

# Habitat Happenings

SUMMER 2021



## PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

Follow our 2021 Home Build in Spooner, Wisconsin!

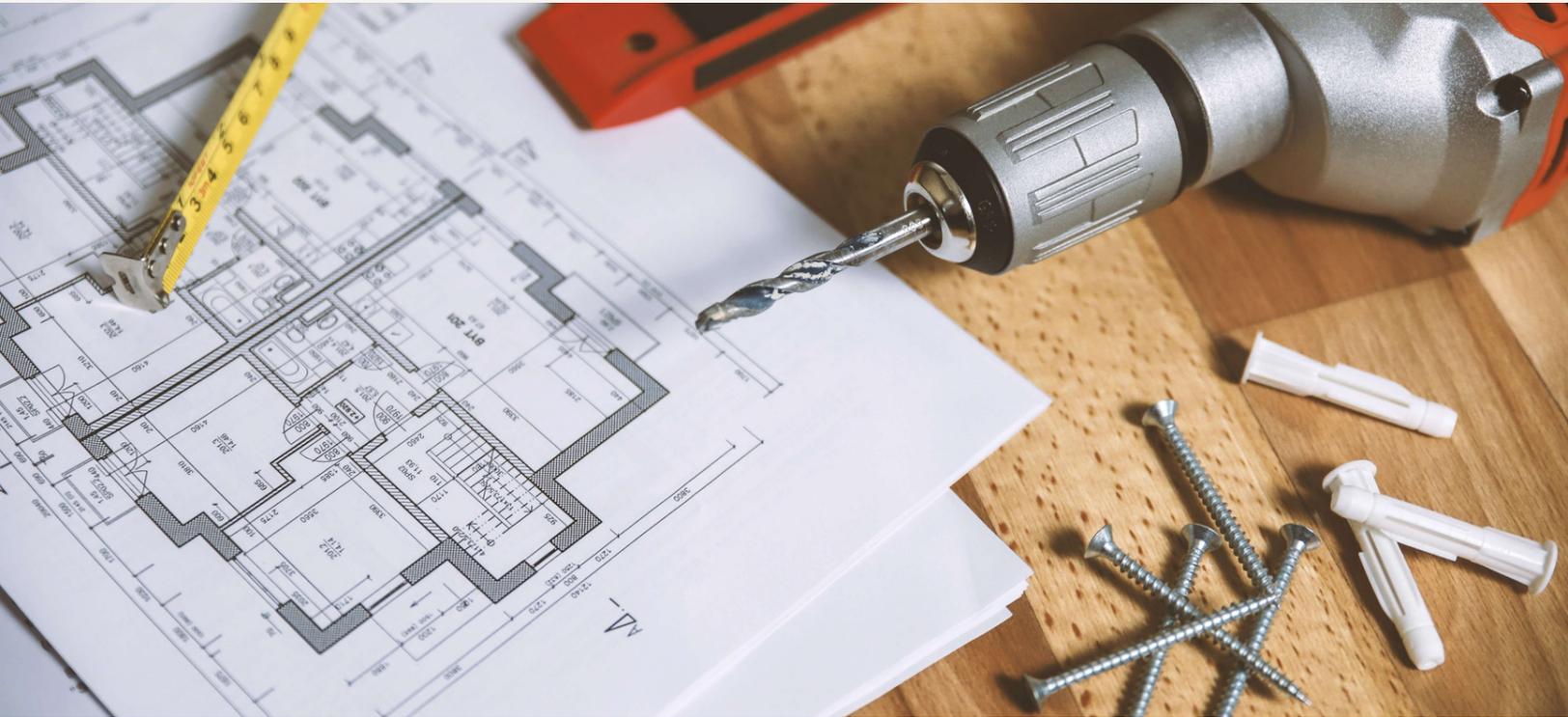
## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

This issue, we have spotlighted our Girls Can Build Project Coordinator, Kayla Hill!

## DONATION HIGHLIGHT

Learn more about three big brands of antique kitchenwear we commonly see at the ReStore.

