



the Blueprint

Fall 2026 Newsletter



Together,
we build
the future.

Pictured: Summer Meadows
neighborhood (August 2026)

Happy Fall!

What a busy and rewarding summer it has been at Habitat! Summer Meadows is truly taking shape as homes are completed, and families close on their mortgages and move into their new homes. At the ReStore, donations continue to pour in, as well as a constant stream of shoppers. The need for Aging in Place projects remains strong, as more homeowners seek modifications that allow them to live safely and independently in their homes. Across every program, we are witnessing firsthand the incredible impact of a community coming together to help its neighbors thrive.



Christine Reilly,
Executive Director

At Habitat, we are blessed with an incredible community of volunteers. I am continually inspired by the individuals who generously give their time and talents to our mission. Day after day, they demonstrate that together, we can build a stronger community. To everyone who has volunteered with Habitat - thank you! Your dedication makes our work possible, and your impact reaches far beyond the job site.

Our work to help more people achieve affordable homeownership is far from over. Across the U.S., the housing crisis is a well-known challenge, and Douglas County is no exception: **one in four households is paying more than it can afford for housing. As the cost of housing continues to rise faster than wages, the barriers to buying a home are growing for families in our community.** The impact reaches beyond monthly budgets, affecting people's health, education, and long-term financial stability.



This year at our annual Hard Hat event, we heard from Habitat homeowners Matt and Chelsey. "We closed on our home about a year and a half ago," the family shared. They'd been living in their third apartment in the area, newer, safe, but never quite theirs. A newborn son, a shared laundry room, thin walls. "While we made it work, we still knew that we wanted a home to continue growing and raise our family in."



Here's what made their story land so hard with the room: they had done everything right. "Despite being debt-free and doing what we could to save for a down payment, finding affordable move-in ready housing in this area was still difficult to do with the budget that we had..." Two working parents, no debt, steady jobs yet they still could not find a decent home to purchase.

The barrier isn't effort. It's the market.

Families across our community are doing exactly what Matt and

Through your support, since 1997, we've served:

245
families

99 new or
improved
homes

146 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.

Chelsey did, paying down debt, saving carefully, working hard, and still finding the math doesn't work. That's not a personal failing, that's a housing market that hasn't kept pace with the people trying to build a life in it.

Across the country, the "starter home" that once gave working families their first foothold toward stability is quietly disappearing. Rising prices, limited supply, and a market built for someone else's budget are putting that first step further out of reach every year — including right here in Douglas County.

The current reality in Douglas County, MN:



(National Association
of Realtors, Q4 2025)



(Alexandria Area
Economic Development
Commission)

Scenario:

\$336,855 = sales price

\$16,842 = 5% down payment

6.61% = current interest rate for 30-year fixed-rate loan

\$2,151 = monthly principal payment

\$383 = monthly taxes and insurance payment

\$2,534 = monthly mortgage payment

Did you know? Industry-wide, a mortgage payment is considered affordable if it takes 30% or less of your gross monthly income.

To afford this monthly mortgage payment, your estimated annual income would need to be around \$101,500.

Today, the average first-time homebuyer in the U.S. is 40 years old, and purchasing a home at the area median price typically requires an annual income of more than \$100,000. **Habitat is here to help.** Through affordable mortgages and down payment assistance programs, we help individuals and families take the life-changing step of buying their first home.



Now in their home for nearly two years, Matt and Chelsey share, "With our payments going towards building equity instead of just a month of rent, and having the safety of our own home to raise our family in, we are truly thankful for the blessing that Habitat has been to our family. We want to thank the Habitat team, crew, volunteers, and donors like you for opening the door to the opportunity and reality of homeownership for families like ours."

At Habitat, we see every day how a safe, affordable home can transform lives. It creates a foundation for children to succeed in school, for families to build financial stability, and for neighbors to invest in their community. **Together, we are building a better community - one home, one family, and one neighborhood at a time.**

With an abundance of gratitude and hope for the future,

Christine Reilly

Christine Reilly,
Executive Director



Build Updates



House 1
Construction on house 1 began mid-April. The homebuyer is working through the loan closing process, hoping to move in this fall.



House 2
Work began on house 2 in May. Interior finishes just wrapped up. The next step for this home is to begin the loan closing process.



House 3
Building efforts began early July for house 3. Drywalling just wrapped up. The next step is to begin installing cabinets, floors, and trim.



House 4
Volunteers started work on house 4 early August. Siding is almost finished. The next step is interior work by the contractors for electrical, plumbing, and drywalling.



