

MetLife employees help provide shelter to those in need

By **James Bessette** - September 20, 2019 2:29 am



PITCHING IN: MetLife employees Haley Cuddy, left, senior marketing research consultant, and Tim Bowen, assistant vice president, claims, work on a new house in Exeter for a project overseer South County Habitat for Humanity. / PBN PHOTO/MICHAEL SALERNO

ONE NAIL AT A TIME, one piece of plywood at a time, the Washington County community comes together for one common goal: Help those less fortunate have a roof over their heads.

For close to 30 years, the South County Habitat for Humanity, based in Charlestown, has provided such homes with the help of local businesses, volunteers and other community members in order to increase affordable housing in the area.

The worldwide organization has built 69 homes since the Rhode Island chapter was established in 1990, according to Colin Penney, executive director for South County Habitat for Humanity, with approximately 13 homes being built in the last five years within all of the Washington County communities except for New Shoreham.

“We’ve been the only game in town for Washington County for affordable-home ownership,” Penney said. “There are other organizations around the state and town options for rentals, but we’re the only one doing long-term, permanent homeownership programs. It’s had a great impact.”

Each home takes approximately five to six months for the organization and volunteers to build start to finish, Penney said, and volunteers willing to help are aplenty. He said about 500 to 600 individuals, both from neighboring towns and employees from prominent businesses, offer their time and labor to construct these homes.

Recently, multiple employees from Metropolitan Life Insurance Co. spent time Aug. 8 constructing a new home in Exeter. The company also provided a \$25,000 grant to help finance its construction.

“We would be absolutely lost without our business partnerships,” Penney said. “At least 50% of funds for every home we build do come from the community, from folks [such as] MetLife and other corporate sponsors.”

Penney also said the organization is currently planning various events and initiatives as part of South County Habitat for Humanity’s 30th anniversary, including a gala to be held in April 2020 at Quidnessett Country Club in North Kingstown.

Want to share this story? [Click Here](#) to purchase a link that allows anyone to read it on any device whether or not they are a subscriber.