

the **BLUEPRINT**

Fall 2022 Newsletter



**every
one**

**wants to age
safely in their
homes**

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Dear Friends,

This year we celebrate our 25th anniversary of building homes, community, and hope in Douglas County. The lives of hundreds of individuals have been transformed as a result of having a decent and affordable place to call home.

Through a collaborative effort, Habitat Douglas County works toward increasing the affordable housing stock in our community. We are grateful for the thousands of volunteers, donors, and community partners who have stepped up to support our community and mission.

Volunteers are the heart of Habitat Douglas County. It was a joy to see so many of you at our ice cream social.



Lori Anderson,
Habitat Executive Director



When I reflect on our 25th anniversary, the word gratitude comes to mind. Best selling author, researcher, and professor, Brené Brown, writes about gratitude in her recent book, *Atlas of the Heart*. "Gratitude is an emotion that reflects our deep appreciation for what we value, what brings meaning to our lives, and what makes us feel connected to ourselves and others."

I see signs of gratitude every day in the faces of our volunteers, as their cup is filled by volunteering. I see joy in the faces of our homebuyers as they see the progress of their home.

As we transition between seasons, may your days be filled with gratitude, joy, and all good things.

With gratitude,

Lori Anderson



Since 1997,
we've served:
135
families

80
new or
improved
homes

55
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.

What Does it Take to Build a Habitat Home?

Have you ever wondered what it takes to build a Habitat home? Along with some information from Habitat for Humanity International, here are a few fun facts.



The average home we build is a three-bedroom, one-bath home that is about 1,200 square feet. When selecting lots, we work to ensure the home style will fit appropriately within the neighborhood and follow any neighborhood covenants for roof pitch, driveways or other items. Depending on the size of the family, we have also built four-bedroom, two-bath homes.



Each house uses around 150 pounds of nails, 400 two-by-fours, 7-9 windows, 8-10 interior and exterior doors, and 4,500 pounds of shingles. Building the home are homeowners working 200 sweat equity hours alongside the 200 volunteers who share 1,500 volunteer hours per house. That's a lot of love (and sweat)!



We are grateful for the amazing national partners who work with Habitat affiliates throughout the country providing key materials, including Cree, Dow, GAF, Levelor, Owens Corning, Schneider Electric, Sherwin Williams, Square D, Valspar, Whirlpool and Yale.

We are also grateful to the generous local partners for their in-kind donations which help families in Douglas County secure safe and affordable housing, including: Advanced Irrigation & Hydroseeding, Advantage Seamless Gutters, Alex Glass & Glazing, Alex Rubbish & Recycling, Arnquist Flooring, Bitzan Ohren Masonry, Carpet One, Colorful Seasons, Custom Comfort Plumbing & Heating, Dakota Supply Group, Excel Plumbing & Infloor Heating, Hilltop Lumber, Jim's Electric, Paz Excavating, Plowman Drywall, Simonson Lumber, Stoeckel Jahner Land Surveying, Alexandria Title Company, Klimek Brothers Well Drilling, Larry Steidl Tree Service, and Viking Garage Door.

Habitat Douglas County loves working with businesses who want to donate building materials for home construction or overstock items for resale at our ReStore. Please contact us if you would like to schedule a donation at 320-759-1989.

Check out the progress on our 2022 homes!



New flooring looks great!



A fresh coat of paint looks amazing!



Getting ready to break ground on the next home.

Aging in Place Program Celebrates 5 Years!



In September 2017, Habitat for Humanity of Douglas County launched the Aging in Place (AIP) program to address the need for affordable repairs for seniors in our area. Five years later, the program has served 55 homeowners (and counting)!

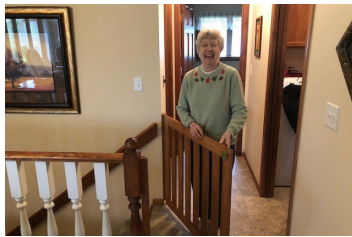
The goal of the Aging in Place program is to provide products and services that foster safe and livable homes and communities, ultimately helping people of all ages build strength, stability, and self-reliance. "We are thrilled to provide this service to older homeowners," comments Lori Anderson, Executive Director. "Being able to preserve the independence of homeowners while increasing their safety improves their confidence and pride."