House 5
Beginning mid-September, volunteers will start building house 5. Work will continue on this home throughout the winter.



House 6
Students from Alexandria College's Carpentry program will build house 6. Known as the Legends Build, students will spend their class-time on-site throughout the school year.



Congratulations to our newest homeowner, Ashley!



Congratulations to our newest homeowner, Raven!



Congratulations to our newest homeowner, Gigi!

Aging in Place program exceeds goals!

A shower with no way to step in safely, steps that create a high-risk for falling — these are the everyday realities so many older adults face, exactly what our Aging in Place program is built to solve. Last year, we set out to complete 25 projects yet completed 30 projects, installing walk-in showers, grab bars, ramps, and stair rails so people can move through their homes safely and with confidence. Each modification means more than convenience, it means independence, dignity, and the ability to stay in the home they love. Independence starts with a home that works for you at every stage of life, and as more of our neighbors reach retirement age, the need keeps growing.

To learn more about homeownership or Aging in Place, contact Heather at 320-762-4255 or heather@hfhdouglascounty.org



Volunteers are Habitat Heroes!

As we turn the corner into our new fiscal year, we pause to celebrate the hundreds of volunteers who drive our work forward. From showing up with hammers in hand on the build sites, to the muscles behind ReStore donation pick-ups, to the many hours of time shared to support all of our programs, every volunteer hour builds more than a home, it builds community.

Below, we highlight a few volunteers whose hours stood out this year in construction, the ReStore, and program support. Every hour shared by every volunteer matters. Together, we build the future.



"For a community to be whole and healthy, it must be based on people's love and concern for each other." - Millard Fuller, Founder of Habitat for Humanity



Top Construction Volunteers

- * Randy Resley, 507 hours
- * Les Kuehl, 478 hours
- * Eric Stenborg, 443 hours
- * Dennis Jones, 352 hours
- * Phil Colwell, 345 hours



Top ReStore Volunteers

- * Amy Allen-Opp, 266 hours
- * Bob Timm, 185 hours
- * Brian Berg, 182 hours
- * Bob Dokken, 180 hours
- * Ron Gallus, 176 hours



Top Program Support Volunteers

- * Rick Sansted, 144 hours
- * Donna Thoennes, 131 hours
- * Elaine Larson, 121 hours
- * Jeff Hohn, 108 hours
- * Kelly Uhlenkamp, 106 hours

Welcome New Board Member!

Kristen Berg, Controller at Douglas Machine, joined the Board of Directors in July; she will serve as Treasurer. "Kristen's financial knowledge and servant leadership will help us plan ahead and use our resources well," said Christine Reilly, Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity of Douglas County. "We are grateful she is willing to share her time and expertise with our organization." As Controller at Douglas Machine, Berg brings experience in financial management, operations and strategic planning, skills that will strengthen Habitat's work to build and repair more homes with income-qualified individuals and families in Douglas County. "I'm excited to join Habitat's Board and support work that has a direct impact in Douglas County," Berg said. "I look forward to learning from the board and staff and contributing to advance Habitat's efforts to build homes, communities, and hope."



Kristen Berg
Board Treasurer

Habitat's Board of Directors provides governance and support for the organization's local housing work. Current board directors include Jeff Hohn (Chair), Bobbi Sellnow (Vice Chair), Kristen Berg (Treasurer), Whitney Anderson (Secretary), Rick Sansted (Past Chair), Jerry Hansen, Jenna Hill, Kris Klemenhagen, Tim Madson, Josh Tatge, Angie Urman and Janelle Wunderlich.

Thank you to our generous sponsors!

Listed below and on the next page, you'll find the full list of our 2025-2026 sponsors — the area businesses and organizations who generously powered Habitat's work. Together, these sponsors helped us build safe, affordable homes and fueled our Aging in Place projects. None of what we do could happen without local partnership, and we're deeply grateful for every business that stepped up this season.

Every single one said yes to Habitat this season — and now it's our turn to say yes to them. Shop there. Eat there. Bank there. Hire them. When you support these organizations, you're helping the people Habitat serves. And if your business isn't on that list, consider this your invitation: our upcoming season is the perfect time to get involved as a sponsor. Your support makes a real difference. Every door we open starts with someone like you saying yes first. It takes a whole community to open one door and we want you to join us!