# Wild Rivers Habitat for Humanity



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## Contents

A message from the team	3
Girls Can Build 2021 Summer Camp	4
2021 New Home Build	5
August Home Maintenance Tips	6
Employee Spotlight: Kayla Hill	7
Habitat Ready: Tornadoes	8
Eviction Moratorium to End July 31st	8
Collectable Kitchenware	9
Collectable Kitchenware (Continued)	10
6 Findings on COVID-19's Impact on Housing	11

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# A message from the team

This spring has shaped up to be one of the busiest ones in modern memory here at Wild Rivers Habitat, with many projects keeping us busy as we head into the hot summer. As we emerge from the pandemic into a greatly shifted world, our organization finds itself greatly needed more than ever. Thankfully, our strategic plan for many years now has outlined a gradual expansion of the programs that we offer, and we have found no better opportunity to pursue that goal. Because of this outline that we had, our organization has been able to roll out not only brand new programs, but also service more people than ever before with existing programs like our Home Repair program.

One example of a new program this year has been our Girls Can Build 2021 Summer Camp. This is a program made possible thanks to the donations of the Bernick Family Foundation, and is part of our vision to bring programs to our service area that place an emphasis on education and resource-building in addition to building homes. Programs like these that focus on education and resource building—such as our upcoming tool lending library—allow us to reach individuals and families who might not have qualified for our home repair program or our new build program. These are oftentimes people who still need a hand up, but their needs are not yet great enough that they qualify for other programs. Education and resource

building give people the skills and tools they need so that they hopefully won't have to turn to our other programs.

As we talk about expansion, not only do we mean the rollout of new programs and growing old ones, but we are also in the active process of growing our service area and increasing the number of people we can help. Although this is something that is still being investigated, we have brought aboard new staff to research demographics of proposed areas and form a summary of the area's needs. From there, a roadmap will be drafted that will outline how we will operate within the new areas, from home ownership to home repairs to the opening of a third ReStore.

Expansion also comes in the form of creating more partnerships within our communities and strengthening the ones we already have. Throughout 2020, we've seen just how much good can come out of people, families, businesses and communities working together to give one another a hand up in their time of need. We'd like to thank everyone who has partnered with us so far, and we hope the rest of 2021 has a lot in store for us!



# Girls Can Build 2021 Summer Camp



Last month, we hosted our very first Girls Can Build 2021 Summer Camp at our Spooner ReStore location. One year ago when this program was still in its development, there were concerns whether something like this could be successful within our service areas. We cover a very large area with a low population density, so before we roll out new programs there is always a question of how many people will be able and willing to take part. Regardless of how successful the program would be, having these summer camps was something that our executive director Jennifer Johnson was passionate to roll out.

Jennifer, who spent seven years in leadership roles at two different Home Builders Associations, has seen first hand the gap that exists between men and women in the construction industry. Women account for less than 10 percent of all U.S. construction workers and 12 percent of repair and maintenance workers. They are largely left out of these jobs that often pay more than the average

starting salary for someone with a four-year degree. These camps, for her, were about empowering girls to enter the skilled trades.

Fortunately, the community response to this new program has been extraordinary and overwhelmingly positive. We had to close registration for both our Spooner and upcoming St. Croix Falls camp due to how many girls we had signed up, and we are so thankful to give them the opportunity to get first-hand experience in the trades. Our camp in Spooner wrapped up on June 25th and we could not be more proud of all our attendees. Our camp in St. Croix Falls will begin on July 19th. We are actively working on planning even more Girls Can Build Summer Camps, so keep your eyes and ears peeled!

These camps are made possible by the generous donation of the Bernick Family Foundation. We would also like to thank our sponsors who made this new program possible: Trinity Lutheran Church (Spooner), Thrivent Financial, WE Energies, Bernick Family Foundation, TJ Electric, Yellow River Gardens (Spooner), and everyone who has volunteered their time for this program!



# 2021 New Home Build

## Project Spotlight

### Modular Style Construction

Our new home build for 2021 is currently underway! This year, we partnered with Dan Buchmann's Advanced Tech-Ed class at Rice Like High School. The students did a fantastic job with their half of the build, and we'll be handling the rest! As of this month, the house has officially been moved to our Spooner ReStore location, where our team will finish the interior of the build on-site. We had expected the build to be moved at an earlier date, but unfortunately delays occurred and we were left waiting while our windows were backordered. We've been documenting the entire build on our Instagram account, and if you want to follow along with us

give us a follow! We're also searching for volunteers to work July and August on this build. COVID-19 friendly procedures will be followed to ensure the safety of everyone involved. If you are interested in volunteering, please fill out our Volunteer Watch List on our website. ([wildrivershabitat.org/volunteer](http://wildrivershabitat.org/volunteer))

This home will be approximately 800 square feet when finished and feature one bedroom and one bath. This home is a modular style and will be ready to move to a homeowner's location when construction is finished later this summer. We are currently searching for families and individuals who have an interest in owning a Habitat home. Please visit our website to apply.



