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# New Randolph 'Habitat' Project Breaks Ground

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BY TIM CALABRO



The soon-to-be homeowners are joined by volunteers, construction staff, and Habitat for Humanity folks for the ceremonial groundbreaking of a new duplex on Central Street. (Provided)

The Central Vermont chapter of Habitat for Humanity held a groundbreaking ceremony Saturday at the organization's latest site in Randolph.

The spot on Central Street sits across from Mound Street and volunteers spent last Thursday mowing and getting the grounds ready for Saturday's big to-do.

About 30 people turned out for the event—mostly volunteers, but also a neighbor, the two families that will call the new house their home, Larry Satcowitz (in his roles as a Randolph Selectboard member and the town's representative to the State House), as well as folks from Bensonwood Homes.

There are two unique things about this particular project, according to CV Habitat for Humanity director Zach Watson. First, the house will be made up of pre-fabricated insulated structural panels made by Bensonwood. This style of construction is incredibly energy-efficient and, Watson said, will cut down the time it takes to get the shell of the building done.

When all is said and done, Watson estimated that the panels would have "saved us about six months in rough framing."



Initial work began this week on the future Habitat for Humanity home on Central Street. (Herald / Kyan Smith)

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“There’s a lot of good faith” from Bensonwood as bids were being put together, Watson said.

The second unique feature of the new Randolph Habitat Home is that it will be a duplex— the first one for Central Vermont Habitat for Humanity.

During remarks at the groundbreaking ceremony, Rep. Satcowitz noted that the legislature has been focused on solutions to the state’s housing woes and duplexes are a good way to utilize space.

Between the efficiencies of the pre-fab wall panels and the ability to house two families in a single project, Watson said it’s his organization’s goal to “house more people faster.”

Currently, site work has started, particularly water, sewer, and power line connections, which, due to the topography of the site have proven more complicated than one might expect, Watson said and excavators will have to dig up a portion of Central Street to connect the water and sewer lines.

In November, the walls and roof structures should be delivered and put in place with a crane. Then the shell will be sealed up, heat pumps installed to provide heat, and volunteers will be able to work through the winter on indoor projects—building the interior walls, mudding, and painting.

If all goes to plan, two families will take ownership of the duplex next spring.

On one side will be Rose Volpe, of Randolph, who is raising two elementary school aged grandchildren. The three of them will live in a three-bedroom unit.

The other side will see a family of four move in.

The homeowner will be Mediatrice Muzima, a Rwandan immigrant, along with her two high-school aged children and her mother.

Each half of the duplex will be about 1,200 square feet, equipped with a kitchen, living room, laundry room, and two full bathrooms.

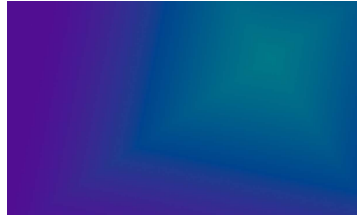
Volunteers, Watson noted, will be needed to help build concrete forms before the foundation is poured this fall and throughout the winter for work on the building’s interior. Anyone interested in lending a hand can sign up at the organization’s website, [centralvermonthabitat.org/](https://centralvermonthabitat.org/) volunteer.

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