Each spring, we celebrate our many precious volunteers with an awards ceremony and a catered meal at a casual location to show our appreciation to them. This year, we will be meeting again at Coquina Beach. Last year many volunteers earned the Presidential “Points of Light” awards. There are three levels: Gold, for donating more than 500 hours in a single year; Silver, for donating between 250 and 499 hours, and Bronze, for donating between 100 and 249 hours.

We had another good volunteer year with 1079 volunteers serving at 13 construction sites (new construction and rehabs.) In addition, volunteers also served on various boards and committees as well as working in the ReStores. This year, over 50 volunteers will receive one of these awards. The total donated hours were 18796.65 hours in the 2017 calendar year. This is a generous donation of $453,751 as calculated by the Corporation of National and Community Service.

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Volunteers will receive one of these awards. The total donated hours were 18796.65 hours in the 2017 calendar year. This is a generous donation of $453,751 as calculated by the Corporation of National and Community Service.

Volunteers RSVP to Barbara Slater at (941)748-9100 x110 or bslater@manateehabitat.org.

Gold and Silver award winners at last year’s Volunteer Appreciation Event.

We are grateful for so many blessings. Through our work as a housing ministry, committed to the mission that everyone deserves a safe and secure place to call home, we see the blessings everyday. By the time a family moves into their Habitat home, their lives have already changed. These first time homeowners have learned building skills, home maintenance, and financial management, preparing themselves for success as they pay their mortgage.

An affordable mortgage and low energy and maintenance costs means parents no longer have to work two jobs to pay rising rental costs. Children become better students and parents engage in their community. A safe home free of toxins and pests means families are healthier. We see the blessings of our work at the celebration of a Habitat home dedication ceremony and at the excitement of a ground breaking for a new home. We also see the blessings in repair and rehab projects for seniors and the disabled, and when we come together and partner in community projects and encourage participation in revitalizing neighborhoods.

It is because of you that we can share these blessings. Your support as volunteers, donors, partners, and Habitat families makes our work possible. In 2018, we will be building, repairing, and reaching further than ever before in our mission. If I have not already, I look forward to meeting you and invite you to come see what we are building.

With gratitude,

Diana Shoemaker, Executive Director
Women Build Home Dedicated November 4, 2017
The road to homeownership that started for Brittany Holley over two years ago has come to a close. She has made many friends on her journey and has told her story of change and transformation along the way.

“I am blessed in so many ways. I have wonderful mentors that are a part of my life now and I know I can do what I have set out to do,” Brittany said. She works full-time while studying Criminal Justice at State College of Florida. Her goal is to become a police officer in Bradenton and serve the neighborhood where she lives.

The dedication ceremony was especially moving when Brittany’s 6-year old daughter Cherish took the microphone to talk about her mom and the blessing their home will be. Many volunteers attended who helped build the house with Brittany and the community leaders who championed the cause of the Women Build. Bous’ Head Brand generously sponsored the home and their employees came out in force three times to help build - always with delicious hot dogs for all.

Critical Home Repairs Answer Prayers
For more than five years, Asalena Smith could not use the sink in her bathroom due to leaks and the cast iron tub had problems in addition to the leaky roof. Now with a new shower enclosure with grab bars, a new vanity and commode with grab bars and a new metal roof, she feels secure in her home again.

“My wishes came true,” Asalena said. Core volunteers Gary French, Tom Weiss, Barry Berman, Rich Mort, Dick Amesbury, Paul Adamski, Steve Shirasuki and others tackled the bathroom rehab and new metal roof. Everyone enjoyed the wonderful cooking Asalena provided including BBQ ribs, potato salad, mac and cheese and collard greens.

Asalena is paying back a portion of the material cost for her roof through a new Manatee Habitat Neighborhood Revitalization program. She can raise her 12 year-old great grandson with peace of mind. She volunteers regularly at Joseph’s Storehouse and the Salvation Army. For more information on the NR Critical Home Repair program, contact Didi Hager at dhager@manateehabitat.org.

Manatee Habitat’s First Interfaith Build breaks ground in Washington Park in Bradenton
December 9th was a rainy and cold day but that did not deter the members of ten faith organizations that have come together to build a house. The Kendall family, including Isaielene, Marvin and grandson Marcus are the Habitat homeowner family and they joined with the faith organization members to turn a shovel of dirt together.

The house will be built at 684 11th Ave. E. in Bradenton. Following the ground breaking Mae Lizzie, a local leader in Washington Park hosted fellowship and refreshments at her home which is also located on 11th Ave. E. The founding faith communities committed to the project are: Church of the Annunciation and Gloria Dei Lutheran Church of Anna Maria Island, Harvest United Methodist Church and Knights of Columbus Council 13341 of Our Lady of the Angels Catholic Church of Lakewood Ranch, Faith United Church of Christ, St. Joseph’s Roman Catholic Church and Trinity Lutheran Church, all in Bradenton, St. Mary’s Episcopal Church in Palmetto, and St. Armand’s Key Lutheran Church and the Islamic Society of Sarasota and Bradenton in Sarasota. More faith organizations are welcome to join the Interfaith Build and add their support and volunteers to the coalition of faith communities united in service to build a house.

Come show your support Thursday, March 22, at 6:05 pm at Manatee Habitat Interfaith Build Night at LECOM Park -- Pittsburgh Pirates vs Toronto Blue Jays Spring Training Game. For more information, contact Amy Van Dell at (941) 748-9100 or avandell@manateehabitat.org.