

the **BLUEPRINT**

Winter 2024 Newsletter



**every
person**
deserves a stable
place to live

p.3 - Devan's dream come true

Dear Friends,

As the holiday season approaches and the spirit of giving fills the air, I want to express my deepest gratitude to each and every one of you for your incredible support of Habitat for Humanity of Douglas County. **Your contributions, big and small, are making a tangible difference in the lives of families in our community.**

This past summer, we celebrated a monumental milestone: the groundbreaking of the Summer Meadows development. This project, the first major affordable housing initiative in Alexandria since 2002, is poised to transform our city by providing 42 brand-new, single-family homes at affordable prices.

The impact of Summer Meadows extends far beyond the number of homes being built. It is a testament to the power of collaboration. During the groundbreaking, Mayor Bobbie Osterberg (pictured right) shared,

“The Summer Meadows development is what cities across Minnesota dream about and pray will happen in their community. This undertaking is truly unique in the United States. The Douglas County Habitat for Humanity development will provide single-family homes that are truly affordable and at a quantity that will make a difference. As important are the partnerships that were established between individuals, businesses, non-profits, and governmental agencies to make it happen. It’s happening here, in Alexandria. Truly a dream come true.”

Summer Meadows represents the culmination of countless hours of planning, fundraising, and unwavering dedication from our volunteers, board members, staff, and most importantly, our incredible donors like you.

This season of giving, as you reflect on the blessings in your own lives, I invite you to consider the dream of homeownership for families in need. **A donation to Habitat is an investment in our community’s future.** At Habitat, we believe in new beginnings. We believe that stable homeownership provides a new chapter that so many families need to improve stability, plant roots, and build savings for families to thrive for generations to come.

Your support – in the form of a financial contribution, volunteering your time, or simply spreading the word about our mission – truly makes a difference. **Together, we are building dreams, one home at a time.**

With gratitude, *Lori Anderson*



**Lori Anderson,
Executive Director**



**Mayor Bobbie Osterberg
at the Summer Meadows
groundbreaking**



**Infrastructure work is complete.
Construction on the first home
in Summer Meadows will begin
next Spring!**

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

184
families

89 new or
improved
homes

95 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.

A Homeowner's Dream Fulfilled



Devan and her mortgage-free home!

Within a span of three days in early 2000, Devan went from despair to hope when she was evicted, got a new job, and learned she was approved into the Habitat for Humanity homeownership program. As a single mom raising four kids, Devan knew her options to find affordable housing were limited. That November, Devan took the monumental step toward securing a stable home for her family when she purchased her affordable home from Habitat for Humanity of Douglas County. Devan enjoyed the process of building her home. She learned to install windows and stain while meeting lots of people, which she enjoyed. "They still say hi and ask how I'm doing when I see them in the community." Throughout the past 24 years, Devan's home has been a sanctuary for her entire family. "Having a home means a lot. It's a safe place to go and come back to," something Devan did not experience during her childhood. Because she moved around a lot when growing up, Devan opened her home to over 200 kids who needed a stable place to go. "They always knew they were safe there. They even called me 'Mama D,' and still do today!"

This fall, Devan made the final payment on her mortgage and celebrated a new sense of security: complete homeownership. "This is awesome! My parents were never able to do this," exclaimed Devan. To honor her accomplishment, Devan shredded her mortgage with two of her daughters Kristy and Kara (pictured right), Habitat for Humanity of Douglas County co-founders Bob Loucks and Dave Anderson, Habitat Board Directors Bobbi Jo Sellnow and Tim Madson, and the Habitat team. Confetti was thrown and cake was shared as Devan whooped with delight. "I love my house! I've been there 24 years; I think I'll stay awhile."

For Devan, paying off her mortgage represents years of hard work, dedication, and now, financial freedom. As we celebrate Devan's incredible achievement, we are reminded of the impact that stable, affordable housing has on individuals and families in our county allowing them to build lasting foundations and generational wealth. Devan's story is one of resilience, determination, and hope—a testament to the life-changing potential of homeownership. We are thrilled to have been part of her journey and look forward to supporting more homeowners in achieving the dream of mortgage-free living. Congratulations, Devan!



