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SPRING | 2011



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# HEB Homeowner Newsletter

Do you remember when you first heard about Habitat for Humanity East Bay? Well now, we need you to spread the word about this great homeownership opportunity! As you know, the first step to applying is to attend one of our orientations.

## UPCOMING HOMEBUYER ORIENTATIONS

**Wednesday**  
**May 4, 2011**  
6:00 p.m.  
First Presbyterian Church  
2619 Broadway Ave  
Oakland, CA 94612

**Saturday**  
**May 21, 2011**  
10:00 a.m.  
Ambrose Community Center  
3105 Willow Pass Rd  
Bay Point, CA 94565

## REFER A FRIEND



And receive **\$50** off  
one monthly  
mortgage payment!

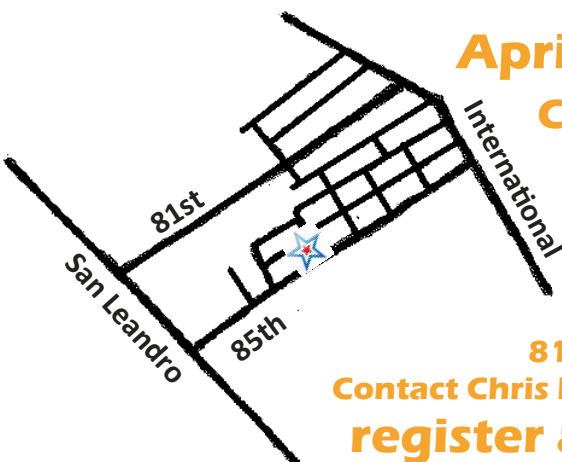
Offer expires 8/31/2011

Please tell your family, friends, co-workers, and acquaintances about our homeownership program. Encourage them to attend an upcoming orientation and to apply! If they are qualified, and make it through the selection process to become a Habitat partner family, Habitat East Bay will deduct **\$50** off your monthly mortgage for the next month!!! Make sure that your reference includes your family name on their pre-application!

# BUILD-A-THON! >>>>>>>>>

**April 16-19, 2011, 7:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.**

**Come help us build 7 new homes in 4 days**



**81st Avenue, southwest of Rudsdale Street, Oakland, CA**  
**Contact Chris Laster at (510) 251-6304 ext. 367 for more information**  
**register at [www.habitatbay.org/build-a-thon](http://www.habitatbay.org/build-a-thon)**

# FRC Cultural Extravaganza!

The Family Resource Committee is a volunteer-led committee that supports homeowners after move-in through various events focusing on youth opportunities and community building. To start off the 2011 year, Cal Habitat students, the FRC and Habitat East Bay staff members hosted a day of fun and cultural activities for youth from the various Habitat developments.

## Saturday, February 26th, 2011

Written by Maria Patanwala

February 26<sup>th</sup> was a packed day for Cal Habitat with multiple workdays and a fundraiser, but one of the most exciting events was the Cultural Extravaganza! Cal Habitat's Community Outreach and Advocacy Committee worked with the Habitat East Bay Family Resources Committee to hold this special event for the Habitat homeowner families. With delicious food, fun art and dancing, and exciting performances, the committee aimed to promote cultural awareness and celebrate diversity in the East Bay community.

The event took place on the UC Berkeley campus with over 40 children and family members ready for a day focused around fun exploration of different cultural traditions. There were performances like Hawaiian dancing and a Chinese instrumental piece, workshops in Salsa and Classical Indian dancing, and booths on Henna, Cambodian culture, and Origami. The fun continued with delicious foods prepared by committee members like sushi, Pakistani dishes like chana and aloo chaat, Indian aloo tiki, pasta, homemade biscotti, and yummy desserts like baklava, turron, peanut butter cookies, and caramel chocolate bars!


Furthermore, we cannot forget our generous donations of pakoras from House of Curries on Durant Avenue in Berkeley and fresh tortilla chips and salsa from La Burrita on Durant Avenue in Berkeley. We are also thankful to the Berkeley Trader Joe's on University Avenue and Oakland Safeway on College Avenue for their generous donations to the event!