With gratitude,
Sara Robinson, Director of Development

Hard Hat Event Sponsors

\$10,000 presenting sponsors:
Alomere Health, Geneva Capital LLC

\$5,000 sponsors:
Douglas Machine, First Western Bank

\$2,500 sponsors:
Massman Companies, Nodland Construction, Old National Bank, Vivie

\$1,500 sponsors:
Carlos Lions Club, Christensen Group, Hilltop Lumber, Vantage Bank

\$1,000 sponsors:
Ameriprise Financial Services, Bell Bank, Forada Lions Club, Gate City Bank, Glenwood State Bank, Henry's Foods, Innovative Builders, Kensington Bank, Mid Minnesota Federal Credit Union, Snyder Thornburg Wealth Management, Tradesmen Construction, Viking Bank, Viking Garage Door, Widseth, Zimny Insurance

Event In-Kind Donors:
Brandon & Abby Johnson Photography, Broadway Ballroom, Colorful Edge Photography, Colorful Seasons, Livewire Entertainment

Save the date!
**Hard Hat
Fundraiser Events**



May 5, 2027



Photo credit:
Colorful Edge
Photography



Workplace Build Sponsors

\$10,000 sponsors:

Aagard, American Solutions for Business

Volunteer Support Sponsors

Christensen Group, Coldwell Banker/Crown Realtors, Douglas Machine, Massman Companies, Reach Church

Faith and Team Build Sponsors

Aagard, Alexandria Industries, Alomere Health, American Solutions for Business, Amy Christopherson State Farm Insurance Agency, Bethany on the Lake, Calvary Church-Alexandria, Curtis Food Recruiters, Diamond Buick Companies, Douglas Machine Foundation, eClub Global Travel Rotarians, Faith Lutheran Church-Evansville, First Lutheran Church-Alexandria, Grace Lutheran Church-Brandon, Greater Alexandria Area Association of REALTORS®, Hubbard Broadcasting-KIKV/KULO, Immaculate Conception Church-Osakis, Massman Companies, Newcomers Club, Pemberton Law, St. Nicholas Church-Belle River, Salem Sauk Valley Lutheran Church, Shalom Lutheran Church-Alexandria, The Church of St. Mary-Alexandria, We Are Family

In-Kind Donors

Advantage Home Pros, Alex Glass & Glazing, Arnquist Flooring, Bitzan Ohren Masonry, Carpet One Floor & Home, Central Minnesota Radon, CM Woodworks, Colorful Seasons, Cullen's Home Center, Custom Comfort Plumbing & Heating, Dakota Supply Group, Echo Press, ExCel Plumbing/Infloor Heating, Hilltop Lumber, Hubbard Radio-KIKV/KULO, Integrity Title, JM Drywall, JP Drywall, Klimek Brothers Well Drilling, Leighton Broadcasting-KXRA, Nyberg Surveying, Paz Excavating, Pemberton Law, R&M Home Performance Contracting, Roth Roofing, Shawn Becker Electric, Sherwin Williams, Simonson Lumber, Stoeckel Jahner Surveying, Strickler Builders, Tanner's Mowing & More, The Title Team, Viking Garage Door, Winning Edge, Winsupply



ReStore Corner

The ReStore is open to the public!

Thank you to everyone who joined us for the ReCreations Design Challenge & Ice Cream Social on August 6! The event brought together makers, families, and neighbors who care about this community.



From delicious ice cream from Up North Creamery to make & take activities teaching recycling from Pope/Douglas Solid Waste Management to fun yard games by CM Woodworks, the afternoon was filled with celebration and fun. We've already had people sharing their ReCreation plans for next year!

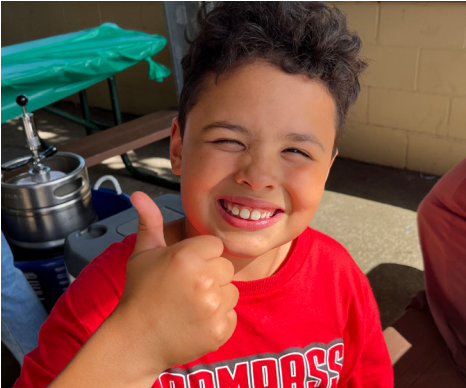
Congratulations to our prize winners

- Most Creative went to McCarten Design for the adorable green children's kitchen
- Most Functional went to Rick W for the handy kitchen island



Store hours: 9 am to 5 pm, Wed - Sat

Donations: Call 320-759-1989



Let's open the door
to a brighter future!



Are you ready to make your impact go further before the end of the year?

Your generosity matters. Some of the most powerful gifts are non-cash methods. Consider these powerful ways to support affordable housing and see savings on next year's tax return:

- * Donor advised funds
- * Stock contributions
- * IRA gifts (for those 70.5 or older)



FREEWILL 

Learn more at hfhdouglascounty.mygiftlegacy.org