Far left: Devan's home in 2000.

Right (left to right): Bobbi Jo Sellnow, Bob Loucks, Dave Anderson, Devan, Lori Anderson, and Tim Madson

Enhancing Safety and Independence through Aging in Place



Linda with her new tub cut-out.

Our Aging in Place program is designed to create an environment of self-sufficiency for income-qualified older adults through improvements that prioritize safety and accessibility. Each modification is tailored to the individual homeowner's needs, ensuring their home continues to serve them well as they age.

Through upgrades such as walk-in showers, tub cut-outs, grab bars, stair gates, and ramps, we help homeowners adapt their homes to meet their evolving needs. Improvements are often simple yet transformative; for example, adding weather stripping can reduce energy costs, while updated door handles and grab bars provide essential support in daily activities.

The Aging in Place program also delivers something beyond practical benefits: confidence, dignity, and peace of mind. With increased safety and comfort, older adults experience a renewed sense of independence and can continue to enjoy their routines without fear.

Linda contacted Habitat about our Aging in Place program because she was concerned about the safety in her home. Navigating the stairs to access her basement laundry was becoming increasingly difficult, as was having to step over the tub to get into her shower.

As part of the home assessment, the Habitat team along with an Occupational Therapist visit with the homeowner to determine what projects may be helpful. After reviewing an estimate of costs, homeowners decide which items to complete.

Linda decided to add a railing on the steps going into her basement, repurpose a hallway closet into a laundry station utilizing a stackable washer and dryer, and determined a tub cut-out would ease her transition into the shower.



The hallway closet was repurposed to a main floor laundry.

Big thanks to you both for the work and time you spent making sure my home was safer to spend the rest of my time in. Do many things are more convenient and safer. Linda

Now, Linda feels safer using the stairs and bathing. Doing laundry is easier, too. "It was a great experience and now I feel safer in my own home." She wrote a note to thank the team for the work on her home (see left). "I hope more older people can have that feeling. Thank you all!"

Am I eligible?



- * Age 62+ or have a medical disability
- * Income qualified
- * Live in home full-time in Douglas County, MN
- * Have current insurance on home

Questions about the Aging in Place program?
Please call or email Denise: 320-762-4255 or denise@hfhdouglascounty.org

DECA Students Lead the Way: A New Era of Community Giving

For the fifth consecutive year, Habitat for Humanity of Douglas County is proud to partner with the Alexandria Area High School DECA chapter. This year's team, comprised of dedicated students Autumn Pazdernik, Sawyer Larson, and Auden Zeller, has taken on an ambitious project titled "Community Giving."

The DECA students are spearheading a movement to revitalize community involvement and support for affordable housing. By promoting the Minnesota State Housing Tax Credit Contribution Program (SHTC), they are empowering individuals and businesses to make a significant impact. This innovative program allows taxpayers to convert their tax liability into a tax credit, directly benefiting local housing initiatives. This program is in the second year of its six-year plan. While contributions for 2024 ended on December 6, 2024, the program will re-open in 2025. Watch for more information to capitalize on this benefit.

Our DECA students didn't just stop at promoting the SHTC program. They immersed themselves in the world of philanthropy, attending the Central Minnesota Planned Giving Council and appearing on our local radio show – KXRA's Open Line and creating a radio ad to run on KIKV FM. These experiences provided them with invaluable insights into effective fundraising strategies and storytelling techniques.

Beyond the classroom, our DECA students rolled up their sleeves and got involved in hands-on community service. They volunteered at the ReStore and helped a Habitat homebuyer with landscaping. These experiences allowed them to truly understand the impact of Habitat's work and connect with the people they serve.

By supporting Habitat for Humanity of Douglas County, you can help create a brighter future for our community and support the successful campaign run by the DECA students to bring awareness of this six-year initiative. Their dedication and creativity serve as an inspiration for future generations of young philanthropists.