The Cultural Extravaganza was a great success with priceless memories of volunteers and kids helping each other learn dance moves and make origami paper cranes. For some volunteers it was a wonderful reunion with the students and families they have met at past events, and for others it was an exciting opportunity to create new friendships. The Community Outreach and Advocacy Chairs would like to thank their committee, the FRC, and everyone else that helped with the event for dedicating so much time and hard work to the effort. We would especially like to thank the families that came as we could not have had the event without them. We are excited for the next event and hope even more families will take part next time! Also, we encourage families to let us know of any ideas for events they may have via email at [calhabitat.outreachandadvocacy@gmail.com](mailto:calhabitat.outreachandadvocacy@gmail.com)!

# Women's History Month

Each year, Habitat for Humanity East Bay observes March as Women's History Month. Coordinated both nationally and internationally, Women's History Month recognizes the important role women have played in history despite the fact that their contribution has often been underrepresented or overlooked. Each March, Habitat celebrates the vital role that women play in our own communities, providing support and leadership among our neighborhoods. This year, the Family Resource Committee, homeowners and youth will be hosting a banquet in order to honor the dreams and accomplishments of our phenomenal women.



**Monday, March 21st, 2011**  
**6pm-9pm**

**Fellowship Hall, Habitat Office**  
2619 Broadway Ave, Oakland, 94612

This year's event will include cultural performances, delicious food and drinks, and a presentation by social activist Pam Tau Lee.

Please join us to celebrate the accomplishments of women in our communities and abroad.



Pictures from Women's History Month event 2010



**Celebrating the Past,**  
**Engaging in the Present,**  
**Building for the Future...**

This year's theme encourages women and men alike to reach out and engage in their community. Habitat for Humanity East Bay prides itself on not only building homes, but building community. We encourage our partner families to interact with one another rather than closing their doors on their neighbors. This interaction and engagement creates healthy communities, where safe spaces can be created for men, women and children. Find out more by attending the Women's History Month event, or calling Tim Thomas at 510-251-6304 x 316.

**If you have not yet participated in an event hosted by the Family Resource Committee, it's not too late! Each year, the FRC hosts between three and four events. If you are interested, contact Tim Thomas at 510-251-6304 x 316.**

# Recent Dedications!

## February 23rd, 2011

On the evening of February 23rd, Habitat East Bay and 12 different homeowners celebrated the completion of their homes!

The evening began with a potluck dinner including many dishes from different cultural backgrounds. After everyone shared in the feast, the CEO of Habitat East Bay, Janice Jensen, opened the ceremony by welcoming and congratulating everyone. Each family was then recognized and presented with a ceremonial hammer, book of faith, and key ring. Board Chair, David Barron, and Board Members, Katie Glenn and Bob Hoffman, were present to explain the significance of the ceremonial gifts and congratulate the families on all of their hard work.

We want to give all the families honored that night a huge welcome to the Habitat East Bay family! After months of hard work, and years of dreaming of owning their own home, these 12 families are ready to begin their journey of homeownership.



*The Nerayo/Ghebremeskel family*



*The Xu/Lai family*



*The Rodriguez family*



*The Yu/Tse family*



*The Bereket family*



*The Torres/Ramirez family*



*The Liu/Li family*



*The Zavala family*



*The Johnson family*



*The Hou/Lin family*



*The Serrano/Isidoro family*



*The Yirbado/Sima family*



A very gracious thank you to our friends at  
*Source Photography*  
for providing photo services!  
[www.sourcephotographysf.com](http://www.sourcephotographysf.com)

# Recent Dedications!

## March 5th, 2011 at Kinsell Commons

On a sunny Saturday morning, over 175 Habitat East Bay supporters gathered to welcome six new homeowners to the Habitat family at the first phase of the Kinsell Commons Development. It was a moving occasion and a time to celebrate the accomplishments of the families, volunteers, sponsors and staff that made this achievement possible.

Attendees included government dignitaries like Oakland Mayor Jean Quan and California State Senator Loni Hancock who expressed their admiration of the Kinsell Commons development and families, while also showing their support for Affordable Housing. Chiu Yuet Chan and his daughter Ada, who will be buying one of the homes, made a moving bilingual speech about the value of owning a home and fulfilling their American Dream.

