderie, being with the women," agrees Cathy Mellott. "We have some



Above left, Marlis Olson's quilt top. Above right, Gail Friedly, left, helps Trudy Hill sandwich a quilt.

good, very knowledgeable people. Everybody's always helping each other out."

In addition to Pikes Peak Habitat for Humanity, the First Lutheran quilters support CASA, local fire departments, Operation Home Front's annual baby shower, Lutheran World Relief and the Lutheran Family Services Innkeeper Dinner.

During COVID-19, though, the group was unable to donate quilts, because none of the organizations they usually work with could accept them. One morning, quilter Chris Gerbig was out walking her dog and stopped to chat with a neighbor. "I mentioned that I had to go to quilting group, even though nobody wants quilts during COVID," she says. The neighbor volunteered at UC Children's Hospital and thought they might be able to accept quilts. So the group inquired and learned that the hospital has commercial laundry facilities, enabling them to sterilize donated items. "So we gave quilts to kids who were there," says Gerbig.

"We're always open to being able to serve this area and the Lutheran World Relief," says Welch. "We also encourage people to develop their own skills and work on things, whether they're gifts or things for themselves. We want to meet the needs of the people in the group."

They view quilting as a learning experience. "Since we're all human, [quilting] teaches us patience," explains Welch. "We learn how to rip out."

"My seam ripper is my best friend!" agrees Hjelmstad.

Andi the Dog Serves as Group's Mascot

When the First Lutheran Church quilting group began meeting in person again after COVID-19 lockdown, they had an unusual new member.

Trudy Hill decided to bring her dog, Andi, with her to the group. Andi had recently lost her mate, and Hill didn't want to leave her alone.

"The ladies seemed to enjoy seeing her," says Hill. "She stays out of the way; she's well-behaved. So they adopted her as their mascot."



(Continued on p. 11)

Pikes Peak Habitat Builds the Beloved Community in El Paso County

This year, Pikes Peak Habitat for Humanity held a series of events focused on the theme of Building the Beloved Community. Spanning the three weeks from Martin Luther King Jr. Day Jan. 16 to U.N. World Interfaith Harmony Week Feb. 1-7, the initiative encouraged participants to help “build the beloved community” locally.

“At Pikes Peak Habitat we recognize that in order to ‘Build the Beloved Community’ it will take all of us – community members of all different backgrounds, beliefs and faiths,” says Chloe Henry, Faith in Action program manager. “So it is our honor to be able to partner with so many faith communities to come alongside families in El Paso County.”

The initiative launched Jan. 16 with a volunteer day at both Pikes Peak Habitat ReStore locations. Volunteer groups from diverse faith traditions and congregations signed up for shifts.

Henry also created daily challenges for U.N. World Interfaith Harmony Week, available as downloadable PDF forms at pikespeakhabitat.org/un-interfaith-harmony-week. Suggested actions included learning about racial barriers to homeownership in the United States, as well as exploring the history of housing policies in El Paso County and Colorado. To encourage participation, Pikes Peak Habitat offered a prize to anyone who completed four out of seven daily challenges.

Pikes Peak Habitat also hosted a special volunteer day at the Interfaith Build for Unity (IBU) site on Saturday, Feb. 4. Participants from several faith traditions worked on the house, wrote blessings and prayers on the framing, and shared a meal. A film crew from Interfaith America recorded the event for a short documentary film they’re creating.

Finally, “Building the Beloved Community in El Paso County: An Interfaith Response to Racial Inequity in Homeownership” on Sunday, Feb. 5, was sponsored by Pikes Peak Habitat in association with the Pikes



Volunteers from First United Methodist Church model their “Love Each Other” gear at the ReStore Northeast on Jan. 16.

Peak Inter Faith Coalition and the 10th Air Base Wing Community Chapel.

“To build the beloved community, we recognize that we need to understand the historic barriers to homeownership like the racial homeownership gap, as well as meaningful steps community stakeholders are taking to address these barriers,” says Henry. “That is why our IBU Subcommittee was passionate about hosting this interfaith dialogue event.”

The event featured a panel of experts who shared their experiences in working for affordable housing and addressing historic inequities:

- **Catherine Duarte**, HUD Programs Manager, Community Development Division, City of Colorado Springs
- **James Johnson**, Property Acquisitions Manager, Solid Rock CDC
- **Max Kronstadt**, Co-Founder, Pro Housing Partnership
- **Heather McBroom**, Program Development Manager, Thrive Networks
- **Raju Patel**, Senior Vice President, President Bank of America Colorado and Market Executive, Bank of America

After they spoke, approximately 70 participants shared a meal and engaged in a facilitated interfaith discussion.



