

the **BLUEPRINT**

Summer 2023 Newsletter



page 4 - Hard Hat Event Highlights



every family deserves an opportunity to live in peace

Dear Friends,

Thank you for building homes, communities, and hope! As we close out our fiscal year and reflect on the impact we have made in the community, we are grateful for all our supporters who have made this impact possible. The Hard Hat Events were the most successful to date, and we have exceeded our goal of raising \$130,000. Because of you, we can continue serving more families with safe and affordable housing. **We are so grateful for your unwavering support!**



Lori Anderson,
Habitat Executive Director

Habitat has served 19 families this fiscal year 2022-2023. Hard work and generosity made it possible for these homeowners to have something that most of us take for granted—peace of mind and a stable place to thrive.

A hand up, not a handout. Habitat homeowners work hard; they don't ask for handouts. Approved homebuyers must demonstrate: a housing need, ability to pay a mortgage, and a willingness to partner with Habitat.

At the end of each homeowner's journey, they have put in at least 200 hours of "sweat equity" and purchased their home with an affordable mortgage. Our homeowners are physically and financially invested in their homes and are set on the right path toward responsible homeownership. The homeowner classes they are required to complete as part of their partnership with Habitat provide them with the tools to be successful homeowners and contributing citizens in their local communities.

In Douglas County, one in four households spend half or more of their income on housing. With help from our supporters, we can make the cost of home affordable for everyone. People are often surprised by how impactful their donation is.

Habitat's homeownership program benefits our community:

- * revitalizes neighborhoods
- * increases the tax base
- * encourages volunteerism
- * removes substandard housing
- * provides employment for subcontractors

Even the smallest donations can make a big difference, and our supporters know their money is going to a good cause. Habitat is proud to share we have received a Four-Star rating from Charity Navigator and the GuideStar Platinum Seal of Transparency, the highest level of transparency. The Four-Star rating exceeds or meets best practices and industry standards across almost all areas. The Platinum Seal is the highest level of transparency, which means you can trust we are being responsible with your donations.

Thank you for helping our families find "HOME."

Lori Anderson

- **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:

152 families

84 new or improved homes

68 Aging in Place projects

Home is time for new beginnings: Brenda's Story

"Home is a place of peace," shared newest Habitat homeowner Brenda Rising at the 2023 Hard Hat Events. **"We feel safe and empowered, and this is our time for new beginnings."**

Unfortunately, the search for a home of her own was "rough." Even though Brenda had been pre-approved for a loan, what was available in her price range needed more work than she knew she could afford. Her apartment manager, Deb, suggested Brenda reach out to Habitat. Brenda was even more excited to learn that Habitat was hoping to build in Brandon, where she wanted to live.

Brenda found out she was approved three days before Christmas. "I decided to tell the kids by wrapping up a note in a Christmas gift. They were so excited, especially when they learned that it would be a four-bedroom home so we could each have our own room."

The process of partnering with Habitat was fun for Brenda. **"It really opened my eyes to how much the community cares and wants to help people trying to improve their lives."** Brenda made a point to stop at the build site and greet volunteers on the days she was not able to help. "I wanted them to meet the person attached to what they were working on. I can't thank the volunteers enough, for their help, their smiles, their encouragement, for the time they spent building my home and their willingness to help someone they had never met."

Brenda and her family moved into their new home in November, yet it feels like forever for them, which is a great feeling. "It's been awesome to watch my kids blossom. I've seen a sense of calm and peace settle over all of us. We are all more confident. My kids talk more about their 'home' rather than where they live. **They are focusing on the future and how to be successful. The future for them doesn't feel so intimidating now.** When you're lower-income, things like college feel so far away. Now, that doesn't feel like such a big mountain to climb.

Habitat for Humanity has lifted a lot of stress from our lives. We are blessed to have had such a wonderful opportunity and thank everyone for being a part of Habitat. You have all helped to change our lives and we are forever grateful."

Pictured to the right, top to bottom: Brenda at closing; Brenda's family unwrapping the approval announcement at Christmas; Brenda and her mentor, Mona, working on the build site; Brenda's family at the dedication; and Brenda's home.



Contact Denise at our office to learn more about our homeownership program. Call 320-762-4255

17th Annual Hard Hat Events Exceeds the Goal!



