

# the **BLUEPRINT**

Summer 2024 Newsletter



**every family**  
deserves a stable place to live

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# Dear Friends,

We are thrilled to announce a groundbreaking moment for the city of Alexandria – the **Summer Meadows development!** This July, construction begins on the **first new affordable housing project in our community since 2002.**

Habitat for Humanity has a long history of listening to our community's needs and responding with impactful solutions. Summer Meadows development is a testament to this commitment. With **42 new homes**, this 25 acre development will transform lives and strengthen our community.

The location of Summer Meadows is ideal. Many homes will back up to a beautiful **wetland preserve**, while others will have a **city park** as their neighbor. An **elementary school** is conveniently located nearby, creating a vibrant family environment. This project is a win-win! According to the Alexandria Area Economic Development Commission, Summer Meadows will provide **much-needed housing for our local workforce**, benefiting both residents and employers.

Join us in celebrating this momentous occasion! The **Summer Meadows Ground Blessing Ceremony** takes place on July 9 at 10:00 am.

Building a thriving community takes all of us. At Habitat for Humanity of Douglas County, we envision Summer Meadows filled with the people who make Alexandria special – educators, healthcare professionals, restaurant staff, and more.

We cannot do this alone. **Your support – your time, your resources, your belief in our mission – is what truly makes a difference.**

Thank you, *Lori Anderson*



**Lori Anderson,  
Executive Director**



*Please Join Us!*

**JULY  
9  
2024**

**Summer Meadows  
Ground Blessing**

**10:00 am**  
Seasons Dr, Alexandria

Please join us to bless the ground on our biggest project to date! Street parking is available near Summer Lane & Seasons Drive.

For more information about Habitat for Humanity of Douglas County, please call our office at 320-762-4255 or visit [hfhdouglascounty.org](http://hfhdouglascounty.org).



- **Our mission:**
- Seeking to put God's love into action, Habitat for Humanity brings people together to build homes, communities and hope.

- **Our vision:**
- A world where everyone has a decent place to live.

Because of your support, since 1997, we've served:

**174 families**

**88** new or improved homes

**86** Aging in Place projects

# Our Forever Home

"Partnering with Habitat for Humanity was an amazing opportunity for our family and many other low-income families in this community," shared Habitat homeowner Christie Nohre at the 2024 Hard Hat Events. "Building our house and putting in the hours was hard work but it gave us that much more pride in owning a safe, accessible home that we could afford."



**Christie Nohre**  
Habitat homeowner

Christie and her husband, Scott, partnered with Habitat in 2011. They have two daughters, Sophia and Sadie. Sophia was born with a rare condition called Osteogenesis Imperfecta which causes bones to break easily. Requiring many doctor visits and specialized care, the couple made the decision that Christie would stay home to care for their daughter.

"As time went by and Sophia got older, housing was becoming more of an issue." Frequent broken legs and body casts made it hard to carry her up the stairs. Knowing that Sophia would occasionally need a walker or wheelchair in the future, the couple began looking for an affordable and accessible home. Family and public health nurses suggested Christie and Scott apply to Habitat. "Being homeowners has been such a blessing. Right away everything became simpler. With the attached garage and no steps Sophia could independently get into the house. Without the stress of looking for an affordable home, we were able to focus on Sophia and her medical care," said Christie. A year after moving into their home, the couple welcomed another daughter, Sadie, to the family.

"Growing up, Sophia had many surgeries and changes in mobility but our house provided for us every step of the way. As our financial situation has gotten better, we have looked at other houses but many of them simply would not work with her wheelchair, and we are happy to have a home that allows her to move freely no matter what situation we are in."

For 13 years, the family has made unforgettable memories in their home. From annual first day of school photos, to Easter egg hunts, birthday parties, bonfires, a butterfly garden, and winter ice lanterns, the family has experienced so many special moments in their home. Christie commented, "Our affordable mortgage payment and energy-efficient home has made all these things possible. Habitat for Humanity lifted a lot of stress from our lives and allowed us to focus on raising our family in a safe, accessible home. We are forever grateful for the wonderful opportunity and thank all of you for supporting Habitat for Humanity of Douglas County whether it be financially or through volunteer hours. Our family and so many others have thrived because of it."



**Nohre family**



**Sophia, Sadie, and Ranger**



**Contact Denise at our office to learn more about our affordable homeownership or Aging in Place programs.**

**Call 320-762-4255 or email [denise@hfhdouglascounty.org](mailto:denise@hfhdouglascounty.org)**

# 2024 Hard Hat Events



On May 15, 2024, over 550 people gathered at our 18th annual Hard Hat Events. This premier fundraiser raises money to help construct affordable housing in Douglas County.



The highlight of the event was homeowner Christie Nohre (see article on p.3) sharing how their forever home has been a blessing for their family.