We would like to extend a heart-felt welcome to all six families: **The Chan family, The Huang family, The Lai/Law family, The Lei/Yu family, The Weldemichael/Teweldbrhan family and The Ma/Lu family.**



**KINSELL COMMONS IN OAKLAND**

## March 7th, 2011 in Antioch

### NSP REHAB AT GENTRYTOWN DRIVE, ANTIOCH



Bank of America Representative, Jeremy Williams, presented the ceremonial house key to the very proud Gargaro family. This NSP Rehab was made possible by Bank of America's sponsorship.



On March 7th, 2011 the Gargaro family celebrated the completion of their new home on a sunny day in Antioch. Christian and Elizabeth Gargaro, along with their two children Christian, Jr. and Selena, explored the beautifully renovated home which was made possible by dedicated volunteers, donors and their own sweat equity.

"Owning our home," says Christian "makes us feel proud and motivated and gives us the financial security to help us follow our dreams."

# Family Earthquake Preparedness

Our thoughts go out to the people of Japan, where an 8.9 earthquake hit on March 11, 2011, causing devastation throughout coastal towns and cities. In the Bay Area, it is critical to prepare for an earthquake. Below are some life-saving tips to help your family get ready:

## Step 1: Prepare a Home Earthquake Plan

- Develop a family meeting spot. In case you are unable to get in touch, the family meeting spot serves as a safe place for your family to meet in any circumstance.
- Identify safe places in every room--under a sturdy table or desk or against an inside wall where nothing can fall on you.
- Practice DROP, COVER, AND HOLD ON at least twice a year. Drop under a sturdy table, hold on, and protect your eyes by pressing your face against your arm. If there's no table or desk nearby, sit on the floor against an interior wall away from windows, bookcases, or tall furniture that could fall on you. Teach children to DROP, COVER, AND HOLD ON!
- Choose an out-of-town family contact. During an earthquake, phone lines may be down and cell phone lines may be jammed in the area. By calling a contact who is out of the area, your family may relay information to each other.
- Inform babysitters and caregivers of your plan.

## Step 2: Prepare a Disaster Supplies Kit for home and car, including:

- First aid kit and essential medications.
- Canned food and can opener.
- At least three gallons of water per person.
- Protective clothing, rainwear, and bedding or sleeping bags.
- Battery-powered radio, flashlight, and extra batteries.
- Special items for infant, elderly, or disabled family members.
- Written instructions for how to turn off gas, electricity, and water if authorities advise you to do so. (Remember, you'll need a professional to turn natural gas service back on.)

## Step 3: Make your home earthquake safe:

- Make sure picture frames and other breakables are well-secured.
- Bolt your bookcases and cabinets firmly to the wall.
- Keep your Disaster Supplies Kit in a designated location. Make sure everyone in the family knows where it is located.

## Step 4 : Know what to do when shaking begins:

- DROP, COVER, AND HOLD ON! Move only a few steps to a nearby safe place. Stay indoors until the shaking stops and you're sure it's safe to exit. Stay away from windows. In a high-rise building, expect the fire alarms and sprinklers to go off during a quake.
- If you are in bed, hold on and stay there, protecting your head with a pillow.
- If you are outdoors, find a clear spot away from buildings, trees, and power lines. Drop to the ground.
- If you are in a car, slow down and drive to a clear place (as described above). Stay in the car until the shaking stops.

## Step 5 : Identify what to do after the shaking stops:

- Check yourself for injuries. Protect yourself from further danger by putting on long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, sturdy shoes, and work gloves.
- Check others for injuries. Give first aid for serious injuries.
- Look for and extinguish small fires. Eliminate fire hazards. Turn off the gas if you smell gas or think it's leaking. (Remember, only a professional should turn it back on.)
- Listen to the radio for instructions.
- Expect aftershocks. Each time you feel one, DROP, COVER, AND HOLD ON!
- Inspect your home for damage. Get everyone out if your home is unsafe.
- Use the telephone only to report life-threatening emergencies. Contact your designated out-of-area contact, so they can communicate your safety to other concerned family members.