# August Home Maintenance Tips

Late summer heat is upon us, so our August home maintenance chores focus on indoor tasks as well as some easy maintenance to keep your air conditioning system running right. So crank up your AC, grab some scrub gloves, and get ready to spruce up the following often neglected areas of your home.

## 1. Replace your Air Conditioning filter

The air filter on your heating and cooling system needs to be replaced every 1-3 months to keep the air in your home clean and flowing freely through the unit. For best results use a high quality air filter that's rated to remove mold, pollen, and other microscopic particles.

The air filter is located where the air returns to your heating/cooling unit. In some systems, the filter is in or near the air handler unit, while on others it's behind the wall or floor return grate. To make it easier to replace the filter next time, put a sticker on the cover with exactly what size filter you need to buy and when to replace it.

## 2. Clean your Air Conditioner drain line

Air conditioners remove water from the air in your house as they cool, and the last thing you want on a hot August day is for the condensation drain line to become clogged with algae and back the water up into your AC unit or house. To check the drain line for clogs, pour a cup of water down the access line while someone else watches where the pipe exits outside. If the water drains slowly or not at all, it's clogged and needs to be cleared.

To remove a clog from the line, attach a wet-dry vac to the end of the pipe, and use it to suck the

clog out of the drain line. To prevent future clogs in the air conditioner drain line, pour a cup of bleach down the access pipe to kill any algae.

## 3. Clean and Maintain the Bathroom Vent Fan

Running a bathroom vent fan during and for 10-20 minutes after you shower or bath is important to remove excess humidity and prevent mold or mildew from forming. Cleaning the vent fan annually will keep it running quietly and efficiently.

To clean a bathroom vent fan:

1. Turn the power off to the fan.
2. Remove the cover (on most fans you pull down on the cover to extend it, then compress the spring wires on each side to take it off).
3. Use a brush or vacuum to remove dust from the cover, then scrub it in soapy water.
4. Vacuum out the dust from inside the fan box and wipe off the blades.
5. Spray the moving parts with silicone lubricant to help it run smoothly and quietly.
6. Replace the vent fan cover.
7. Turn the power back on.

While it's important to keep our homes in tip-top shape, some repairs are too big to tackle alone. If your home needs repairs or safety upgrades and you are a low-income homeowner struggling to keep up for any number of reasons, Wild Rivers Habitat for Humanity has several programs to help you improve and maintain your home. If you are looking for assistance making a home repair, consider applying for our Home Repair program. Repairs we can help you with include porch and deck, window, roof, gutter, siding and trim, and wheelchair ramp and railing repair or installation. For more information on our programs including applications, visit [www.wildrivershabitat.org](http://www.wildrivershabitat.org) or call the Wild Rivers Habitat office at 715-939-1390.

# Kayla Hill

## Employee Spotlight

### Girls Can Build Program Coordinator



Kayla Hill was brought on earlier this year to help us coordinate our Girls Can Build summer camps for 2021. Already, the leadership that she displayed preparing and executing our first camp in Spooner has impressed everyone on our team, and we wanted to highlight her success leading our Girls Can Build summer camp here.

Kayla currently works as a 4th grade teacher at St. Francis Catholic School in Spooner, WI. She graduated from the University of Wisconsin-River Falls in May of 2019 with a Major in Elementary Education and a Minor in Spanish. Kayla said that her experience as a teacher helped her in prepping for the camps, forming time frames to guide the camp and having the foresight to prep backup activities in case she went ahead of schedule. Kayla themed each day of the camp around a project that ramped up in difficulty as

the week went on and the girls grew more comfortable with the tools and their skills. Projects included making recycled bottle vases, cement planters, motorized boats, a large raised planter, and then a Friday to free build. On some days, Kayla had speakers in to speak to the girls, and she said that one of their favorites was Jordan Burch from TJ Electric.

