

Homeowner Story: My Aunt Bernice

In March we asked you to tell us a story about the most influential women in your life. Karen, the winner of our March contest and a faithful homeowner since 2009, submitted this beautiful story about her Aunt Bernice:

"My story is about my Aunt Bernice Brown, a business owner and incredible woman. My mom died when I was six years old. I was shifted to foster homes. In 1966 my aunt, Mrs. Brown, came to Akron, Ohio, and adopted me. When I was in the 11th grade I came to Grand Rapids, and although Aunt Bernice had children and a husband, they treated me as one of their own. My aunt was well known for her beautician skills and had a shop on Eastern Ave named Mika's Boutique.

My aunt taught me the common values of life, the love of God, the love of self, your self-worth, and kindness toward others. She never said you cannot do anything, but always try and do your best, and if you fail, try until you get it.

With her guidance, I have instilled the values she taught me to my three adopted children and the three biological children of my own. I love working with children in the community and also as a Foster Grand Parent for Senior Neighbors in the school system helping children to improve their skills.

So I thank my aunt for being so amazing and a phenomenal woman who never turned anyone down. She is no longer here with us on earth but her spirit lives in my soul."



Karen's tribute to her Aunt Bernice is touching and is the winner of the June Newsletter contest!



June Contest!

For the June Contest submit no more than a paragraph to dmadison@habitatkent.org about **your favorite summertime activity by June 22, 2021**. Please note that all entries are subject to minor editing for grammar and spelling.

The top three entries picked by our selection committee will win **\$50 each**.



2020 Homeowner of the Year:

Patrice has been a Habitat Kent homeowner since 2017.

She has been a faithful member and volunteer at Renaissance Church for the past seven years, and has been employed at Grand Rapids Public Schools for over 20 years working with children. She enjoys cooking for the school staff so they can have a good meal during busy days.

Patrice has and continues to be a good steward of her Habitat Kent home, doing a new home improvement project every year to keep her house beautiful!

Patrice with her daughter and granddaughter outside of their beautiful home. Congrats on being Homeowner of the Year!



Toni and her sons moved into their Habitat Kent home just before Thanksgiving last fall after finishing the homeownership program in record time!

Homeowner Shoutout

We are giving a big shoutout to Toni who is a part of the Roosevelt Park condos. Toni is a veteran of the Air Force, from which she was honorably discharged, and is a single mother of two wonderful boys.

Toni was a fantastic partner with Habitat Kent and finished the homeownership program in record time. She worked very hard to get her family into their new Habitat Kent home. As a family, they like to go roller skating and biking together. They love their new home and moved in right before Thanksgiving, just in time to create beautiful new memories for the holidays.

Did You Know?

Habitat Kent has closed on 10 homes in the Roosevelt Park neighborhood since the beginning of the year!

Take a look at the condominium development, Plaza Roosevelt, and see Habitat Kent's 17 completed condos, Dwelling Place's affordable apartments and storefronts, a future green space, and Grand Rapids Public Schools' new Southwest Community Campus High School.

Plaza Roosevelt is a beautiful addition to the neighborhood and demonstrates what Habitat Kent is all about: bringing people together to build homes, community, and hope.



Grand Rapids Mayor, Rosalynn Bliss, touring Plaza Roosevelt this winter with Bev, Habitat Kent Executive Director, and Ivor, Director of Community Development.

Neighborhood Surveys this Summer

This summer we will be out and about talking to our neighbors in Roosevelt Park! From July through September, staff and volunteers will walk door to door asking people what they like about the neighborhood and what they want to see improve.

If you live in Roosevelt Park, we look forward to connecting with you! We're also looking for volunteers to help us ask pre-written questions and record responses. Times are flexible making this a great volunteer opportunity for all schedules.

If interested, contact Andrew: aclaucherty@habitatkent.org, (616) 588-5233.