# VIP Volunteers

Each month, Habitat for Humanity East Bay features a volunteer who has made a significant contribution by dedicating their time and hard work to Habitat's mission. In February and March, volunteers with the Family Selection Committee and Family Resource Committee were honored. Their support has greatly aided the work of the Homeowner Relations Department and the lives of our partner families!

## Rebecca del Carmen



If any single person embodies Habitat East Bay's mission, it is Rebecca del Carmen – fondly known as Carmelita. More than just a familiar face at home dedications and homeowner events, Carmelita is truly a backbone in our community outreach and support efforts. On various Saturdays, you can find her picking up Habitat homeowners from public transit, making homemade tamales for a Family Resource Committee event, or doing home interviews with applicants. She has served as emcee for a Habitat Christmas party and four times a year, she volunteers at the Concord Moose Lodge so that Habitat can use the space to host homeowner events, at which she provides her DJ and catering services.

In her spare time, Carmelita calls families to remind them of their sweat equity commitments and assists in organizing events with the Cal Berkeley Habitat for Humanity Chapter and Family Resource Committee. Simply listing her involvement with Habitat East Bay is exhausting – yet every phone call, car ride, handmade tamale, and emcee gig is accomplished with care, thoughtfulness, and joy. Whatever it may be, Carmelita can always be relied on to go the distance in supporting the heart of the Habitat mission – our homeowners.

## Marvin So

Many of you will recognize the smiling face of Marvin So, and if you do not, then your kids will! Marvin has been a dedicated and enthusiastic volunteer with Habitat East Bay for the past two years. As a UC Berkeley student, he is part of the esteemed Cal Habitat Chapter, where he has served as the Community Outreach and Advocacy Chair. This role allows him to closely coordinate with the Family Resource Committee, creating engaging events for Habitat's partner families, while also planning Affordable Housing advocacy campaigns in the community. In addition, Marvin has volunteered on the construction site, working hand-in-hand with partner families and other dedicated volunteers to see Habitat's mission come to life.

Soon, Marvin will be continuing on to new and exciting adventures; he will be studying abroad in Costa Rica during the spring semester, taking his energy and enthusiasm to new locations. Though he is taking a short break, he plans to continue his involvement with Habitat for Humanity East Bay when he returns. Everyone here at Habitat wishes him safe travels!



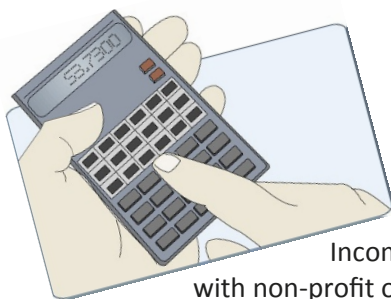
**Are you interested in volunteering, but want to try something different than construction? Marvin and Carmelita provide great examples of other ways to get involved! Both the Family Selection Committee and the Family Resource Committee need more volunteers! Call Anna Bachman at 510-251-6304 x 371 or email at [abachman@habitateb.org](mailto:abachman@habitateb.org) to learn more!**

# TAX DAY IS APRIL 18, 2011

## Has your family filed their taxes already?

Typically, taxes are due April 15th of the following year. However, for the 2010 tax year, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has extended their deadline to April 18, 2011. This is due to the fact that Emancipation Day, a holiday observed in Washington, D.C., falls on Friday, April 15th. Therefore, all taxpayers have three extra days to file this year.

Written by Alana Riemermann



If you still need to file taxes, there are many good resources in the community that can help you. For example, the **Earn It! Keep It! Save it! Campaign** is a great resource during the tax season. This campaign is part of a larger program through the IRS called the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program. Locally, the United Way of the Bay Area has teamed up with non-profit organizations to offer **free tax-preparation** sites all across the Bay Area. Not only do these sites help you prepare your tax returns for free, they also offer resources on claiming the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) for working families, information on asset-building programs, screening and enrolling for public benefits, financial education and other community resources.