For Kayla, her success comes from the feedback and enthusiasm expressed by both the girls and their parents. But even that, she said, did not compare "to seeing how comfortable the girls were with the tools and projects by the end of the week." Her experience working as the program coordinator has continued her passion working with kids, and hopes that the Girls Can Build summer camps can continue to grow into something special for our service area. Because of the success Kayla has been able to bring to this new program, we are already in the process of doing many more camps in the future!

Kayla is excited to meet the next group of girls for our upcoming camp in St. Croix Falls. She says, "each group of kids brings a new dynamic to any club, camp, team, or classroom. So I'm looking forward to seeing how this next group works together, as well as how they do with the new projects I have in store for them."

When asked if she had any final words for her first group of girls, she said that she hoped the camp "encourages and inspires girls to take shop classes in high school, consider a trade for a future career, or just believe in themselves that they can successfully take on every challenge that comes their way."

# Habitat Ready: Tornados

Wisconsin's tornado season generally runs through April to September, although peak months are the summer months of June, July, and August. The weather during these months is perfect for creating powerful storms like this. Tornados often form when cool, polar air traveling southeastward from the Rockies overrides warm, moist air from the Gulf of Mexico in the eastern states. Tornados are some of earth's most violent storms and often form quickly, leaving little time to make life-or-death decisions. In order to protect your home and family, it's important to be prepared before a tornado strikes. Follow these tips to be better prepared in case one of these storms strikes.

- Review your family preparedness plan.
- Establish a family communications plan.
- Assemble a disaster supply kit.
- Designate an area in your home as a shelter:
  - The safest place during a tornado is a storm shelter or underground room, such as a basement or cellar.
  - If going underground is not an option and you do not have access to a storm shelter, the next safest place is a small interior room (such as a bathroom, hallway or closet) on the lowest floor, away from windows and exterior walls.
- Know the difference between a tornado WATCH and WARNING.
  - WATCH: A tornado is possible. Stay tuned to a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration weather radio or TV for more information and be prepared to seek shelter quickly if necessary.
  - WARNING: A tornado is expected or occurring. Take shelter immediately.

- During a tornado, go quickly to your predetermined shelter and avoid windows. Get under a sturdy piece of furniture like a table and cover your head with your hands. If time permits, put on sturdy shoes.
- If you are outside or in a vehicle when a tornado strikes, try to get inside a building if possible. If there isn't time to get indoors, lie in a ditch and cover your head with your hands. Never try to outride a tornado. They can change direction quickly and lift cars up.
- After a tornado passes, stay tuned to a NOAA weather radio or TV for updated information. Be aware of hazards such as broken glass and downed power lines, and leave your house if you smell gas and notify your insurance company if your home is damaged.

## Eviction Moratorium to End, Help for Renters is Available

On July 31, 2021 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) federal moratorium on evictions for nonpayment of rent will expire. While the moratorium is in place, renters cannot be evicted for missing rent payments alone. With the expiration of the moratorium coming on July 31st, landlords can expect payment of back rent and may initiate evictions. If you are still struggling to make payments due to COVID-19, the Wisconsin Emergency Rental Assistance Program (WERA) assists qualifying households with up to 12 months assistance for current and/or overdue payments. Please visit [wiscap.org/wera](https://wiscap.org/wera) for more information on this program and for information on how to apply. Wild Rivers Habitat for Humanity also has funds available for homeowners and renters impacted by COVID-19. Visit <https://wildrivershabitat.org/mortgage-%26-rent-help>

# Collectable Kitchenware

## Donation Highlight



We've cheated a bit for this edition of our Donation Spotlight segment, as our item featured is actually a range of kitchenware from three well-known companies: Pyrex, McCoy, and Homer Laughlin. Something that is almost constantly coming into the ReStores are antique kitchenware pieces, and we wanted to feature three companies who produce most of the pieces that we see.

## McCoy

Antique McCoy items are considered highly collectible. The McCoy Pottery Company has a long and interesting history: the American company was founded in Roseville, Ohio in April 1910. Roseville was chosen as the area was rich with clay, and the land was given to the company free of charge in recognition of the employment opportunities and

revenue it would bring to the area. The founder, Nelson McCoy (senior), established the company as the Nelson McCoy Sanitary and Stoneware Company, to produce utilitarian stoneware items. A change of direction took place in 1933 when the company responded to consumer interest and began to focus more on the manufacture of decorative items and less on utilitarian wares. The company changed hands during the years, and finally closed in 1990. The style of antique McCoy items is wide and varied, and the company made plenty of different cookie jars, bowls and canisters throughout the years.



