

the BLUEPRINT

Habitat for Humanity of Douglas County's Newsletter • Fall 2016



A Home Filled With Conversation and Laughter

Mackenzie's drive and determination to make a better life for her family becomes apparent from the moment you meet her. A single mother, Mackenzie works as a personal care attendant for Prairie Community Services. Managing a full time work schedule, a 9-month old baby, and 200 hours of sweat equity wasn't an easy task, but one Mackenzie conquered as she kept her mind focused on the goal of homeownership. Upon finding out she was approved for partnership with Habitat for Humanity, Mackenzie shared, "I was speechless; I didn't have words for how thankful I was for the opportunity."

Groundbreaking at her home took place on April 25 and her dedication ceremony was held on August 23. "Seeing how many people took time out of their lives to help make a home for Aubree and me, it's overwhelming. When I'm living in my house I know I'm going to walk around and remember all the conversations, laughter and hard work that went into building it, and that makes it that much more special," said Mackenzie.

Mackenzie's home is the 15th home built in partnership with Thrivent Builds with a \$67,500 grant. "Thrivent Builds has helped us grow to serve more and more families," said Lori Anderson. "We celebrate this milestone and thank Thrivent Financial, churches, volunteers and donors for making it possible."



Prior to homeownership, Mackenzie lived in an apartment and shared a bedroom with her infant daughter. She is excited to provide her daughter a safe and comfortable place to grow up. "Knowing that Aubree is going to have her own room and a backyard to play in brings tears to my eyes. It seems like such a simple thing to want, but it means the world to me."

**Thrivent®
Builds**



Goal Setting Leads to a New Home for Kyya's Family



Kyya's story is a great reminder of the importance of goal setting. Kyya works at Wells Fargo in Alexandria and had listed homeownership on a personal goal setting sheet. Her supervisor and Habitat Development Committee member Rebecca Pyburn noticed her goal and encouraged her to submit a homeownership application with Habitat. When she was approved for partnership, Kyya stated, "I felt overwhelmed with emotion and cried my eyes out!"

Kyya's home was rehabbed during our 2016 Home Builders Blitz in June. Some memories that stand out most to her during the process include "working with the mission group from Wisconsin" and "days that members of my Wells Fargo family came to help with siding and yard work." Kyya and her girls can't wait to have a home where they will each have their own room and a backyard to play in.

Kyya's dedication ceremony took place on September 28, and her goal of homeownership was achieved. Watching the girls run around their yard full of laughter and joy was truly a blessing made possible through partnership.

Dear Friends,

This year, Habitat for Humanity celebrated an important milestone – our 50th family moved in to a new home! "Home" is a great foundation for the families we serve. This building of concrete, wood and glass provides stability for families as they are able to put down permanent roots in the community.



This milestone is brought home when I hear personally from families how their new home has provided stability. They no longer are moving frequently from place to place. One family moved eight times before they were able to finally move into their Habitat home. With their Habitat home as a foundation for the family, children are healthier and perform better in school. Families tell me about their children who have graduated from high school, gone on to college and are beginning their own careers. Parents often are able to continue their education or receive a promotion at work. They even enjoy the simple gift of baking cookies for their neighbors. Families settle in and thrive in their community thanks to your generous donations of time and funding.

Workforce housing is a priority in our community and will drive the conversation this fall as we create our next Strategic Plan to double the number of families served by the year 2020. We are seeking financial partners to ensure that more families can prosper here by owning their own homes. The challenge is great, so many families in our community are facing housing costs that are rising much faster than wages. Working families are falling further and further behind as they try to provide a safe place for their kids to grow up.

The best way you can help is to make a gift today. You are donors and volunteers providing the foundation that we depend on to fulfill our mission of bringing people together to build homes, communities and hope. On behalf of the families that partner with us – thank you for your support; you are making a difference and changing lives!

With gratitude,

Kori Andersen

Executive Director

Meet Our New Community Engagement Coordinator

Molly Comer started in June as Community Engagement Coordinator for Habitat for Humanity of Douglas County. She is a native of Alexandria and graduated from Augustana University in Sioux Falls, SD. Molly will be working with communications and volunteer coordination to help build strength and stability through shelter in Douglas County. Molly has really enjoyed working with all of the wonderful volunteers and organizations that partner with Habitat! She is enthusiastic about promoting Habitat's mission and helping more families meet their goal of homeownership!



Habitat Volunteers Participate in Vietnam Big Build



From left to right: Diane Koranda, Michelle Lackey-Olsen, Steve Heseltine and Nick Heseltine.

This October, four local individuals had an opportunity to see firsthand how Habitat changes lives both at home and abroad. Michelle Lackey-Olsen, Diane Koranda, Steve Heseltine and Nick Heseltine travelled half-way across the globe to take part in a life-changing mission to build 20 homes in 5 days for families in Vietnam.