The program focuses on making improvements to the safety, accessibility, or other minor repairs in homes. Example projects include installing handrails, ramps, comfort height toilets, lever door handles, and stair gates. Many projects focus on improving the safety of bathrooms by adding sliding shower seats, fitting tub cut-outs to make entry easier, and installing grab bars.

A look back at our work:



The first project, installing handrails to allow safe entrance to a house



Adding a stair gate to prevent falling



Building a ramp for accessible entry to the home



Placing grab bars, a handheld shower head and a sliding shower seat in the bathroom

Housing Plus, a new program addition

Habitat has a partnership with a local Occupational Therapist to provide a free functional assessment for each Aging in Place homeowner. This assessment is used to understand how individuals complete daily living activities, evaluate risks, and recommend modifications to help them remain in their home.

Aging in Place homeowners have shared:

"The grab bars make moving around so much easier and safer. Now I can live independently, without fear of falling, and focus on my health."

- Dennis

"My husband can be more independent. He can use the ramp to get outside without my help. He now gets more exercise with less worry about falling."

- 2018 AIP homeowner

"I recently had knee replacement. The raised toilet and walk-in shower are a huge help to me."

- 2020 AIP homeowner

Who is eligible?

Aging in Place homeowners meet the following criteria:

- have a need for repairs
- be income qualified
- own and live in the home full-time
- have current homeowners insurance
- either reside or work in Douglas County for at least one year.

Home is Independence

Sharon learned about the Aging in Place (AIP) program from her sister and brother who were encouraging her to replace her main floor tub with a more safe, accessible shower. A short time after she picked up an application, Sharon ended up falling and breaking both wrists. The fall helped her realize how important the work really was to allow her to remain in her home and care for herself.

Part of the application process includes a free home assessment from a Certified Aging in Place Specialist. After reviewing the suggestions from the assessment with the Habitat team, Sharon chose to have a gate installed at the top of her steps to prevent falling, added handrails to the steps going downstairs for stability, replaced her bathtub to a walk-in shower on the main level for easier access, installed a new front exterior door and a storm door to help block the wind, installed new numbers on the exterior of her house for easier identification of emergency services and updated her smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.



**Pictured above:
Sharon**



Nearly a year later, Sharon is still pleased with the work and improvements. "The excellent work will help me stay in my home longer. The gate and handrails to the basement prevent me from falling. Having a shower on the main floor is wonderful. The two doors have made my house warmer, especially when it's windy. I feel so lucky to have gotten this done. Aaron and Denise were so pleasant to work with. You made me feel like I deserved this! I appreciate this more than you know." Sharon loves being in her home of 28 years, especially the pride she has in knowing it is hers. "Even when I can't go downstairs anymore, I can do everything on my first floor. The work has made such a difference."



Though many of the projects seemed simple -- new numbers on her front door, replacing smoke detectors, or installing a handrail -- Sharon would not have been able to complete any of the work without the AIP program.

Repayment for Aging in Place projects is based on income, ranging anywhere from paying 50-100% of the total project cost. The maximum cost of a project is \$7,500; homeowners can have up to three years to repay for the work. "The financial help from the program is unbelievable. I would never have been able to have all this work done if it were not for the AIP program."



For Sharon, home is her independence. "I love my home. I enjoy sitting on the deck, having my family here, and being able to stay here. Life is great when you can do that!"

To learn more about the Aging in Place program, contact Denise at 320-762-4255 or visit our website at hfdouglascounty.org

DECA Student Community Giving Project

Three Alexandria Area High School DECA Students have chosen to partner with Habitat for their Community Giving Project. This marks the third consecutive year we've been privileged to work with the program. Students will headline our annual "Give Home for the Holidays" campaign, working on a matching campaign of \$10,000 to increase monthly giving.

DECA is a student led organization at Alexandria Area High School. Focused primarily on business, participating in DECA helps prepare students for future jobs and careers.

Building on momentum generated by prior projects, this year's group has exciting new ideas to implement. Their first project goal is to increase awareness of DECA and Habitat for Humanity by having a float in the Alexandria High School Homecoming parade.



