



ON THE JOB — Habitat for Humanity volunteers work together on the Campbell Street project in 2018. Photo provided

Habitat for Humanity making dreams of home ownership come true

By John Clayton
Editor

Since 1991, Habitat for Humanity of Laurens County has been adding to the local landscape home by home.

The local Habitat for Humanity group, which is an all-volunteer force, currently averages about one new home each year. The latest dedication was held in late January when Stanvisha Johnson and her family officially dedicated their new home on Campbell Street in Laurens.



"This one's within sight of another little brick house that the guys renovated," said local Habitat for Humanity Board of Directors member and volunteer Joel Evans. "They're nice little houses."

The latest house built in Laurens is a four-bedroom home with two baths. It included all new appliances, and is maintenance-free on the outside, Evans said.

Evans and a small cadre of about a dozen dedicated volunteers usually complete about one house each year. Students from Presbyterian College and PC School of Pharmacy add to the volunteer workforce as do crews from local industries.

Evans said the Laurens organization may be smaller than those in more metropolitan areas, but the volunteers are proud of the work they do.

"Most of us are retired guys, and we're able to work one or two days a week," Evans said. "We're all volunteers. We don't have anybody who's paid. Whatever we do, we do

HABITAT HOME — The most recently finished Habitat for Humanity of Laurens County home on Campbell Street in Laurens, which was dedicated in January.

it the hard way. Most of our guys are over 70 years old. I'll be 75 in June, and some are older than I am. We have a couple of guys in their 60s. They're the young guys."

The home owners also provide "sweat equity" on their projects, working to help build their own home, which is sold to them at cost. The homeowners then pay back the long-term, low-interest loans, which go into other projects.

Evans said the organization is always looking for volunteers and donations so that they can continue Habitat for Humanity projects in the area. The next project will be a home in Clinton. That project could begin with construction in the next couple of weeks and be ready for dedication early next year.

"We'd love to get some new guys in," Evans said. "We had a few new faces come in a while back, and they're working with us now."

Anyone interested in volunteering with Habitat for Humanity of Laurens County can call Evans at 923-1194.

Donations can be sent to PO Box 194, Laurens, SC 29360. Those interested in applying for a Habitat for Humanity home can pick up an application at either the Clinton or Laurens location of the Laurens County Library.

Hobbyist turns pro in interim job between mission

By Judith Brown
Staff Writer

The desire for a hobby became more than just a creative outlet for Mark Studdard while serving a young missionary in northern Iraq. Several years later now, the joinery techniques of an earlier generation are providing a small business until his family decides on their next long-term mission assignment.

"We've been back for two years now which means my woodworking experience is three years," said Studdard. "There's nothing new about joinery. It's been around for a really long time."

When an old chair wiggles and creaks, he said, it's because the nails or screws have rusted from the humidity in the air and reacted with the wood, and joinery works well because that same humidity, without metal, will cause the joints to swell and tighten. Since he can't always wait that long as he works on a furniture piece, he'll add wood glue to the joints.

Both Studdard, 32, and his wife, Kristen, grew up in missionary families. Studdard grew up in a village in Cameroon, Africa, and Kristen, whose parents were Wycliff translators, lived in the Solomon Islands.

"In Iraq we were working with Samaritan's Purse and I was running an education program in a community center there for refugees," Studdard said, explaining the work with the Kurdish people was in the safer area of Northern Iraq.

"I wanted a hobby and I wanted to teach myself woodworking, specifically joinery because I like old things and seeing how great-grandpas used to make things work," Studdard said. "We were home on furlough and before we went back, I filled a 50-pound suitcase with tools."

With no grandpas around to teach him, however, Studdard went to YouTube to learn the old craft of wood joints. He learned about the mortise and tenon joint - which he uses sometimes, the corner bridge joint and others.

"It's a huge learning curve and



NO HARDWARE — Joinery-style furniture maker Mark Studdard of Clinton says the many wood pieces he's created appear to make no sense until he begins fitting them together like a puzzle, such as the bar stool he was creating for a customer. He learned the process during free weekends while as a missionary with his wife in Iraq.

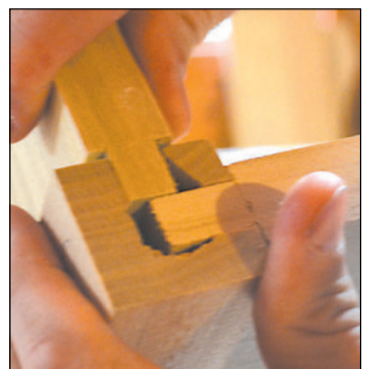
took me six months to do my first workbench," Studdard said. "I was working weekends so it was slow, but if I had learned traditional woodworking first, I never would have learned joinery because it's such a meticulous art. At first, with every cut I had to test it because you are working with really small tolerances."

By the time he returned to the United States after a full year's practice, however, he had become much more proficient.

Studdard bought power tools and learned how to do the work with electric tools and decided to try a little business, naming it Makari Designs after his hometown village in Cameroon. He made tables in the modern farmhouse style popular in stores like Ikea, and went to craft fairs.