## Fiesta Dinnerware

Fiesta was introduced in 1936 by the Homer Laughlin Pottery Company, discontinued in 1972, and went back into production in 1986. It was casual and inexpensive tableware whose colors could be mixed and matched, exuding a sunny, California sensibility even though its Art Deco aesthetic was the brainchild of an Englishman,

# Donation Highlight (continued)

Frederick Hurten Rhead, and the company was based in Newell, West Virginia. The original 1936 Fiesta line was limited to just five colors — red (which resembles orange), blue (these days it's known as cobalt), green (sometimes called light or original green), yellow, and old ivory ("old" was dropped). A year later, turquoise hit the shelves. There were 34 pieces in that original lineup, from coffeepots to sugar bowls, candle holders to casseroles, dinner plates to carafes. Seventeen more styles of cups, marmalades, mustards, platters and vases were added before the end of the 1930s. For collectors, two pieces in particular are among the most prized: a 12" compartment plate and a covered onion soup bowl, both of which were dropped in the first year, thus severely limiting their supply.



## Pyrex



Until recently, old Pyrex was purchased mainly by longtime devotees unable to find replacements for a broken coffeepot or chipped mixing bowl. But in the past few years, old Pyrex has attracted new admirers, particularly among those who grew up with it. Pyrex pieces—buoyantly colored mixing bowls and leftover boxes that filled kitchen cabinets in the 1950s—still exude cheerful domesticity. A vast amount of Pyrex was manufactured—and still is—by the Corning Glass Works of Corning, New York. In 1915, the company introduced Pyrex: a 12-piece line of machine-made glass ovenware comprising casseroles, pie plates, custard cups, shirred egg dishes, individual baking dishes, and a loaf pan. The curious trademark, chosen after discarding candidates like Pie-Right and Py-Right, blended the sound of the word pie with the "X" used frequently on Corning products. Pyrex was an immediate success—and a notable improvement over the metal utensils of the time. Food cooked more quickly in glass and did not stick; food flavors disappeared after washing; and the cook had the pleasure of seeing when the food was done.

# 6 Findings on COVID-19's impact on housing

**Even before the COVID-19 pandemic hit, the U.S. was facing extreme housing challenges.**

*For decades, stagnant wages combined with insufficient supply to meet demand have pushed the cost of home out of reach for millions of families.*

*Now, with hours, wages and jobs cut as a result of the coronavirus, even more individuals are facing housing instability at a time when one's ability to be safely and affordably housed is integral to the health and safety of us all. Here are seven findings on the persistent impact of COVID-19 on economic stability and housing affordability across the U.S.*

## **1. Nearly one-third of people can't afford all of their needs.**

*In April, 31% of adults reported that their families could not pay the rent, mortgage or utility bills, were food insecure, or went without medical care as a result of financial hardship.*

## **2. COVID-19 isn't affecting all communities equally.**

*Just as the virus is excessively harming the health of Black Americans, it's also undermining the economic stability of people of color, including Black people, at a disproportionate rate. In June 2020, Blacks posted the highest unemployment rate of 15.4%, compared to 14.5% for Latinx, 13.8% for Asians and 10.1% for whites.*

## **3. Families are struggling to make rent both fully and on time.**

*In June 2020, 20% of households did not pay any rent by the first of the month. By June 20, 12% of those households were able to put money toward rent — but this also includes families who only made partial payments.*

## **4. The number of borrowers who have deferred payments on their home loans has climbed.**

*In the week ending July 12, the total number of loans in forbearance was 7.8%. For the week of March 2, only 0.25% of all loans were in forbearance.*

## **5. Mortgage lenders continue to tighten lending standards.**

*The Mortgage Credit Availability Index, an indicator of lending availability, fell by 3.3% in June, its lowest level since April 2014. A decline in the MCAI indicates that lending standards are tightening, making it more difficult for individuals to access sound lines of credit for homeownership.*

## **6. Builders of multifamily homes report construction delays.**

*53% of firms are experiencing construction delays, with 85% of these firms reporting the delays due to permitting and 37% indicating delays due to construction moratorium. It remains unknown how these delays will impact the total units that should be completed in 2020 and how the costly delays might impact the pricing of such units once they are completed.*



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**and YOU!**