

Ashburnham Habitat LPC selects McSparren family

The Ashburnham Local Project Committee of Habitat for Humanity invites the community to welcome the family who will build and own the Habitat for Humanity house to be built on Sherbert Road, Ashburnham.

The reception for Leah and Chris McSparren and their three children Joe, Gage and Andrew will be on Oct. 1, from 2-4 p.m. at the Senior Center, in Ashburnham.

The event is open to any and all. Help us welcome the McSparrens to Ashburnham. Refreshments and snacks will be available. Stop by with your family and friends.

The McSparrens presently live in Townsend where Chris grew up. Leah grew up in Ashburnham and is excited about 'coming home' to Ashburnham. The family currently lives in a small, cramped apartment, with a make-shift kitchen, a pullout couch, and the three boys sharing a small bedroom. This young family truly understands the meaning of partnership and what it means to be a Habitat family. They are very proud to be a part of this project, and eager to become members of the Ashburnham

community. The McSparrens have many family and friends who will volunteer to help them earn their 500 sweat equity hours when construction begins in spring 2007. Chris feels that he can make a valuable contribution because of his experience working with a plumbing company.

Habitat encourages community volunteers to work alongside the homeowners to build the house. For information about volunteering or donating to the project, contact Laura Jones at (978) 827-3232 or dogwoodlaura@yahoo.com.

The Ashburnham Local Project Committee is part of Habitat for Humanity North Central Massachusetts, a non-profit, Christian ecumenical housing ministry that builds houses with people in need. It is the local affiliate of Habitat for Humanity International, serving twenty-three towns and cities in north central Massachusetts, including Acton, Ashburnham, Ashby, Ayer, Bolton, Boxboro, Clinton, Fitchburg, Gardner, Groton, Harvard, Lancaster, Littleton, Lunenburg, Leominster, Maynard, Pepperell, Princeton, Shirley, Sterling, Stow, Townsend, and Westminster.

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NMRSD leader

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which the school committee approved and will be developing an evaluation method for at their next meeting on Monday, Oct. 23.

Marshall said she developed her plan for the year after a discussion with school committee members during their August meeting and through her own observations after two months in the district.

Students at or entering the regional high school may be the ones who notice the biggest changes as Marshall works to achieve her plan. Two of those — reviewing the high school graduation requirements and upgrading the outside athletic facilities — will have direct impacts on the current eighth-graders and the high school students.

"We're going to try to rest fields," Marshall said. "It's free money wise, it's not free politically."

She said this would take work on scheduling field usage, some fertilizing and other maintenance as well.

"Turf management really means managing the turf," she said. "It's really getting to be unsafe for our kids to play on."

Marshall said she also would work on reviewing the graduation requirements, which was something school committee members asked her to do. The review process has to be completed by January, if requirements are going to change so that

incoming freshman can make the necessary scheduling choices.

Marshall predicts she will have a proposal to present to the school committee at their Jan. 15 meeting. She will be working with students, teachers, administration and parents to develop the proposal.

Other goals include a plan to upgrade the heating, ventilation and air conditioning system; decrease the number of students school-choicing out of the district while increasing the number of students coming into the district; as well as begin a compliance plan for the New England Association of Schools and Colleges accreditation review.

"It's an admittedly aggressive schedule," she said.

In other business:

- The district hired 30 new teachers over the summer to replace teachers who had left. Associate Superintendent Robert Dempsey said most of those departing teachers were early retirements.

- Marshall also announced it appears the school district has about 200 fewer students this year than last year, which she says is a trend across the state.

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Caitlyn Kelleher can be reached at (978) 827-3386, ext. 15, or e-mail: caitlynkelleher@aol.com

"Turf management really means managing the turf. It's really getting to be unsafe for our kids to play on."

— MAUREEN MARSHALL

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