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December 21st 2006

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Habitat for Humanity

by Jeff Green

Habitat for Humanity is coming to Addington Highlands, with plans to build a house just west of Flinton in the summer of 2007.

It all started when the Chisholm family of Roslin (north of Belleville), decided to celebrate the 150th anniversary of their lumbering business. They approached the Prince Edward – Hastings County affiliate of Habitat for Humanity with the idea of donating a building lot they own on the Upper Flinton road to be used as a site on which to build a Habitat for Humanity house.

As it happens, the lot is not in Hastings County, so the Prince Edward Hastings affiliate approached people in Addington Highlands, and a meeting was arranged in early December to set up a local volunteer group. Ruth Peck, one of members of this group, said, "We have been able to gather a really strong group of about 10 people to get this project off the ground." The new committee is called the Flinton Build Committee.

Habitat for Humanity was established in Georgia, USA, in 1975, by Millard and Linda Fuller. At that time the couple sold all their possessions and have since devoted their efforts towards helping to house people around the world.

According to Habitat for Humanity International's website, the Fullers took their inspiration from a passage in the Bible that says "someone lending money to the poor should not act as a creditor and should not charge interest," and should "choose to build houses on a no-profit, no-interest basis, thus making homes available to families with low incomes."

In 1985 Habitat Canada was formed, and it now encompasses 70 affiliates and 30,000 volunteers, and has built over 1,000 homes.

The Prince Edward-Hastings affiliate has sponsored 8 houses since being formed in 1995.

The Flinton project will follow the protocol that all Habitat projects use. A selection committee, including representatives from Addington Highlands, will look for an appropriate family.

"The family selection process is extensive, following a strict set of guidelines," said Habitat board member Nigel Sivell of Prince Edward County. "They need to be employed; be a family that doesn't normally qualify for a traditional mortgage; and have inadequate housing."

The home that is being built will be fully funded through donations and will

be built by volunteer labour, including 500 hours from the recipient family.

The family will then take on an interest-free mortgage, with payments geared to their income. All of the mortgage payments received by Habitat must be spent on building new homes. According to Nigel Sivell, once the Prince Edward Hastings affiliate has 20 houses built, the mortgages will be sufficient to fund a new home every year.

Much of the Flinton house's costs are being funded through the generosity of the Chisholm family. A part from donating the land, complete with a good well, they will be clearing the building site, providing \$20,000 worth of building materials courtesy of the Timbrmart store they own in Roslin, and are helping to source other in-kind donations from their suppliers.

Locally, North Addington Education Centre has already expressed interest in getting students involved, and other volunteer recruitment and fundraising will begin in the New Year.

The township has waived fees for the use of the Flinton Recreation Centre for a public meeting to start the project locally. That meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 16th, at 7:00 pm.

For further information, contact Cheryl Hartwick at 613-336-8439.

For general information about Habitat for Humanity, go to habitatpeh.org or habitat.ca.