Ask the Expert: *How to upgrade your curb appeal on a budget*



We're excited to announce our new **Ask the Expert** column! In each newsletter, an expert in his or her field will share tips on home maintenance and lawn care.

First up is Tom Poll, Habitat Kent Warehouse Supervisor. We asked him for some simple, cost-effective ways to beautify the outside of your home.

Doing some simple things, like changing the color of your front door can instantly change the look of your home and show-off your personality.

Q: What is "curb appeal"?

A: Curb appeal is how attractive your home is from the street. Basically, it's the first impression people have of your home.

Q: Where should I start to help my curb appeal?

A: One of the easiest things to do is to get rid of clutter in the front yard. Keep garbage and recycling bins somewhere else, put away kids' toys when they're done playing, and keep the front yard free of litter.

Q: Are curb appeal projects expensive?

A: Talk with a contractor and you could be looking at thousands of dollars in projects. Thankfully, there are many things you can do for under \$100.

One of the first things someone sees is the front door. A really simple and expressive way to show off your house is changing the color of your front door. A gallon of exterior satin paint costs about \$35 or less.

You can also change the color of front posts or railings. Depending on the amount of railing and posts you have, and the material they're made of, changing the color can be as easy as painting. You can also change materials, but this is more expensive.

Q: What if I don't want to change any colors?

A: Some subtle things that really show your personality are putting up a fun mailbox or special house numbers.

Q: How can I incorporate plants or flowers?

A: Planting new shrubs or flowers is another inexpensive way to change the look of your home.

Flower boxes under the window for annual flowers or a couple of flower pots along the sidewalk or on the front steps add colors that will last all summer and fall.

Just remember to water them! Flowers and plants that are not planted in the ground need more water.

Things to do this summer:

Pack some snacks and a blanket, and enjoy free family evenings in parks across Grand Rapids with activities for all ages!

- **6/18: Martin Luther King Park** - Spiderman: Into the Spider-verse
- **7/17: Sullivan Field** - A League of Their Own
- **7/31: Roosevelt Park** - Moana
- **8/7: Plaster Creek Family Park** - Raya and the Last Dragon
- **8/21: Highland Park** - Wonder Woman: 1984



Pools and Splash Pads Reopening

Cool off from the summer heat at one of the City's 3 public pools and 14 splash pads! Pools are re-opening at 30% capacity.

Find a pool near you: <https://bit.ly/3n3fmUB>

Admission: Residents - \$1 for kids, \$2 ages 18+; Nonresidents - \$4 per person.

Other Fun Things for Kiddos

John Ball Zoo: check out the animal exhibits!
[1300 Fulton W, Grand Rapids, MI 49504](https://www.johnballzoo.org/visiting-us)

Children's Museum: Thursday is Family Night!
Hours: 5pm- 8pm;
Admission: \$3 admission
[11 Sheldon Ave NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503](https://www.childrensmuseum.org/visiting-us)

Tips from the MSU Gardening Club!

Curious about where to start with your visions of fresh basil, cherry tomatoes, and lavender sprigs?

Check out these links for a successful head start:

- **Planning your Michigan Fresh Garden:**
<https://bit.ly/3eh38DP>

- **Planting a Smart Vegetable Garden:**
includes frost free dates! <https://bit.ly/32yUWJA>
- **Ask a Master Gardener:**
Is your philodendron or house plant struggling? Ask your questions and upload photos, and get answers and solutions from an expert on-hand!
ask.extension.org

Free Wi-Fi in Ten Parks

10 parks across the city have free public Wi-Fi hotspots! There is no log-in required, and all usage is filtered through Children's Internet Protection Act guidelines. Learn more:

<https://bit.ly/3tQVCpC>



Words To Live By: *Always find time for things that make you feel happy to be alive- Happy Summer!*

Stay in the Know

If you have a new cell phone number or email, please send it to DeShawn: dmadison@habitatkent.org
Visit: [Habitatkent.org](https://www.habitatkent.org)

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