

the **BLUEPRINT**

Fall 2024 Newsletter

Summer Meadows Ground Blessing
July 9, 2024



every parent
wants to build a brighter future
for their family

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Dear Friends,

We are fortunate to live in an area that is vibrant, thriving and has a culture of partnerships. Without partnerships, we would not be able to do the work we do and make an impact in the community. With home values rising faster than incomes, Habitat and the City of Alexandria were looking for solutions to address the affordability gap.



**Lori Anderson,
Executive Director**

This summer, we broke ground on Summer Meadows, an affordable housing development made possible with a partnership between the city and Habitat for Humanity of Douglas County. The City of Alexandria, Douglas County, and the school district all participated in Tax Increment Financing, which helps to fund the public infrastructure of this project, making all the homes affordable and making this project possible.

This fall, two community partnerships will help build two new homes adjacent to the Summer Meadows development. Carpentry students from the Alexandria Technical and Community College will build the Legends home and the CAPS students from Alexandria Area High School will participate in the Cardinal Build alongside volunteer groups. Partnerships like this benefit everyone involved by offering more affordable housing to the community, while students learn lifelong skills and gain exposure to a future career.

Another great partnership to highlight is the new State Housing Tax Credit Program and Contribution Fund. We have already received contributions for homes that will be adjacent to Summer Meadows. To those who have made contributions, thank you! I invite others to consider participating in this program.

For example, if you owe \$1,700 on your Minnesota state income taxes as a business or an individual, you can contribute \$2,000 to one of our current projects. You will receive a certificate for a \$1,700 tax credit. This is a win-win situation, and we encourage you to take advantage of it. The tax credits are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

When you contribute, you support affordable housing and can qualify for a state tax credit of 85% of your contribution!

- **Who can contribute?** Any person or business that pays Minnesota taxes and meets eligibility requirements can contribute.
- **How much can I contribute?** To qualify for the tax credit, contributions must be at least \$1,000 and cannot exceed \$2 million each tax year.
- **How do I contribute and claim the credit?** To contribute to the State Housing Tax Credit Program and Contribution Fund, you will need to fill out an application. It takes about 10 minutes to complete the application. You will get an e-mail within one week, asking you to DocuSign and send your funds via check or bank wire.
- **What happens to my contribution?** Contributions will be used to develop and fund affordable housing right here at home by selecting a Habitat for Humanity of Douglas County qualified project.

Questions? To learn more, see the back cover or contact me at 320-762-4255. Thank you!

Lori Anderson



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

179 families

89 new or improved homes

90 Aging in Place projects

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.

Board of Directors



Tim Madson

Habitat for Humanity of Douglas County recently elected three new board directors: Tim Madson, Bobbi Jo Sellnow, and Janelle Wunderlich.

“We are delighted to welcome Tim, Bobbi Jo, and Janelle to the Habitat Board,” said Executive Director Lori Anderson. “Their combined experience and expertise will be invaluable as we strengthen our impact in the county. Each of them brings unique insights and skills which will enhance our strategic initiatives and help us achieve our goal to build and serve more.”



Bobbi Jo Sellnow

Tim Madson is a retired physical therapist from Mayo Clinic. He has volunteered each Tuesday as part of the ReStore pick-up crew and been a mentor for two Habitat homebuyers. His first-hand experience with the Habitat homeownership process and understanding of the ReStore will be a valuable addition to the board. Bobbi Jo Sellnow is Vice President of Operations for Douglas Machine. With extensive experience in leadership, Bobbi Jo has contributed significantly to sound financial stewardship and optimizing processes. Janelle Wunderlich is Director of HR at Alexandria Industries. As a human resource professional, Janelle’s commitment to building community and serving others aligns perfectly with Habitat’s mission. All three new members will serve as passionate advocates for Habitat’s mission.



Janelle Wunderlich

Habitat is honored to have an innovative and passionate board who govern our work. Other board directors include Angie Krebs (Chair), Jeff Hohn (Vice Chair/ Treasurer), Rick Sansted (Secretary), Tony Loosbrock (Past Chair), Jenna Hill, Scott Kluver, and Carmon Watkins.

Thank you to outgoing board members Stephanie Lucy, Erin McCoy, Kevin Taylor, and Brooke Zabel. Their combined leadership and dedication to Habitat’s mission were a significant asset to Habitat’s goals.

In Memoriam



Tom Klemenhausen

We honor the legacy of Tom Klemenhausen, who died on July 7, 2024. Tom joined the Habitat Board of Directors in 2021. His expertise on our Construction Committee, keen eye for land selection, and unwavering mentorship to our team and board were invaluable to Habitat. He spearheaded the concept of a large-scale development and led many aspects of the Summer Meadows project.

A moment of reflection was taken during the Summer Meadows Ground Blessing on July 9 (see p. 5) to honor Tom. Lori Anderson shared, “We know Tom is beaming with pride thinking about the 42 families who will call Summer Meadows home, and the children who will be riding bikes through the neighborhood, playing in the park, and the families who will become neighbors.”

**Board Director
2021-2024**

Our sympathies and comfort are shared with Tom's entire family.