Pictured above, left to right: Tony Loosbrock, Habitat Vice Chair/Treasurer and event emcee; Habitat homeowner Brenda Rising and her mentor, Mona Strege; Colleen Boesen, sister of Aging in Place homeowner; Heather Smith-Ahrens, Habitat Director of Operations.

Over 550 people gathered at the Hard Hat Events on Wednesday, May 10, 2023 to celebrate the impact of affordable housing and repairs in Douglas County. Whether attending the Breakfast or Happy Hour, the room was filled with energy, laughter, and networking.

Tony Loosbrock, Habitat Vice Chair/Treasurer and event emcee explained that Habitat homeownership has a lasting impact on every member of the family. Attendees enjoyed a special video message from Habitat Executive Director, Lori Anderson. Heather Smith-Ahrens, Habitat Director of Operations, shared how building a Habitat home is about more than just the structure, "you are building stable neighborhoods and fostering relationships between people, transformation from uncertainty to confidence in the homebuyers, and a world where each family member can find their way to shine."

Homeowner Brenda Rising (see feature on p. 3) captured everyone's hearts through her story and Mona Strege, mentor to Brenda, uplifted the awesome change in confidence she's seen in the entire family. Colleen Boesen, sister of Aging in Place homeowner Sharon Carlson, delighted the audience with her humor and testimonial about how the repair work helped Sharon remain in her home and feel deserving of the work.

From the hearts and homes of our Habitat families - THANK YOU for making the 2023 Hard Hat Events the most successful in our history! Donations are already at work building two new homes in Alexandria. There's still time to make a donation to support your neighbors by visiting hfhdouglascounty.org.

Save the date!

**May 15, 2024
Hard Hat Events**



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)



**Kent & Pam
Carlson**

Window of Opportunity (\$1,000)



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



Pillar of Stability (\$600)



**Terri Bursch,
Bursch Travel**



Build Update



Team Build Home

The first build of the year began April 17. Despite the chilly temps, groups worked quickly to tip up walls, shingle and even side the home. Subcontractors are now working on installing electrical and plumbing in the home while we start the next two homes. We'll return in August to install insulation and sheetrock. Homebuyer Courtney loves the blue siding!



Faith Build Home

Construction on the Faith Build home started May 22. The Faith Build brings many churches and faith partners together to build the home. Homebuyer Anthony is excited to begin creating new memories in his home. Whenever he sees the progress, his smile is catchy!



starts July 10!

Women Build Home

Habitat is excited to build again in Osakis for our 6th Women Build! This home will be the first new construction home Habitat has built in Osakis. Homebuyer Jackie is excited to move back to her home town and be closer to her family. Join us Tuesday, July 18 at 4:30 pm for the Blessing of the Build.

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.



Construction Team Updates

Congratulations to Aaron Johnson, our new Construction Manager! Aaron has been with Habitat since February 2020. In March, Aaron was hired as our Construction Manager. In this role, he will coordinate the construction process of safe, decent, affordable housing. In addition, Aaron provides on-site supervision of vendors, volunteers, and subcontractors as well as oversee the entire construction department.

Habitat welcomed our newest team member in April - Tyler Hauck. Tyler is our new Construction Coordinator. His main focus is the Aging in Place program, overseeing and performing improvements to the safety, accessibility, energy efficiency or other minor repairs on homes. Tyler will conduct home assessments to understand the homeowner's desire to live safely in their home and coordinate all the modification work. Tyler has completed additional training through the National Association of Home Builders to become a Certified Aging in Place Specialist (CAPS). This training gives people skills and knowledge necessary to modify a home to meet the unique needs of the older population, disabled owners, or their visitors. Tyler and his family have lived in Alexandria since 2020. Welcome, Tyler!



**Aaron Johnson,
Construction Manager**



**Tyler Hauck,
Construction Coordinator
& CAPS Specialist**

ReStore Corner



Store Hours

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

Donations

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

**Call 320-759-1989
to schedule
an appointment.**



every family
deserves the opportunity to
build a better life



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

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Let's Picnic!



You're Invited!

Habitat Friends & Family Picnic

June 20, 2023
5:00 - 7:00 pm

City Park
118 City Park Rd,
Alexandria

 **Habitat for Humanity**
of Douglas County, Minnesota

Join us for a fun and festive picnic at City Park including backyard games.

Meet and mingle with the Habitat homebuyers and homeowners, board members, volunteers, supporters and the Habitat team.