

Home build to raise hope



Home build to raise hope. Ron Hendriks is one of three committee members heading a house build to benefit Wells of Hope in their ongoing efforts to deliver clean drinking water in Guatemala.

Steve Henschel, staff

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They want to build a home, and, while they are at it, build some hope.

Wells of Hope, a Niagara-based not-for-profit poverty reduction organization, appeared before Pelham Town Council last week to ask for a bit of land. Specifically, the lot at 1143 Maple St. in Fonthill. The organization is hoping the town will donate the land so they can build a house on the property, which they will sell as a fundraiser.

Under the name Build for Hope, the organization hopes to make close to \$300,000 on the 2,500 to 3,000 square-foot house they plan to build.

"We're actively looking for property," said Ron Hendriks, build committee member and owner of Homes by Hendriks. He explained that while the Fonthill property is their first choice, should town council refuse to donate the land the organization will look elsewhere in Niagara.

Ben Obdeyn of Mabo Construction and Frank Memme of Mountainview Homes have also joined Hendriks on the build committee and a number of contractors and suppliers have already signed on to donate time and/or supplies for the build.

"There's going to be lots of construction companies involved," said Hendriks, who added that he hopes to land a property soon so there is time to design before getting an early spring start on construction.

"If we get the go-ahead we could be ready to go in the spring for sure," said Hendriks, who added that the organization is asking a large favour of the town.

"It's a big thing we are asking," said Hendriks. "It is a good opportunity for the town to get involved."

Hendriks said the build has already been a year in the planning and he hopes to pull the whole thing off with as little cost as possible. When all is said and done the house will be sold with proceeds going towards a drilling rig already purchased by

Wells of Hope.

Hendriks said about \$500,000 remains to be paid on the high-end, \$1-million drill used by Wells of Hope to drill for clean fresh water in the Guatemalan region of Jalapa.

“That’s the rig they need to drill in Guatemala,” explained Hendriks, pointing out that tough volcanic rock in the region makes the drill a necessity.

Wells of Hope founder Ted Vander Zalm said the organization was founded to combat poverty in 2004. Since then Wells of Hope has concentrated on delivering clean water to Jalapa.

“Without water there is no life,” said Vander Zalm, explaining that safe drinking water is an important first step in combatting poverty. He added that every eight seconds one child dies from a water borne illness and that he is frequently told by doctors the organization has in Jalapa that most medicine is useless without clean water first.

Since the organization got its start Vander Zalm estimates they have improved the access to clean water for tens of thousands of people. He said that in the poor region of Jalapa, water infrastructure has never been even considered due to the high price of drilling.

He went on to point out that his organization relies almost entirely on the generosity of Niagara to continue its operations.

“Our funds come from the generous donations of the area,” he said, pointing out that the organization is constantly fundraising and is the midst of launching two business initiatives to help increase capital. One of these initiatives is Wells of Hope’s own line of bottled water to be sold in stores. For more information on Wells of Hope visit www.wellofhope.com.

Hendriks said he is still looking for suppliers and tradespeople to sign on for the build. Anyone interested in helping out is invited to call Homes by Hendriks at 905-563-7681.

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