Summer Meadows



The first shovel with City Representatives



Jenna, Habitat Board Director and homeowner



Earthwork progress in August

Habitat for Humanity of Douglas County broke ground on Summer Meadows, the first affordable housing development in Alexandria since 2002 and the largest project in the 27-year history of the organization.

The community gathered at the Ground Blessing ceremony held July 9 to celebrate the momentous occasion. Lori Anderson, Habitat Executive Director shared, “Through building 42 affordable homes, we’re not just building houses, we’re helping families stay afloat and build a brighter future.” Among those present included Alexandria City Mayor, Bobbie Osterberg, who commented on how Summer Meadows is an example of the “coming together of so many people and resources to create something greater than the individual parts.”

Through the partnership of the City of Alexandria with approval of the Planned Unit Development, the guidance and insight from the Alexandria Area Economic Development Commission to achieve TIF financing, and the USDA Rural Development site loan, the Summer Meadows development is a testament to the unwavering support of the Habitat founders, volunteers, donors, supporters, and everyone who believes in the mission.

Tony Loosbrock, Habitat Board Past Chair, commented, “I am so excited for the 42 future Habitat homeowners, who are such strong and determined people, striving to better their lives and keep growing. We are blessed to serve them.” Habitat homeowner and Board Director, Jenna Hill, explained, “My family has been in our home for two years and we are still in awe. Habitat has impacted our lives now and forever. I used to feel ashamed that I could not provide my children with a home they were proud of and have friends come over,” adding, “Life hasn’t always been easy for me, but one obstacle I no longer have to worry about is affordable housing and a place for my kids to feel safe and loved because we have that! We can now create memories and build a future – this is the feeling for 42 more families here. Without hope and this community believing in Habitat’s mission, I wouldn’t be standing here today to tell you all thank you. Because of this community, not only does my family have a home, but we will continue to bless many other families. Thank you.”

Earthwork began in July and will continue into this fall. Upon completion, water, sewer, and the new road — Seasons Drive — will be completed. Next spring, construction on the first homes of Summer Meadows will begin. Habitat’s strategic plan is to build five homes this year and next. In addition to building within the Summer Meadows development, Habitat will continue to build homes throughout Douglas County as opportunities arise.

Questions about Summer Meadows?

Please call or email Heather: 320-762-4255 or heather@hfhdouglascounty.org

Donor Spotlight

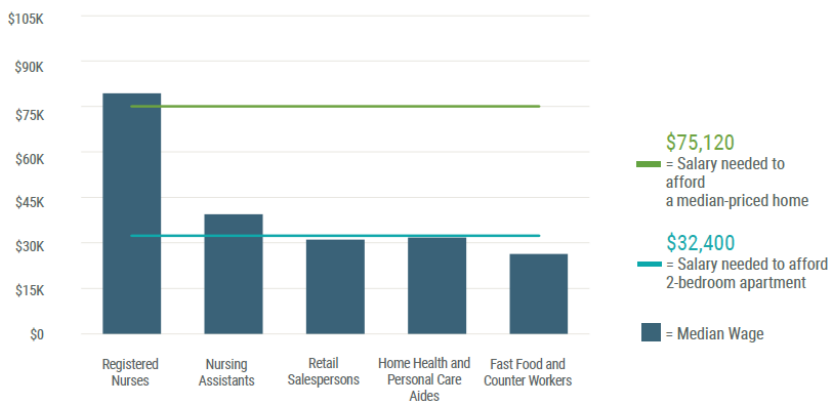
The housing crisis has made homeownership a distant dream for many families in our own community. Chad Swanson, a dedicated Habitat for Humanity volunteer, understands this struggle firsthand. As a parent, Chad empathizes with the challenges of homeownership and the aspiration for a stable home.

Several years ago, Chad was invited to the Hard Hat Events. While he did not immediately get involved with Habitat, the tide turned when he noticed Habitat homes popping up in familiar neighborhoods. "These were families enjoying maybe their first home and getting out of an apartment. I have always had an interest in construction since it was my father's hobby and thought I may have something to offer," shares Chad. "Obviously, on my first day as a crew lead volunteer, I was apprehensive about how I would fit in. I was so impressed with the crew members' dedication and knowledge at each site. I felt very welcomed by the Habitat construction staff and crew members," he adds.



Chad Swanson

THE REGION'S MOST IN-DEMAND JOBS vs DOUGLAS'S COST OF HOUSING



Source: Minnesota Housing Partnership, 2023 Douglas County Profile, mhponline.org/wp-content/uploads/Douglas.pdf

"Habitat isn't about handouts; it's about providing a hand up," Chad says. "My wife and I were blessed with a good business and we want to share that success with others." Your support can turn dreams into reality. Every dollar donated funds construction, land, and operations. Chad's story is proof that one person can make a significant difference. Join the movement to build homes and hope. Donate today to Habitat for Humanity of Douglas County.