The participants paid their own travel expenses to take part in the mission and spent five days

working alongside families in building a house made of not only brick, but of love as well.

This build is possible through the support of Habitat affiliates from across the globe through affiliate tithe. Habitat made the decision early on to tithe as part of its Christian identity. The concept of tithe is based on the biblical principal of sharing what God has blessed you with to bless others.

Habitat for Humanity is a global organization and many places where the need is the greatest for housing, the options for fundraising are dim. Affiliates in the United States and other developed countries of the world join together in sending tithe donations to support the developing countries of the world.

Habitat for Humanity of Douglas County has consistently been a leader among small affiliates across the US in its tithe support, and is currently in the top 10 in the nation.

More photos of their trip can be found on our website www.hfhdouglascounty.org or Facebook page @HFHdouglasCoMN.

Habitat for Humanity Looks to the Future

The Habitat for Humanity board approved purchasing two tracts of land adjacent to the Habitat for Humanity office and ReStore on North Nokomis Street/ County 42 in Alexandria. The purchase will allow for expansion of parking, future expansion of the ReStore retail and warehouse space, future donation drive thru and the opportunity to create a Habitat campus facility to house construction trailers and building materials. The project will include several phases and be dependent on fundraising progress to complete the phases over a three to five-year period.

“The key step was to secure the land, we wanted to avoid the mistake of becoming land-locked and eventually needing to relocate at a high cost” said Lori Anderson, Executive Director. “This is a perfect location for our operation and public contact has greatly increased since we moved to this location in 2012. Currently Habitat owns a construction warehouse facility offsite and consolidating the operations into one location in the future will greatly improve efficiency for staff and volunteers.”

Major gifts from Otto Bremer Foundation, American National Bank, Alexandria Industries, Mammel Family Foundation, Aagard, Geneva

Capital, Jeffery / LuAnn Golberg and the Blade family provided funding to purchase the land. Alex Rubbish & Recycling Inc., Innovative Builders, Hagstrom Engineering PLLC, Ringdahl Architects, Seph Construction, and Stoeckel Jahner Surveying Inc. provided in-kind professional services for site planning and preparation.

Work has begun to clear the space for an expanded parking lot. The land included a residential 1950's house which was not cost effective to move and rehab for a Habitat family.

The Alexandria Fire Department used the house to practice their search and rescue techniques.

“It is extremely valuable to have a structure to simulate and train on the techniques/ skills we need to efficiently and safely perform a search and rescue operation,” said Ron Moore, Battalion Chief 1, Alexandria Fire Department.

“During our training evolution we also added a simulated fire through the use of smoke machines which added to the challenge. We also practiced critical communication skills needed to be successful. Overall the drill identified key areas where we needed to improve and that is why we train.”



This preliminary architectural rendering from Ringdahl Architects shows what an expanded Habitat for Humanity facility could look like with expanded parking, ReStore retail and warehouse space.

ReStore Continues to Grow in Year 2

Year 2 has been an exciting one at the ReStore! The community support has been outstanding, and led to a 21% increase in sales compared to the first year. We collected over 2,100 donations throughout the year ranging from single items to entire bedroom or dining room sets!

The ReStore is very proud to be reselling items and keeping them out of the landfill. Last year we saved approximately 132 tons of material, which totals over 260 TONS since we opened in May of 2014!

We are excited that on Thursdays we often find a line of people waiting for the doors to open at 9 am, and our parking lot is filled with shoppers! Due to the demand and an effort to continue to grow, we are looking forward to our improvement plan to include a bigger parking lot, a new entrance, and in the future a drive-thru donation drop off. Check out our ReStore Facebook page for a weekly preview of new items and donations!



Pictured from left to right: Brad Forbrook, Ron Gervais, and Emil Kack

To help manage the growth of the ReStore, we have added a third part-time employee, Ron Gervais. According to Ron, his favorite part about working in the ReStore is “working with the wonderful volunteers, donors, and shoppers who come together to serve our mission.” He joins Emil Kack and Brad Forbrook along with ReStore manager Bob Voltz. The ReStore’s success is also thanks to the many volunteers who put in over 2,700 hours last year. We truly thank everyone who has donated, shopped, or volunteered! Your contributions are helping fund homes to build strength and stability in Douglas County.

Give to the Max Day to Raise Funds for Parking –
Give a Little to Build a LOT!

give TO THE **MAX** 

NOV. 17, 2016

Habitat is seeking cash donations and in-kind services for the construction of the new parking lot which will more than double available parking spaces. To make a donation, visit our website www.hfhdouglascounty.org and click “donate now.”

For more information, contact Lori Anderson, 320-762-4255 or lori@hfhdouglascounty.org.

