



# Habitat for Humanity News

of Citrus County, Inc.

Web site: [habitatcc.org](http://habitatcc.org)

Summer, 2008

## The Knoll Family



When I reflect back a year ago, when, as a single parent, I struggled to provide a safe and decent home for my children, I can hardly believe we are now living in our beautiful new home.

Thanks to Habitat and Publix, along with all the wonderful volunteers, my dream has become a reality! You all are the true meaning of giving back. We are so blessed, not only because we now own our own home, but also because of all the friendships that were made along the way. May God continue to bless you all as you bless others.

**With much love and appreciation,  
The Knoll Family  
House # 36**

## Habitat of Humanity - 15 years in Citrus County

### *Commemorating our past – Looking towards our future*

**By Norm & Bonnie Peterson**

As we celebrate our 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary at Habitat for Humanity of Citrus County, it gives us time to pause and reflect the accomplishments and remember the struggles that our affiliate has had. It is also time to look forward to the challenges and greater success in the future.

In 1992 a few of the civic minded leaders in Citrus County decided to move forward with Habitat for Humanity in our community. We owe a lot to those dedicated volunteers who had the vision to step forward and start this dream helping the low income community in Citrus County. We have to give that credit to Clark Johnson, Avis Craig, Carol Miller, Paul

& Linda Hurley, The Civitan Club and others who led this endeavor. Through their efforts, Habitat for Humanity International, in 1993 granted us an affiliation status. In the beginning only one house a year was being constructed. But that was a just a start without which we could not realize our true potential and grow. At that time and for several years after, the affiliate was strictly a volunteer organization. In 1998 we took a bold move and hired our first part time Executive Director Kay Ralph. Kay led the affiliate in that capacity for two years, and brought us from one to two houses per year. In 2003, we hired our first full time Executive Director and began to professionalize our operations with a more involved Board of Directors and a five year Strategic Plan.

Also – in February of 2003, the vision of our leadership and Board of Directors, decided to expand our efforts by opening a Thrift Store, “*everything for The Home Store*” – in Inverness. This store had several priorities. First was to provide everything for the home (except clothing) for the citi-

zens of Citrus County to purchase at a reasonable cost and secondly to provided funds to cover administrative costs and salaries for the growing affiliate. Our success at the Home Store has been phenomenal! In its second year, it had achieved and surpassed our five year expectations, and it continues to grow each quarter.

The support of the Citrus County community has also been instrumental to our success. Support from Church, business, and civic groups have brought volunteers and funding to our projects. Many of these groups have had ongoing commitments over the years and that has inspired new community involvements with our affiliate.

Our partnering families are encouraged to apply and qualify for SHIP funding. Over the years, Low Income Housing Services has helped most of our families to realize the right to home ownership through Habitat. This partnership is a real blessing for them.

As the affiliate grew with annual home building capacity, we also increased our staff. Today, with the strong leadership of Terry Steele, our current full time Executive Director, we have hired several full time employees, a few part time employees and in 2008 we will accomplish eight houses. We still depend on our dedicated volunteers to supplement the enormous work that it takes to maintain and grow our organization. Without them, our mission could not be accomplished.

Respect for each other and investing in these relationships have built strong teamwork between our staff and volunteers and that is the key that gives us the confidence to know that our potential and our future is very positive.

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