Left, volunteers work on the IBU home Feb. 4. Below, future IBU homeowners Jessica (left) and Anna talk at the build site.



Ground Blessing Introduces Three New Families to Neighborhood

Pikes Peak Habitat for Humanity held a joint ground blessing for three families at our The Ridge at Sand Creek neighborhood on Saturday, Jan. 28.

The event showcased **Karmen**, the fourth Veteran Build future homeowner; **Susie and Alex**, whose home will be the third George Hammond Build – Honoring Tim Trowbridge; and **Ricardo and Mariela**, the 2023 Apostles Build future homeowners.

Mike Maroone Honda also was recognized for their support of the fourth Veterans Build via their annual Honda and Accord car shows.

Karmen is a U.S. Army veteran and single mom to two sons. Her home will be Pikes Peak Habitat's fourth Veterans Build.



The boys are excited about having their own rooms and plan to decorate them in Avengers and Pokemon themes. Karmen looks forward to enjoying the view of Pikes Peak from her new backyard.

Lara Family Wins Gingerbread Home Build

Together with our generous sponsors, participants and donors, we raised more \$27,000 during the 2022 Gingerbread Home Build to support the construction of Karmen's new home.



First prize went to the Lara family (left), who received their plaque at the ground blessing Jan. 28. Sam and Melanie Adams and George Hammond earned second place, while third went to the ReStore Northeast staff.

We're grateful to all the participants, as well as title sponsor CHFA and sponsors Thrivent and Mountain Country Radio.



Susie, her son Alex and her grandson will live in the third George Hammond Build – Honoring Tim Trowbridge. Both Susie and Alex enjoy gardening.

Ricardo and Mariela, the 2023 Apostles Build family, are the parents of four sons – the youngest born in November!



Mariela is excited for family game nights in their new home. The boys are eager to have space for books, toys, and sports equipment. And Ricardo anticipates meals with the whole family together at the table.

Prop 123 Passes in Colorado

In November 2022, Colorado voters approved Proposition 123, which allocates one-tenth of 1% of state income tax revenue to fund affordable housing.

While acknowledging that the lack of affordable housing won't be solved with just one measure, Pikes Peak Habitat for Humanity views Prop 123 as a needed and valuable tool to expand the number of affordable units in Colorado. Funds from this initiative will allow cities throughout the state to locally invest in workforce housing solutions. Such investment is desperately

needed. The cost of housing in Colorado Springs, for example, has far outpaced wages. The disparity between income and home prices mean homeownership is unattainable for many workforce families.

At a conservative estimate, Pikes Peak Habitat will double the number of homes we build and repair in El Paso County each year because of Prop 123.

Read Pikes Peak Habitat Executive Director/CEO Kris Lewis' letter about this measure at pikespeakhabitat.org/proposition-123.

Mayoral Candidate Forum Focuses on Affordable Homeownership

(Continued from p. 1)

With 12 mayoral candidates on the ballot, Colorado Springs voters have an array of choices, ranging from city council members and county commissioners to small-business owners and military veterans. This forum allows voters the opportunity to hear each candidate express their plans and perspectives on the specific challenge of affordable homeownership.

In addition, event participants can interact with participating candidates in a meet-and-greet in the Ent Center lobby prior to the forum.

All 12 candidates have confirmed that they will participate:

- Sallie Clark
- Andrew Dalby
- Darryl Glenn
- Longinos Gonzales, Jr.
- Lawrence Martinez
- Jim Miller
- Christopher Mitchell
- Blessing “Yemi” Mobolade
- Kallan Reece Rodebaugh
- Tom Strand
- John “Tig” Tiegen
- Wayne Williams

Pikes Peak Habitat’s event website, pikespeak-habitat.org/mayoral-candidate-forum, has a link to the registration page and is continuing to be updated with the latest information.

Pikes Peak Habitat Goes to Washington

2023 Habitat on the Hill Spotlights Advocacy Efforts



Karla Probert

Karla Probert, executive assistant to the executive director/CEO and affiliate advocacy ambassador for Pikes Peak Habitat for Humanity, traveled to Washington, D.C., this year to participate in the 2023 Habitat on the Hill.

