

# the **BLUEPRINT**

Winter 2021 Newsletter



**Habitat's first  
home in 1998.**

## 25 years & 120 families served

**From humble beginnings in 1997 to now,  
your support has transformed so many lives.**

**View the historical timeline on p. 4**

## Dear Friends,

Over twenty-five years ago, the initial spark to create a local Habitat for Humanity was ignited. Dave Anderson, Bob Loucks and John Aponte, of Alexandria, held a meeting in the basement of First Lutheran Church, at which two other people attended. Inspired by the need for affordable housing in the community, volunteer engagement increased and the group worked diligently for more than a year to become a recognized 501(c)3 non-profit organization. On January 31, 1997, Habitat for Humanity of Douglas County, Minnesota was established.



**Lori Anderson,**  
**Habitat Executive Director**

Looking back on Habitat Douglas County's twenty-five years, it is inspiring to see how far the organization has come through the hard work of many. Habitat floor plans have been altered and energy efficiency standards have increased. The local Habitat office began as a mail cubby at First Lutheran and is now located in a beautiful building on North Nokomis. The Habitat ReStore launched in 2014 to help fund the mission and now provides a retail niche in the community. The number of families served each year has grown from one, to a current goal of five homeownerships and 25 Aging in Place repairs. The faces of staff, board members, and volunteers have transitioned over time. While many pieces of the organization have transformed, the intangibles have remained steady: the heart of Habitat volunteers, the generosity of donors, the leadership of board of directors and committee members, and the ambition of homeowner families.

Habitat for Humanity is a hand-up. Homeowners who partner with Habitat put in 200 hours alongside volunteers on the construction site, take educational and budgeting courses, as well as pay an affordable mortgage. All Habitat homeowners have one thing in common; they want a better future for themselves and their families.

Habitat Douglas County feels blessed to have served over 100 families in the community. We know that when we build homes, we are also building strength, stability, and independence. We also know that it took thousands of people stepping up to make 25 years possible, and we are humbled by those who give their time and financial gifts generously.

We are excited to continue this 25-year legacy!

*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.

**Our values:** Humility, Courage, Accountability



# Habitat Douglas County Founders Spotlight

As we reflect on 25 years of serving Douglas County, we wanted to hear from two of our founders about their experiences with Habitat. Meet Dave Anderson and Bob Loucks! Dave and Bob, along with John Aponte, started the affiliate in 1997 and have been with Habitat ever since.

## Why did you choose to volunteer with Habitat?

**Dave:** My dad took me to a Habitat build site in Sioux Falls, SD. I thought this was a pretty good idea, so why not have one in Alexandria. I enjoy our mission, the homeowners, the volunteers, the staff, the good things we collect for the ReStore. I look forward to helping with the pick-up crew every Tuesday!

**Bob:** The more I heard about Habitat, the more I thought I should become involved. When I saw the invitation in the church bulletin and with encouragement from my wife, I knew it was time. The first reason I enjoy Habitat is demonstrating the power of prayer. It's really about saying this is not about my work, this is about everyone's work. The second reason is the people. So many people have been and continue to be willing to be part of the program and help. There are so many people who went out of their way to help make it successful.

## What is one highlight from your time volunteering?

**Dave:** Working on the first home, getting the affiliate started, going from our office closet at First Lutheran to now. I enjoy the homeowners and their kids and seeing what the home becomes. I remember opening the ReStore, collecting donations on Tuesday, and the ReStore staff. Traveling to Vietnam for a Habitat build was also a highlight. Habitat and the volunteers are the hands, hearts and feet of God on earth, helping build a community, hope, and aspirations right here in Douglas County! I'm one lucky boy to have been able to be part of this great community mission!

**Bob:** Dedications are always a highlight for me. Seeing everyone come together to reflect and celebrate, the homeowners realize how many people care and it shows in their thankfulness. I have also enjoyed the first day on the build site - you arrive to a blank cement slab and by the end of the day walls are up. A favorite activity of mine is helping people who have no idea how to hold a tool learn a new skill.



**Dave Anderson,**  
Co-founder of Habitat  
Douglas County



**Bob Loucks,**  
Co-founder of Habitat  
Douglas County



**Bob & Dave celebrating Habitat's  
20th anniversary in 2017.**

**Thank you, Dave & Bob, for your vision and passion!**

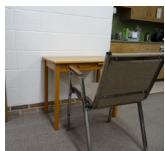
# Celebrating 25 years of building!

Habitat Douglas County has seen many changes and significant growth throughout the past 25 years. From being an all volunteer-led organization in 1997 to the first half-time employee in 2004 to a team of 13 in 2021, our affiliate has been blessed with incredible support from donors, volunteers, and the communities we serve. **Thank you!**

For a more detailed history, please visit our website at [hfhdouglascounty.org/about-us](http://hfhdouglascounty.org/about-us)



Alexandria Technical College carpentry students build the third Habitat home.



A few committed people start meeting and contact Habitat for Humanity International to learn more about the process to establish a local affiliate.

**1996**



Dedication of the first home in Osakis. DECA students from Jefferson High School host an open house.

**1998**



The board hires the first employee, Lori Anderson, to serve as the Executive Director.

**2004**



First Annual Hard Hat Breakfast is held.



Habitat is selected to participate in the Thrivent Builds program. The program increases capacity and expands to building three homes annually.

**2006**

**1997**

**Jan 31:** Habitat formally becomes a 501(c)(3) under the laws of the state of MN with a local board of directors. First Lutheran Church provides space for the first Habitat office.

**2001**

Tastefully Simple donates funds and volunteers to build the fourth home. Walls are constructed in the Tastefully Simple warehouse.