### What you will need:

- Photo identification for each person on your tax return
- Social Security card or ITIN for each person on your tax return
- W-2 forms for all jobs held in 2010
- All 1099 or 1098 forms
- Child care provider information
- Landlord's name, address and phone number for the CA renter's credit
- A voided check for direct deposit
- Last year's tax return

There are more than 200 free tax preparation sites across the Bay Area, so please take advantage of this amazing opportunity! Each site operates differently, so it is important to do some research before you plan to go to a specific site. To find the location that is closest to you and to get more information, call 1 (800) 358-8832 or visit the following web sites:

- Alameda Tax Sites: <http://www.earnitkeepitsaveit.org/alameda-tax-sites>
- Contra Costa County Tax Sites: <http://www.earnitkeepitsaveit.org/contra-costa-tax-sites>
- California VITA Sites: <http://www.irs.gov/individuals/article/0,,id=233742,00.html>

For general information on the Earn It! Keep It! Save it! Campaign, please visit: [www.earnitkeepitsaveit.org/](http://www.earnitkeepitsaveit.org/) or call the United Way of the Bay Area at (510) 238-2418 or (510) 238-2424.

For general information on filing taxes, visit the Internal Revenue Service (IRS): <http://www.irs.gov/> or call 1(800)829-1040.



Please contact Alana Riemermann, Homeowner Relations Education Coordinator at Habitat for Humanity East Bay with any further questions or if you would like more resources on tax preparation: [ariemermann@habitateb.org](mailto:ariemermann@habitateb.org) or (510) 251-6304 ext. 365.



# Family Fun Day!

Every year, the Family Resource Committee plans a summer event to unite families from all Habitat East Bay developments. Filled with fun, sun, and some great food, Family Fun Day is always a great way to meet your neighbors and Habitat volunteers.



This year's Family Fun Day  
will be held

**July 16, 2011**

at the Lafayette Reservoir  
off Mt. Diablo Blvd and Shore Trail

Mark your calendars so you can join the fun in the sun with your family, friends, and neighbors!

More information will be sent out closer to the event date.



## Help us plan Family Fun Day!

We would like to invite you to participate in the Family Resource Committee. Help us plan **FAMILY FUN DAY** and other events for the coming year!

Our meetings are held the first Thursday of each month from **6:45 - 8 PM** on the 3rd floor of the Habitat Office, located at 2619 Broadway Ave, Oakland, CA 94612. Our upcoming meetings are:  
**April 4, May 2, and June 6th**

Dinner is provided. Please RSVP to FRC Chairperson, Catherine Pinkas @ 925-708-0447.



# Get involved in your community!

## It's easy, rewarding, and fun!

Why volunteer in your community?

- It's a great way to create closer bonds with members of your community, learn new skills, meet new people, impress colleges, get scholarships, and give back to others!

What do you do when you're volunteering?

- Almost anything you can think of! There are many different ways to get involved in the community from participating in marathons, tutoring children, cleaning up beaches, or serving food in a soup kitchen.

How do you get involved?

- Think about what you enjoy doing such as a hobby, interest, or skill and then try to find an organization or event in the community that uses these. Contact these places and ask if they need volunteers. Check out the helpful websites and information below that can assist in searching for opportunities.

### Websites:

- Volunteer opportunities in the East Bay – You can input your age group and zip code, as well as do an advanced search that includes your interest preferences to find a volunteer opportunity!  
[https://volunteer.truist.com/vccc/org/opp/medallions/?medallion\\_id=10327384032](https://volunteer.truist.com/vccc/org/opp/medallions/?medallion_id=10327384032)
- Volunteer Match – You can input your zip code, interests, and age group to find the perfect opportunities to volunteer near you! You can also register with the website and they will email you with updates on various service opportunities in your area as they come up.  
[www.volunteermatch.org](http://www.volunteermatch.org)
- A really great list of volunteer opportunities in Alameda County with descriptions and contact information to find out how to start volunteering.  
<http://www.homefires.com/volunteer/alameda.asp>

### Places to go to find volunteer opportunities:

- Libraries! Check out your local library and ask a librarian to find out if there are any volunteer positions open. You may be helping sort and shelf books or helping younger children with their reading or homework.
- Hospitals often need volunteers over the age of 16 so inquire at your local hospital/clinic to find out if any volunteers are needed! It's a great way to get acquainted with the medical environment if you are thinking about being a doctor, nurse, or any other type of health professional in the future.
- Elementary Schools often need high school students to help with events and after-school programs, so maybe visit your old school or any local elementary school and see if they need any help!
- The Alameda Food Bank often needs help sorting food donations or holding food drives and has locations throughout the county. Volunteer Manager: (510) 635-3663 ext. 308
- Ask your high school counselor and teachers if they know of any opportunities coming up. Your school may even have a community service bulletin board with local opportunities.