Rick Sansted, Habitat Board Secretary, and Allie Janssen, Hard Hat Event Co-Chair, served as event emcees (see picture top left). Throughout the program, "What Home Means to Me" was shared by both speakers and the audience, who built the word cloud (seen right) in real-time during the event.



Lori Anderson, Habitat Executive Director, commented, "We all know the feeling of home. It's a safe haven, a place to gather with loved ones, a space that feels uniquely ours. But for far too many people in our community, that basic need for a decent, stable home remains out of reach." Citing the 2023 Alexandria City Housing Update, Lori added how Habitat is meeting 50% of the identified housing need in our community and showed a sneak peek of the Summer Meadows development (see article on p.8).



Through the help of 236,813 volunteer hours and incredible community support over the past 27 years, the power of Habitat's work is evident in the words of our homeowners who have shared: "Habitat allowed me to complete my education," "I have a new outlook on life," "I feel safe," and "I am independent and feel empowered."

Kasey Morris, Habitat Director of Development, highlighted how the Aging in Place program helps make the homes of people age 62 or better more safe and accessible, allowing them to be independent and remain in the comfort of their homes.

**From the hearts and homes of our Habitat families - THANK YOU for making the 2024 Hard Hat Events successful!** Donations are already at work building three new homes in Douglas County.

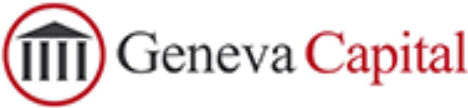
There's still time to make a donation to support your neighbors by visiting [hfhdouglascounty.org](http://hfhdouglascounty.org). Questions? Contact Kasey at 320-762-4255.

## People enjoyed posing at our photobooth!



# Thank you to our generous event sponsors!

## Foundation of Hope (\$7,500)



## Roof Raiser (\$5,000)



## House of Strength (\$2,500)



## Door to Tomorrow (\$1,500)



## Window of Opportunity (\$1,000)



Because of our sponsors, 100% of event proceeds were applied directly to our programs!



SAVE THE DATE!  
2025 Hard Hat Events  
May 7, 2025

## Pillar of Stability (\$600)

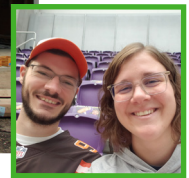


## Build Updates



### Team Build Home

Construction on Angel's home began on April 15. Exterior work is complete and sheetrocking is underway. Angel and her family are so excited! At the Blessing of the Build, the kids eagerly located their rooms and had fun signing their names on the garage walls. Work will resume in August to install cabinets, flooring, and trim.



### Faith Build Home

May 13 was an epic day on our Faith Build home as the group built exterior walls, added sheathing AND installed roof trusses before the end of the build day. Exterior work has continued, with only a small amount of siding yet to be finished. We'll return in July to insulate, sheetrock with flooring and cabinets to follow in August. Matt & Chelsey are thrilled and ready to play in their backyard.

## Meet the homebuyers!



### Meet Brady & Tara

"Each day our happiness and excitement build, we feel so fortunate and have a renewed sense of hope. You are helping build walls that will keep two little girls safe and happy, a roof to shelter their heads and hearts. You are giving their parents a sense of community and fostering hope and kindness." Brady & Tara's home is the Women Build for 2024. Construction began in June!



### Meet Jayde

"I was motivated to apply for the Habitat housing program to provide a stable home for myself and my children and be able to live comfortably. I look forward to having my own space. I look forward to gardening and decorating to make the home ours." Construction on Jayde's home will begin this fall.

# Thank you Team Builder Businesses

Team build partnerships are an investment in Habitat, employees, and the community. They bring coworkers together in a unique way to problem solve, communicate, build camaraderie, and involve them in a truly meaningful effort to help uplift the lives of a local family through affordable homeownership.



## ReStore Corner



**Jim Gareis,  
ReStore Manager**

The ReStore welcomes Jim Gareis as the new ReStore Manager.

Jim and his family, wife Candy and son Colton, relocated to the Alexandria area in August 2023. Their family had a cabin in the area and they always enjoyed visiting.

After 37 years in the law enforcement industry, Jim is excited to begin a new career and looks forward to learning about the ReStore and Habitat. He's grateful to have the opportunity to work with such a great organization.

the donation process can be. After a donation arrives, it's tested and cleaned, then placed on the floor for sale. Inventory changes so quickly!"

Welcome, Jim!



**Store Hours**  
Wed - Sat  
9 am - 5 pm

**Donations**  
Mon - Sat  
10 am - 4 pm

Call  
320-759-1989  
to schedule.

# Summer Meadows



For over 27 years, Habitat has built a proven track record of building strength and stability through affordable homeownership. We are taking a big step forward with the Summer Meadows development, the first new affordable housing project in Alexandria since 2002, offering families a chance to anchor themselves in this vibrant community.