Probert joined 375 Habitat for Humanity International colleagues, homeowners, board members and leaders from 40 states, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico at the event. Participants learned about the implications of a changing political environment on housing policy and discussed challenges and solutions for advancing Black homeownership housing experts.

In addition, they met with congressional offices, celebrated a year of policy successes at all levels of government, and left with tools to increase their advocacy impact locally – all while connecting with peers.

Probert’s plans included meeting with Colorado legislators to discuss local issues and challenges, including the high cost of housing throughout the state. She also shared stories of Pikes Peak Habitat homeowners, both to showcase the work our affiliate is doing and to personalize the issue of affordable homeownership.



Habitat on the Hill 2023: Advocacy for Impact

February 7 – 9 • Washington, D.C.

2023 COLORADO SPRINGS MAYORAL CANDIDATE FORUM on Affordable Homeownership



HOSTED BY:



EVENT BROADCAST COURTESY OF:



Quilts for New Beginnings

(Continued from p. 6)

Hall has brought several friends to the group. “We were all coworkers,” she explains, “and now we are all retired and looking for meaningful ways to spend our daylight hours.”

Rieves has a similar perspective, viewing quilting as her calling. “God gave me this to do in retirement,” she explains. “That is what I do, make quilts to give to people. It’s what my life is at this point.”

And the women want the recipients of their quilts to know how much love has been invested in each step of the process.

“Cherish the love that went into making the quilt, because all the quilts are made with love,” says Jackie Peterson, whose specialty is tying quilts. “They’re fabric, they’re material, but they’re put together with love.”

Cumnock agrees. “Everyone, regardless of their circumstances, needs something beautiful in their lives that is their own, whether it’s a child or an adult,” she says. “They can call it their own, and it is special for them, and they know that someone made it with love just for them.”

For Pam Buller, who creates quilt tops, quilting isn’t just a labor of love but also a means of spiritual connection. “I pray while I’m sewing, so I feel like God speaks to me while I’m quilting, and often I’ll know something about the person as I’m sewing,” she explains. She hopes quilt recipients know “that they’ve been prayed for and that God is watching over them and just how much he loves them.”

And the group’s mission is expressed through their name. “We believe that we give these willingly for their new beginning. That’s part of our name,” says Daugherty. “We hope this brings them comfort, blessing of their new beginnings.”

“When people think about other people instead of themselves,” says Cumnock, “I think that’s what changes the world.”



Left, a storage closet at Ascension Lutheran Church is full of fabric and supplies donated to Quilts for New Beginnings.

First Lutheran Quilting Group

(Continued from p. 7)

“Part of my passion is that I was a home ec teacher, and once a teacher, always a teacher. And so I’ve been able to help people,” Welch says. “Darlene has sessions where she’ll teach something. And we always have, as part of the meeting, show and tell or asking of questions, and sometimes people will mention things that they’ve learned.”

Some members are relatively new to quilting. “I started doing this when I retired, and I started doing this because my mother had all the equipment,” says Gerbig. “I was a true beginner.”

Friedly has been quilting for five or six years, she says. Before she retired, she worked in children’s services in Oregon, and when she was tasked with decorating the office, she selected wall quilts. “I’ve always known they’re special,” she explains. “It’s so rewarding. It feels so creative.”

For others, like Marlis Olson, quilting is a multi-generational legacy. “I learned to sew from my mother and my grandmother,” she says. “Even my daughter is a quilter.”

She developed her sewing skills using a treadle machine on the southern Minnesota farm where she grew up. She recalls placing her doll on flour sacks or newspapers and cutting out patterns. “I didn’t have any fancy teachers,” she says. “We just learned a lot by doing. Being in a group here, this is finishing our education.”

But it isn’t only about the craft or even the fellowship. Creating quilts for others is a spiritual calling. “We fulfill our love of Christianity by doing this,” says Olson.

Edwards has a similar perspective. “It gives me a warm feeling. We can give this to a kid. A lot of these kids just don’t have anything; even the adults don’t,” she says. “We really love making quilts for people who would really like to have them. I haven’t given one away yet that they haven’t appreciated.”

Trudy Hill agrees. “It’s very gratifying for me,” she says. “I feel that I’m trying to do God’s work in helping people in need. That’s what we’re called to do, to take care of each other and love each other, so whatever I can do for someone that needs something, I feel that I’m following his teachings to us.”



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