**Still have questions or need help finding community service? Email Maria at [mpatanwala@berkeley.edu](mailto:mpatanwala@berkeley.edu) from the Cal Habitat for Humanity Community Outreach and Advocacy Committee.**

## **INTERESTED IN LEADERSHIP TRAINING?**

Come learn practical life skills to become a better leader and community member

**March 21, 2011:** Program in Observation of Women's History Month

**April 4, 2011:** Acquiring Skills to Run your Base Organization: Techniques of Public Speaking

**May 2, 2011:** Acquiring Skills to Run your Base Organization: Planning & Facilitating Meetings

**June 6, 2011:** Relationship Building & the Organizing Process: Door Knocking

**July 11, 2011:** Relationship Building & the Organizing Process: The One-on-One Interview

**September 12, 2011:** Understanding the Features of your Home: How to Do Home Maintenance

**All trainings will be held at 2619 Broadway, 3rd floor Conference Room from 6-8pm**

**For further detail, contact Tim Thomas at 510-251-6304 ext. 316 or [tthomas@habitateb.org](mailto:tthomas@habitateb.org)**

Join us for the Livermore dedication!

Habitat East Bay has recently renovated two more homes at the Freeda Court Development in Livermore.

**Saturday, April 2nd, 2011**

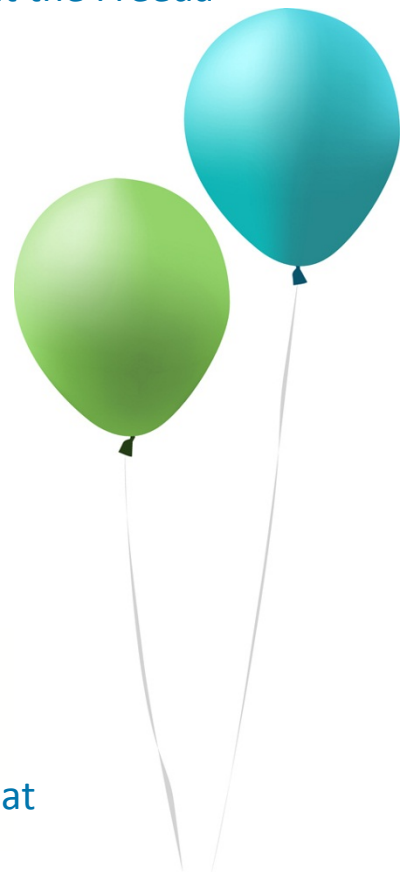
**10am-12pm**

**4195 Freeda Court**

**Livermore, CA 94550**

Please join us as we welcome the Cardenas and Roby/Schneider families to the neighborhood and the greater Habitat East Bay family.

If you are interested in attending please call Anna Bachman at 510-251-6304 x 371 or by email [abachman@habitateb.org](mailto:abachman@habitateb.org)





2619 Broadway  
Oakland, CA 94612

*Attn: Homeowner Relations*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

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*Want to know what is coming up at Habitat East Bay? With spring and summer right around the corner, it is time to become involved!*

**QUESTIONS?**  
**Call (510) 251-6304 x371**

- Monday, March 21, 2011:** Women's History Month Event
- Saturday, April 2, 2011:** Livermore Dedication
- Saturday, April 16—Tuesday, April 19, 2011:** Habitat Build-A-Thon
- Wednesday, May 4, 2011:** Homebuyer Orientation (new applicants)
- Saturday, May 21, 2011:** Homebuyer Orientation (new applicants)
- Saturday, July 16, 2011:** Family Fun Day

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