3M Pilots New Partnership Program



3M helped us kick off our Partnership Program on July 27, 2016, at 1110 Thomas Drive. The crew worked hard alongside future homeowner Lisa to help raise the walls of her home.

The Partnership Program gives businesses and organizations opportunities that align with their philanthropic and marketing interests.

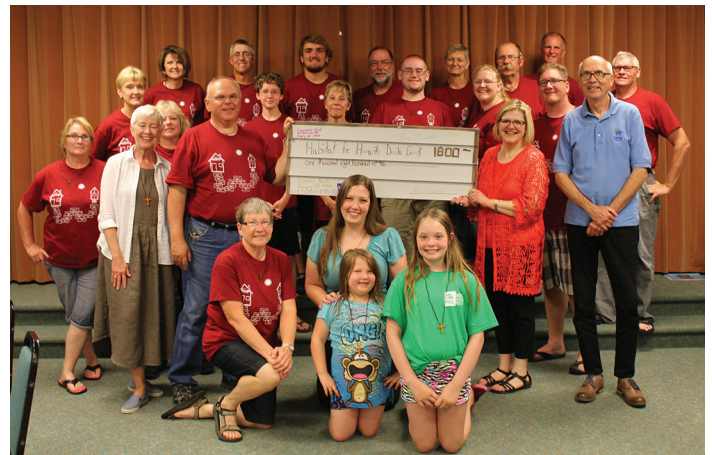
If you are interested in getting your business or organization involved, please contact Lori at 320-762-4255 or lori@hfhdouglascounty.org.

Amery Congregational UCC Returns to Alexandria

This year during our 2016 Home Builders Blitz we were blessed to be joined by a mission group from Amery Congregational UCC out of Amery, Wisconsin. The team of 18 people ranged in age from 16 years old to those enjoying retirement. The group stayed at the First Congregational United Church of Christ in Alexandria and worked on two rehab homes during their week-long stay.

The trip marked the Amery team's second build with Habitat for Humanity of Douglas County. In 2006 the church's mission team helped build three homes in Alexandria and returned ten years later to help with the 2016 Home Builders Blitz. During their time here they helped with almost all aspects of building including siding, flooring, trim, doors, painting, and landscaping.

The group had tremendous energy and even hosted a night of entertainment during the week at the First Congregational UCC. Habitat staff, volunteers, and homeowners along with UCC members were invited to join a homemade meatloaf dinner and enjoyed wonderful hospitality and songs of praise by the mission



group. They brought gifts to bless Kyya and Mackenzie's families and also gave a generous donation to our local Habitat. The check presented in the photo is made completely by materials found at the build sites!

This is the third time Habitat has participated in the National Home Builders Blitz. The Vikingland Builders Association and area contractors partnered with Habitat, its donors and volunteers to make this build a success. We are so grateful for everyone's hard work and generosity!

Habitat for Humanity of Douglas County Announces New Board Officers



Habitat for Humanity of Douglas County elected officers: Nick Heydt, president; Jon Ballou, vice president; Joyce Moe, treasurer; and Marie Anderson, secretary. Other directors include Jason Briscoe, Michelle Bethke-Kaliher, Hans Dahl, Bill Flaig, Dian Lopez, Jeff Montgomery, Ken Pederson, and Irene Vagle, past president.

**WELLS
FARGO**

Wells Fargo Takes Action in Alexandria

Local Wells Fargo team members applied for a \$15,000 grant from the Wells Fargo Housing Foundation and contributed over 60 volunteer hours on the build sites. "We are so thankful for the continued support from our Wells Fargo team members. Volunteers from the corporate office traveled to Alexandria to volunteer," said Lori Anderson.



**Habitat
for Humanity®**

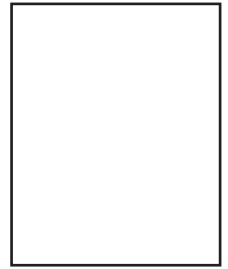
Volunteers Needed!

This fall we are working on a couple of projects, including a garage addition and a home rehab, both located in Alexandria. There are many volunteer opportunities available onsite, in the ReStore and in the office. We are also looking for people willing to provide treats and meals for the crew.

Email volunteer@hfhdouglascounty.org or call the office at 320-762-4255 to sign up!



1211 N Nokomis NE
Alexandria, MN 56308



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 *Core Values*

- **Compassion** – Acting with selflessness to demonstrate Christ's love.
- **Stewardship** – Serving others with the gifts entrusted to us.
- **Relationships** – Building community through meaningful partnerships.
- **Family** – A foundation of love and safety.
- **Optimism** – Empowering hope and possibility.

Celebrate with us!

Lisa's Family Dedication

Thursday, October 27, 2016 – 4:30 pm

1110 Thomas Drive NE, Alexandria

Appetizers will be served.



Habitat
for Humanity®
of Douglas County