Located in a highly desirable neighborhood in Alexandria, the development will allow 42 homes to be built over the next ten years, with four to five homes built each year. Sidewalks will exist on both sides of the street with trees to enhance the interconnectedness of neighborhoods allowing easy access to bike trails and a buffer of native plantings. One side of the property is located next to an existing park.

## Why Summer Meadows?

Homeownership is about stability, health, and opportunity. Owning a home allows families to build wealth, invest in their children's education, and contribute more meaningfully to our community.

In 2023, a local housing study painted a clear picture: there's a significant affordability gap in our community. Home values are rising faster than incomes, and we desperately need more affordable options. The study calls out the need for 8 to 10 affordable homes built annually, and recognizes Habitat as the only one in a position to meet this need.



## City of Alexandria & AAEDC Support

At the June 26, 2023, meeting, the Alexandria City Council approved a request from Habitat for a planned unit development on existing vacant property. Through partnership with the Alexandria Area Economic Development Commission (AAEDC), Habitat applied and was approved for tax-increment financing (TIF) from the Alexandria City Council.

"We're thrilled the city has chosen to support our efforts to create affordable homeownership opportunities through this development."



Lori Anderson,  
Habitat Executive Director

"By having a partnership with the city, we'll be able to move forward with our goal of building four to five homes a year and perhaps even accelerate that as the need continues."



Heather Smith-Ahrens,  
Habitat Director of Operations

"It will be so great to watch these houses get developed -- and it will be so helpful to our employers who need great housing for their workforce. It's a win-win all around."



Nicole Fernholz,  
Executive Director, AAEDC



### About the homes

The homes of Summer Meadows will feature two-, three-, and four-bedroom homes ranging in size from 1,000 to 1,400 square feet utilizing five different house plans that include two-stall garages. Homes will be built slab-on-grade with in-floor heat to optimize energy efficiency and exteriors with stone veneer and porches. Visit our website for more information at [hfhdouglascounty.org/get-housing-help/summer-meadows](http://hfhdouglascounty.org/get-housing-help/summer-meadows)



### Why Support Summer Meadows

Together, we can build a brighter future for Douglas County. A future where everyone has the opportunity to own a home, to feel secure, and to contribute to a thriving community. Like our future homeowners, Habitat for Humanity of Douglas County is dreaming big and courageously broadening our horizons to serve more people. Homeownership is a life-changing opportunity, and it is impossible without you: a community that believes we can do better.



For more information on how you can support Habitat, please contact Kasey at 320-762-4255 or [kasey@hfhdouglascounty.org](mailto:kasey@hfhdouglascounty.org)

The Habitat Board and Team standing on the future site of Summer Meadows. Work on infrastructure (road, water, sewer, sidewalks) is scheduled to begin this summer.

## Leave A Lasting Legacy with Habitat

August is National Make-A-Will Month, the perfect time to ensure your wishes are known and your legacy lives on.

By including Habitat for Humanity of Douglas County in your will, you can make a lasting impact on families in need of affordable housing. Planning for the future with a will ensures your assets are distributed according to your desires. Consider including a charitable gift to Habitat of Douglas County and empower us to continue building strength, stability, and hope for generations to come. Your generous gift, no matter the size, can help build a home and transform a family's life.

Habitat offers several flexible options for donating through your will, allowing you to tailor your gift to your specific goals. Join us in creating a lasting impact on our community!



**every family**  
deserves the opportunity to  
build a strong foundation



of Douglas County, Minnesota  
1211 N Nokomis NE  
Alexandria, MN 56308



**every smile**

is more joyful when you realize  
you're finally home



**Building strength,  
stability and  
self-reliance  
through shelter.**



Support  
**HOUSING for  
MINNESOTANS**  
and qualify for a  
**TAX CREDIT**

The new State Housing Tax Credit Program and Contribution Fund allows taxpayers to invest in housing across the state.

When you or your business contributes, you support housing for all Minnesotans and can qualify for a state tax credit of 85% of your contribution!

To learn more, visit [mnhousing.gov](http://mnhousing.gov) and search for contribution fund.



Help support Habitat for Humanity of Douglas County to build more homes in our county. The **Minnesota State Housing Tax Credit Contribution Program (SHTC)** is a new way to help finance affordable housing.

Eligible Minnesota corporate and individual taxpayers can contribute between \$1,000 and \$2 million to the SHTC Program fund, and, in return, receive a state tax credit certificate (TCC) that equals 85% of their total contributions. We encourage you to donate through this program towards our current qualified project.

Act now if you would like to take advantage of this opportunity. The program is limited to granting \$10 million per year. Once the credits are claimed, it will be closed for the remainder of the year.

To learn more and apply online, scan the QR code to the right or visit <https://mnhousing.gov/shtc-contribution.html>



Contact Lori Anderson with any questions at 320-762-4255 or [lori@hfhdouglascounty.org](mailto:lori@hfhdouglascounty.org)