Pictured above:
Lori Anderson, Ben Swedberg, Jaelyn Miller and Kylie Lattimer

Postcards handed out at the parade to educate people about DECA and Habitat.



What does your donation do?

Your donation can help a family...

- build long-term financial security
- provide a stable place to live
- increase confidence

make an impact. donate today.

1. Scan QR code
2. Select amount
3. Choose "Give Home for the Holidays"
4. Click donate!

Help us kick off the "Give Home for the Holidays" campaign!

What are we giving to?

The "Give Home for the Holidays" campaign raises money to build an affordable home for a family in need in Douglas County.

Why?

One in four families in Douglas County are paying more than they can afford for housing. It is our mission to provide people with affordable housing and a sense of stability and community.

Learn about us.

Scan the QR code to learn more about our campaign.



Ben, Jaelyn and Kylie (pictured above) chose to work with Habitat for Humanity of Douglas County because they believe "the impact of Habitat for Humanity in the Alexandria area has been immeasurable. They have built homes for families in need, supported and helped people to purchase affordable housing, and have helped people achieve long-term financial stability."

In addition to participating in the Homecoming Parade, students are also planning a Community Soup Supper to be held later this year. Watch for more details!

You can be confident when donating to Habitat for Humanity of Douglas County because we have met the standards of the Charities Review Council due to our responsible financial management.

HFH of Douglas County, Minnesota, Inc. is a 501(c)3 organization. Your donation is tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.



Make a BIG impact with a monthly gift

As we continue to celebrate 25 years of building a community where everyone has a decent place to call home, we are genuinely touched by our supporters who believe deeply enough in our mission to give on a regular basis.

Home has never been more important. However, homeownership has never felt farther out of reach for our working-class neighbors. When you become a monthly donor, you join a special group of people dedicated to providing a hand-up to families who need safe, affordable housing.



Monthly donations make it easier for Habitat to plan long-term, budget more efficiently and create more life-changing outcomes. These recurring contributions mean that our work continues, and more members of our community can attain a safe, affordable place to call home.

Why donate monthly?



Tailored to you

With small payments spread out month to month, it fits any budget. Even small amounts can make a big impact!



Hassle-free

Your donation occurs automatically each month. You can change the amount or cancel at any time.



Immediate impact, all year long

Monthly donors make a difference every day with reliable, ongoing donations.

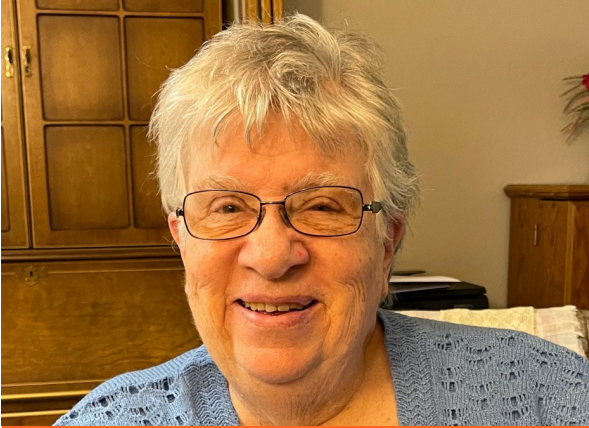
Easy as 1-2-3!

1. Visit our website at hfhdouglascounty.org and click DONATE
2. Choose your amount
3. Follow the prompts

By budgeting a monthly gift, no matter the size, you can have a BIG impact on the life of a family for generations to come. Homeowner Jenna shared, *"I feel fulfilled, cared-for, and nurtured. I had so much community support. Thank you to everyone for their time, efforts, and financial support to help provide a home for a family like mine."*

You're not limited to participating in just the monthly giving program - you can make a special gift at any time.

To learn more about monthly giving, contact Lori at 320-762-4255 or visit our website at hfhdouglascounty.org



every person

deserves to live in the comfort
of their home



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



Shop local, help local

**Empower local families to
build a place to call home.**

Store Hours:

**Wednesday - Saturday
9 am - 5 pm**

Donation Hours:

**Monday - Saturday
10 am - 4 pm**

**Call 320-759-1989
to schedule a donation.**