Kristen took on the social media aspect of the business and they work to convince people at craft shows that their dining room tables, bar stools and desks are great quality.

"But if I then say, 'This table is made with no nails or screws,' then they're intrigued and they say, 'Really? How do you do that?'" Studdard said. "There are a lot of furniture makers out there and that sets



us apart."

The couple is enjoying the break from overseas work while their children are small and they are not far from family, but he expects them to return to Christian humanitarian work before long. Until then, Studdard said making the furniture is a great way to spend their time in America, because he loves working it out like a puzzle each time he creates something new, like the Moravian trestle tables which can be partially dismantled and reassembled by the owner.

"I never dreamed we'd still be doing this after two years and I'm really shocked," Studdard said. "It was going to just be a hobby but it was too much fun."

SECTIONAL SALE! YOUR CHOICE **10% OFF** OR **FREE DELIVERY**

CHOOSE FROM 2!

FINANCING AVAILABLE

Home Sweet Home Interiors
Furnishings • Appliances • Accessories • Bedding • And More

100 Laurens St. • Clinton • 864-547-1700
(Old Badcock Furniture building) • www.homesweethomeinteriors.net

Get Ready For Spring!

- Beautiful Treated Lattice
- Vinyl Lattice
- And so much more! Come see us today!

MOBILE HOME SUPPLIES
Doors, windows, floor registers

Treated Lumber • Flooring • Vanities • Kitchen Cabinets

Hurry, while supplies last!

PETE'S BUILDING AND SUPPLY
215 Exchange Drive • Laurens • 984-5813

TJ'S SCRAP METAL & RECYCLING CENTER, LLC
Upstate's Cleanest Scrap Yard

LET US PAY YOU TO SPRING CLEAN!!

We Buy Junk Cars, Trucks & All Types of Scrap Metal

WE PAY TOP PRICES!
Copper • Stainless Steel • Alum. & Alum. Cans
Batteries • Lead • Appliances • Radiators • Brass

Find our ad in the Service Pages to learn how to maximize your profit!

Monday-Friday 8 a.m.-5 p.m. • Saturday 8 a.m.-2 p.m.
939 Henderson Road, Gray Court, SC 29645 • Office: 876-5595 Cell: 981-1072

PREMIER PORTABLE BUILDINGS

Buy or Rent to Own New & Used

• New & Used Cabins & Storage Buildings
• 1 & 2 Car Metal Carports & Garages

Financing Available
No Credit Check

Lowest Prices in Town • Free Delivery

Call Eddie Hall 684-1210

2 Locations to Serve You:
Little River Trading Co., 211 Hillcrest Dr., Laurens • Hwy 221 S., Cold Point

WWW.PREMIERBUILDINGS.US

NEED IT GONE?

Let us help with hauling off the big stuff.

TRUCKS SUVs

CARS

LAWN MOWERS & TRACTORS

23 1/2 HOUR

NORTHSIDE TOWING
CALL 864-681-4869

THE TIME HAS COME FOR **SPRING CLEANING!**

NORDQUIST CLEANING SERVICES

IS HERE TO HELP YOU CLEAN OUT THE WINTER BLUES FROM YOUR HOME!

Call Debbie at
683-1411 (home) • 444-3421 (cell)
or email debbienordquist@yahoo.com

Spring Cleaning?

Don't forget about your **COMPUTER**

IT'S TIME TO DE-BUG, DE-CLUTTER & REMOVE ALL THE OLD STUFF.

CRON COMPUTER SERVICE

871-3694
682-9150
LEAVE MESSAGE

WE CAN GET YOUR COMPUTER RUNNING FASTER WITHOUT BREAKING THE BANK!

DON'T FORGET ABOUT YOUR CHIMNEY WHILE YOU ARE SPRING CLEANING!!

GET IT CLEANED TO AVOID WAITING THIS WINTER.

FIND OUT THE 4 MAIN REASONS WHY CHIMNEYS LEAK AND WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT! GET FREE FACT SHEET LEAKY CHIMNEYS: DEFINING THE PROBLEM, OUTLINING REALISTIC SOLUTIONS. GET 2 FREE BROCHURES: WATER AND YOUR MASONRY CHIMNEY WE FIX LEAKY CHIMNEYS!

GET YOUR BIRD GUARD BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!
CHIMNEY SWIFTS USUALLY RETURN LATE MARCH!

BLUE SKY Chimney Sweeps

Bless Your Hearth

Chimney & Venting Solutions

864-682-5422

www.blueskychimney.com • bluesky@sweepstuff.com

Refresh your home **WITH NAMES YOU CAN TRUST**

MOHAWK **MANNINGTON** **Shaw** **Armstrong**

QUALITY SERVICE - EXPERT INSTALLATION - SINCE 1947

WHITAKER FLOOR COVERINGS, INC.

2625 Winnsboro Road, Newberry, SC 29108
(803) 276-2884
www.whitakerfloorcoverings.com