

## Earth Day is Every Day When Housatonic Habitat for Humanity Teams up with the Pollinator Pathway to Grow Green Gardens

*With the help of Pollinator Pathway Northeast, Housatonic Habitat for Humanity is planting chemical-free gardens at its Restore and Housatonic-built homes.*

By Penelope Forman

Who planted the first seed? That's Fran Normann, Housatonic Habitat's Executive Director, who has been dreaming and scheming about how to celebrate Earthday 2021 by planting a powerful message in the hearts and minds of the community about the importance of green and sustainable solutions.

“Our message has always been green”, says Normann, “so we reached out for a little help from our friend Louise Washer of the Pollinator Pathway Northeast Steering Committee, which encourages homeowners and businesses to restore pollinator habitats by planting native plants, eliminating pesticides, and reducing lawns.”



Master Gardener Karen Boshka

And that's how the idea of Habitat Sustainable Gardens took root. Next, through the garden gate, enters Master Gardener Karen Boshka to help create Housatonic Habitat pollinator gardens. Together, with an enthusiastic team of Habitat volunteers, the first pollinator garden was planned on a patch of green right outside Habitat's ReStore, smack dab in the middle of urban Danbury.

Says Normann, “Since we often put in lawns at our homes, I thought that creating pollinator gardens instead, without the chemicals, watering, ongoing maintenance of traditional gardens, would be cost effective and sustainable.” The ReStore garden will serve as a demonstration design, a model garden design for others to use at their new Housatonic Habitat homes.

And the idea just grew, not like a weed but like a garden. Normann talked to the Homeowners Association of New Preston, one of the 8 towns Housatonic Habitat serves, where a neighborhood of Habitat homes is being built, and everyone loved

the idea. Instead of mowing a field, they will plant a pollinator garden or a field of wildflowers requiring less maintenance and providing sustainable beauty.

“And you can do it too, outside your window or in your backyard,” adds Washer, “Pollinator Pathways are simply pesticide-free corridors of native plants that provide nutrition and a habitat for pollinators...and even the smallest of available green spaces like flower boxes and pots can be a part of the pathway. We encourage homeowners to rethink, reinvent their lawns... mow higher and less often, reduce the size by adding shrubs and trees. Leave some bare ground and dead wood for nesting native bees and autumn leaves for overwintering eggs. And you’ll be a Pollinator gardener.”

As the excitement mounts and the planting begins, Habitat is not waiting to unveil its garden on Earth Day next Spring. A Pollinator Garden is taking root this Fall. Let the blooming begin...

For more information and to participate, contact [info@housatonicahabitat.org](mailto:info@housatonicahabitat.org) or [info@pollinator-pathway.org](mailto:info@pollinator-pathway.org)