**Questions about donating to Habitat?
Please call or email Kasey: 320-762-4255
or kasey@hfhdouglascounty.org**

Chad's commitment to helping others is fueled by gratitude for his own success. "It's been many years ago when we rented an upstairs house furnished apartment for \$80 per month. We are now seeing \$350,000 starting homes, a staggering figure for young families," Chad explains. The stark reality is that many families in Douglas County spend more than the recommended 30% of their monthly income on housing. As seen in the graph to the left, the top five in-demand jobs are not able to afford a median-priced home in Douglas County.



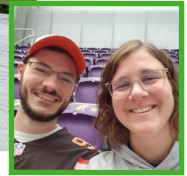
Chad (pictured center, back row) along with the Habitat Board and Team on May 30, 2024

Build Updates



Team Build Home

Cabinets, flooring, landscaping, and interior trim have been completed in Homebuyer Angel's home. All these details make "everything feel so real!" Finishing details will round out work this fall as we near completion of the home. One of the hardest times for homebuyers is when construction is complete and finalization of the loan process begins. During this time, the home waits, along with the homebuyer, in anticipation of closing and move-in day. A home dedication will be scheduled this fall.



Faith Build Home

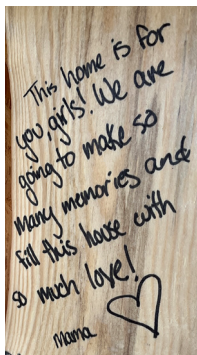
Much progress has been made throughout the summer on Homebuyer Matt & Chelsey's home. Siding, insulation, sheetrock, cabinets, and flooring have now been installed. You may notice a small front porch on this home. This feature will occur on many homes in the Summer Meadows development. "We are excited about all the progress on the house and we have loved meeting all of the volunteers."

Fall builds start soon!



Women Build Home

Construction on our Women Build home began in June. All exterior work has been completed, except for landscaping. Interior work is in progress with insulation, sheetrock, and painting done. Cabinets, flooring, trim, and final finishes will be installed this fall. Homebuyers Brady and Tara are thrilled at the progress and future place for their girls to grow and build memories. Read Tara's message to her girls to the right.



Cardinal Build Home

Homebuyer Jayde is also eager to provide a stable environment for her three children. "When I received the call that I was approved, I reacted with pure excitement. I felt a sense of relief." Construction on Jayde's home will begin this fall. Students from the Alexandria Area High School EMTNR CAPS class will help build the home during their class time alongside volunteer groups. Both the Cardinal and Legends Build homes will be built adjacent to Summer Meadows.



Legends Build Home

This fall will be the third Legends Build built through a partnership with carpentry program students from Alexandria Technical & Community College. Having moved 12 times, Homebuyer Codie shared, "My kids need stability...I am looking forward to a safe place for our family."

ReStore Corner

Habitat for Humanity ReStores are independently owned stores operated by local Habitat for Humanity affiliates that accept donations and sell home improvement items to the public at a discounted price.

Habitat for Humanity ReStores play an integral part in Habitat's mission as proceeds help provide financial support and sustainability to the affiliate.

Additionally, the ReStores contribute to keeping materials out of our landfills. Since our ReStore opened in 2014, we have kept **1,706 tons** out of the landfill!

Our ReStore participates in multiple programs and partnerships:

- **Cardboard Cares** (pictured top right): This summer, our ReStore began a partnership with Cardboard Cares, a local nonprofit helping local area businesses with cardboard recycling. Proceeds from recycled cardboard donations are returned to the community via visual art instruction at little or no cost. To learn more about the organization, visit cardboardcares.org. The red bin is located in the parking lot, next to the organics recycling area.
- **Soles 4 Souls** (pictured middle right): Located near the ReStore entrance, the ReStore is now a drop-off spot for the Alexandria Lions Club initiative. The Lions Club has been collecting pairs of shoes which they bring to Soles 4 Souls, a nonprofit that turns shoes and clothing into opportunity. Shoes are then distributed throughout the US and worldwide. To learn more about the organization, visit soles4souls.org.
- **Organics recycling** (pictured bottom right): Since 2019, the ReStore parking lot has been a drop off site for organics recycling through Pope/Douglas Solid Waste Management. Organics recycling is an important part of effective waste management programs. Items are returned back to nature, reducing resource use and greenhouse gas emissions. Visit popedouglasrecycle.com to learn more about what items are accepted.
- **Metal recycling**: Did you know that any unsold lights and other items containing metal are deconstructed and the metals separated out for recycling? After separation, the metals are collected for a special metal recycling site.

When you donate to and shop at the ReStore, you help the environment by

- reducing the amount of waste and need for new items,
- reusing things that still have value, and
- recycling items rather than sending them to the landfills.



Store Hours
Wed thru Sat
9 am to 5 pm

Donations
Call 320-759-1989
to schedule.

Mon thru Sat
10 am to 4 pm

Questions about the ReStore? Please call 320-759-1989 or email jim@hfhdouglascounty.org



of Douglas County, Minnesota

1211 N Nokomis NE
Alexandria, MN 56308



every family
deserves the opportunity to
build a better life.



**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 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 contribute to this program towards our current qualified projects.

Act now if you would like to take advantage of this opportunity. The program is limited to granting \$9.9 million in 2024. Once the credits are claimed, it will be closed for the remainder of the year.

To learn more and apply online, scan the QR codes 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