Above, left to right: Auden Zeller, Sawyer Larson, and Autumn Pazdernik



Above, left to right: Autumn, Auden, Sawyer, Lori Anderson, and Chad Silbernack on KXRA's Open Line promoting the State Housing Tax Credit Program



Students helping pick-up donations for the ReStore (above, right) and adding landscaping at a home in Miltona (right)

Questions?
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To learn more about the Minnesota State Housing Tax Credit Contribution Program, visit <https://mnhousing.gov/shtc-contribution.html> or contact Lori Anderson at 320-762-4255

Let's continue to support the incredible work of these young leaders and build a stronger, more equitable community together.

Questions about donating to Habitat? Please call or email Lori: 320-762-4255 or lori@hfhdouglascounty.org

Build Updates



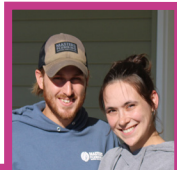
Team Build Home

Angel will close on her home just in time to celebrate the holidays together. Her whole family is eager to wake up in their new home for Christmas filling the season with joy!



Faith Build Home

November was a month full of joy for Matt and Chelsey's family as we celebrated the dedication and they closed on the home! Their holidays will be full of cherished memories and treasured traditions.



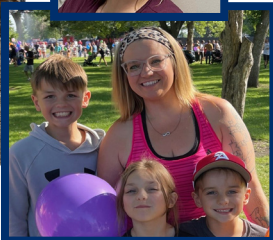
Women Build Home

All work is complete. Brady and Tara's girls are excited to move into their home just in time for Christmas. When driving by the home, the girls often say, "my home is awesome!"



Cardinal Build Home

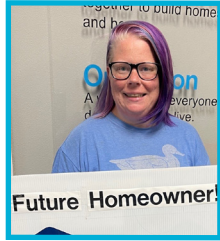
Exterior work on the home is almost complete. Interior finishes - including flooring, cabinets, trim, appliances, and accessories will be finished throughout the winter. Jayde and her family look forward to the spring when they can move in.



Legends Build Home

Exterior work is well underway on Codie's home. Students from the carpentry program at Alexandria College are building the home as part of their classes. Work will continue throughout the winter and their entire academic year. Codie's family eagerly awaits getting settled in their new home next spring.

Meet the first two homebuyers of 2025!



Kayla's Family

Kayla and her son enjoy being together, playing outside, drawing and painting, playing games, and reading. Currently, she lives in a neighborhood that has been known as the "bad part of town" and wants to have a safe space for her family as well as a place of her own. "I am going to love hosting and having friends come over when I want." For Kayla, "the most exciting part of owning my own home is not wasting money on paying rent and that I can put that money into my own equity and home for the future."



Both Kayla and Brittany's homes will be the first built in the Summer Meadows development!

Brittany's Family

Brittany and her family have been looking for a home for over a year, yet "nothing was even [affordably] close for a single mom with three kids on a budget. I felt like I wasn't able to provide anything more than a small apartment for them." Brittany and her three kids "cannot wait just to have grass under our feet, eat popsicles outside in the summer, and have a family game night in the living room! The thought of having a house soon brings so much more peace in our lives knowing we will now have a permanent foundation and a place to call home. The weight will be lifted off of our shoulders, as we now will have OUR own place. We are all very blessed and will continue to give back to this amazing community as it has helped us so much already."

ReStore Corner

We're excited to announce new discounts at our ReStore to help you save even more while supporting affordable housing! Stop by to discover great deals on furniture, appliances, and more—every purchase makes a difference in our community. All discounts will be taken at the register.

10% OFF
Active Military and Veterans
(with valid ID)
Every day

10% OFF
Senior Discount for ages 62+
(with valid ID)
Thursdays

+ Watch for new color tag discounts!

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



Because of your support, Habitat has transformed the lives of local families since 1997. From the hearts and homes of 184+ families, **thank you!**



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

Save the Date!



19th Annual

Hard Hat Events May 7, 2025

Breakfast 6:15-8:00 am or Happy Hour 5:00-7:00 pm

Broadway Ballroom, 115 30th Ave E, Alexandria

The Hard Hat Events play an important role in raising funds to build affordable homes and help older adults age in place with dignity.

Join us for an inspiring program featuring Habitat homeowners.

Connect with friends and network with community members.

Registration opens March 5, 2025!