**2005**

Habitat celebrates serving the 10th family at a home dedication.

**#10**

**2007**

Millard Fuller, Founder of Habitat for Humanity International, is the speaker at the Hard Hat Breakfast.



**Nicaragua**

The Board selects Central America (Nicaragua) as our title partner to help support the building of homes internationally.



In 2008, Habitat adopts a 12 day build schedule to optimize scheduling volunteers and increase capacity to build more homes. Additional crew leaders are recruited from the faith community.





In 2012, Habitat purchases current building for office and future ReStore space at 1211 N Nokomis NE. In 2018, Habitat sells the construction warehouse and uses the funds to build a new warehouse, creating the Habitat campus.



Habitat's first all women built house is completed in Alexandria.

**2012**

**#50**

Habitat celebrates serving the 50th family!

**2016**

Since  
1997,  
we've  
served:

**120 families**

**78**  
new or improved  
homes

**42**  
Aging in Place  
projects

and supported 100 international  
families through tithing

## Top 5

Habitat is 5th in the nation based on 5-year construction trends for homeownership and repairs among similar sized affiliates.



Habitat hosts Chamber Wake Up and celebrates new store entrance and parking lot with a ribbon cutting.

**2018**



**January 31:  
Happy 25th  
Anniversary!**

**2022**

**2011**

Seven volunteers from Douglas County travel to Cambodia to participate in an international build.



**2014**

Habitat participates in a Blitz Build, building two homes in one week.



**2017**

The Aging in Place program is launched and the first project is completed.

**May** The ReStore opens and exceeds first year business plan thanks to community support.



**2019**

Sue Wadsworth, first Habitat homeowner to pay off her mortgage celebrates at the annual Hard Hat by shredding her mortgage.



Habitat partners with Alexandria Area High School EMTNR CAPS Class for the first time to help build a home.



**2021**

Habitat celebrates serving the 100th family locally, the 100th family internationally and the 20th Thrivent home.



Habitat pays off its mortgage for office and ReStore building located at 1211 N Nokomis.

## Give Home for the Holidays

We are thrilled to announce a partnership with Alexandria Area High School DECA students, Aisling O'Connor, Izzy Kent and Brynn Kusters, and DOUBLY excited to announce a \$10,000 matching grant received from State Farm Corporate.



The DECA students are working on projects to educate the community about the needs for safe, affordable housing in Douglas County. You are invited to DOUBLE the impact with your gift to Habitat.

Give HOME for the holidays!



from left to right: DECA students  
Aisling O'Connor, Brynn Kusters  
& Izzy Kent



# 3

### easy ways to give home:

- **ONLINE** at [hfhdouglascounty.org](http://hfhdouglascounty.org)
- **TEXT** the word **DOUGLAS** to **26989**
- **MAIL** to 1211 N Nokomis NE, Alexandria, MN 56308

As we close out 2021, allow me to remind you... YOU are key to Habitat's mission and those we serve. Thank you! Because of **you** we are literally closing in on our most ambitious goal of serving 30 families this year. Five families are in the process of becoming or have become homeowners. 25 adults 65+ partnered with Habitat through our Aging in Place program so they can live longer in their home where they wish to be.



Although we have much to celebrate, there is much work to do. Now more than ever we see the need for affordable housing in Douglas County. One in four families spends more than 30% of their monthly income on housing, leaving little left to pay for food, clothing, or healthcare... which would you choose?

Contact Mary at 320-762-4255 or [mary@hfhdouglascounty.org](mailto:mary@hfhdouglascounty.org) with questions

## Meet our new team members!

Habitat is pleased to introduce our two newest team members, who both joined the team in November. **Welcome Kelli & Rita!**

### Meet Kelli

Kelli is the new Director of Operations for the Habitat team. She is responsible for implementing the strategic plan and managing the day-to-day business operations of the affiliate. She will manage and support the construction, homeowner services, volunteer coordination, and ReStore efforts. Kelli grew up in Alexandria and moved back to the area after college. She lives in Alexandria with her husband Grant and 15-month-old son, Pierce. She is excited to be continuing her career working in affordable housing and truly believes that homeownership is the foundation for success.



**Kelli Minnerath**  
Director of Operations



**Rita Strickler**  
Program Support  
Specialist

### Meet Rita

Rita Strickler joined the Habitat team as the new Program Support Specialist. She will work alongside the Habitat team providing a variety of support services including bookkeeping, database management, report preparation, record maintenance and office operations. Rita and her husband, Rob, recently moved from Illinois to Alexandria to be closer to family. They have four children, three of whom live in Alexandria, and four grandchildren. For the past 18 years, Rita has worked in the public school system in Peru, Illinois as a paraprofessional in developmental preschool, an administrative assistant in the middle school, and administrative assistant to the superintendent. She is excited to join the Habitat team and be a part of the Alexandria community!

## ReStore Corner

Thanks to our generous donors and shoppers, last fiscal year, our ReStore saved 215 tons from the landfill through



**2,725**  
donations



**503**  
pick-ups



**10,378**  
sales  
transactions

### ReStore Hours:

Wednesday - Saturday  
9 am to 5 pm

### Donations:

Call 320-759-1989  
to schedule.

and **raised \$134,000 to support Habitat's mission** of affordable housing in Douglas County. Thank you!





## every family

deserves the opportunity to  
build a brighter future

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

.....

## every gift makes a lasting impact



## leave your legacy

help us bring hope to future  
generations of families in need

### **Your legacy gift provides:**

- **A foundation** of love and safety
- **Stewardship** by serving others
- **Optimism** through empowering hope and possibility
- **Relationships** by building community through meaningful partnerships

**Call Mary at 320-762-4255 to learn  
more about legacy gifts.**