

the BLUEPRINT

Habitat for Humanity of Douglas County's Newsletter • Winter 2019



Celebrating with Habitat Homebuyers

2019 was a busy year of construction for Habitat. Four new homes were built in Alexandria, including the Thrivent Faith Builds home, the Wells Fargo & Partnership Program home, a Women Build and the Cardinal Build. October and November were filled with celebrations to honor all the amazing donors and volunteers who helped create homes for our newest homebuyers.

Ash and Family



Ash's family with mentors Ben & Kristal Bomstad

The Thrivent Faith Builds dedication for Ash's home was held October 21, 2019. Approximately 45 people, including Ash's new neighbors, members of her church, local Thrivent Financial team members, Habitat volunteers, Board members and team members came to welcome her to her new home. A ribbon cutting followed the dedication. Guests toured the completed home and enjoyed cake and refreshments.

Ash was very grateful for everything, stating "I am so humbled by this whole experience. Everything I do is for my kids. This will be a sanctuary for our family, a safe place to call home. Thank you."

Ash closed on her home and moved in at the end of October.

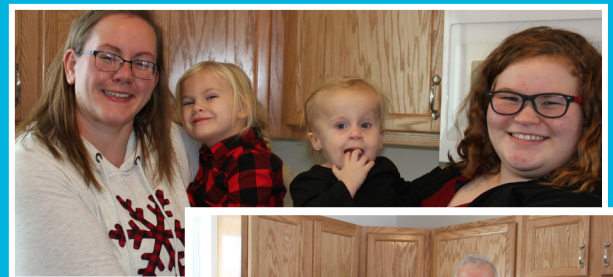
Chelsey and Family

November 11 was a memorable day for Chelsey and her family. A ribbon cutting and home tours were held for the Women Build home, along with the dedication ceremony at Lake Community Church. Surrounded by friends, family and many Habitat volunteers and supporters, Chelsey shared that it meant a lot to her knowing that she and Joe started the process together.

She also shared how eagles were frequently spotted on the build site, a symbol of Joe's presence to her.

Chelsey spoke her heartfelt thanks to the crowd: "This house has been a comfort and stability for us. The relationships we've developed will remain in my life. Thank you for all being a big support to us. This town is amazing."

Chelsey closed on her home in December and woke up the first morning to celebrate her daughter, Mya's, fourth birthday.



Top: Chelsey's family.

Above: Chelsey with mentors Jen & Rich Rentz

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Celebrating with Habitat

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Mary and Family

Mary celebrated the Blessing of the Build for her home on November 14. District 206 Superintendent Julie Critz, along with School Board members, Habitat Board members, volunteers and community members joined together to give thanks for the gift of the lot and to ask blessings on the home that will be built upon it, along with those who will contribute throughout the process. Construction on Mary's home will continue through the winter. Watch for details about her dedication to come this spring!



Mary's family



*Jessica's family with mentors
Bob & Bev Dokken*

Jessica and Family

November 19 was a special day for Jessica and her family. The house was full of warmth, laughter, and excitement as many of her friends, coworkers, and supporters joined her in celebrating the next step in her homeownership process. When asked about the homeownership process, Jessica commented, "You meet a lot of great people. It's cool to say I helped build the home, that's been exciting. Habitat has changed my life." Jessica was able to close and move into her home in November.

To all our Habitat volunteers and donors ... thank you for an incredible year! Next year, Habitat plans to build four homes and complete 15 Aging in Place projects. If you are interested in participating in the Thrivent Faith Build, a Team Building opportunity, the Women Build or the Cardinal Build, contact Sara at 320-762-4255.

Cost of Home

A safe home. Nutritious food. Health care. Access to good schools. Reliable transportation.

Which would you choose?

Because of increased housing costs and growing income inequality, nearly one in ten households in Minnesota face cost burdens, with housing requiring either 30 percent of their income (cost-burdened) or 50 percent (severely cost-burdened). These burdens leave more than 38 million households with little income to afford the cost of food, health care and other basic necessities. In fact, "cost-burdened households with children spend on average \$190 less on food and 70 percent less on health care when compared with similar households living in affordable housing," according to the *State of the Nation's Housing 2018, Joint Center for Housing Studies, 2018*.

With nearly 19 million severely cost-burdened households in the U.S., advocating for affordable housing for homeowners and renters is as important as ever. Habitat Douglas County is working with Habitat for Humanity International to establish, strengthen, and grow housing programs at the local, state and federal level to increase and preserve affordable housing options for low and moderate income renters and homeowners. We hope you'll join us as we strive to make this a reality. For more details, please visit [habitat.org/costofhome](https://www.habitat.org/costofhome).

Executive Director's UPDATE



Dear Friends,

“Seeking to put God’s love into action, Habitat for Humanity brings people together to build homes, communities and hope.” Our mission statement was on full display this year as the Douglas County community supported our Habitat program and our homebuyers.

Many of you noticed the special relationship our homebuyers formed with each other and how this will set them up for success as they become homeowners. One of my favorite things about Habitat is the relationships that are formed. It is more than a house, it is a community that comes together, a community that is engaged and empowered.

We are looking forward to serving more people than ever before in 2020 with four new homes and 15 Aging in Place projects. To expand our construction capacity, we are currently recruiting for a Construction Coordinator to give leadership to our Aging in Place program.

If you or someone you know has construction skills and is motivated by our mission, please contact me for more information or visit our website at hfhdouglascounty.org/get-involved/careers.

As this year comes to a close, we are so thankful for your support – three new homebuyers and their families will be celebrating Christmas in their new homes!

With Gratitude,

Lori Andersen



Cardinal Build Update



Randy Hansen, Habitat for Humanity Construction Manager, AAHS Students Preston Johnson, Ben Olson and Domanik Hines

In October, Habitat announced a new partnership with Alexandria Area High School called the Cardinal Build. Senior students in the EMTNR Academy CAPS class have been spending their class time helping build the home at 1118 Irving Street, Alexandria.

The students – Ben Olson, Preston Johnson and Domanik Hines – have been able to participate in almost every aspect of the build, from laying out the materials during pre-build to raising walls, setting roof trusses, shingling, installing windows and sheet rocking.

When asked about their favorite tasks so far, the three unanimously said they’ve “had fun seeing the house coming together. It’s awesome to work with Randy and the crew. It’s amazing how fast the house has come together.”

Our subcontractors and the building inspectors have even taken time to demonstrate and explain their craft so the students can have exposure to as much as possible. We are grateful for this partnership and the hard work the students have contributed to this home. Not only are the students learning about construction trades through hand-on experiences, they are also learning the enjoyment of serving others and working directly with the homebuyer, Mary. Go Cards and Habitat!

Local Volunteers Participated in International Build in Mexico



This fall, Habitat Douglas County sent three volunteers to participate on a Habitat International trip to Chiapas, Mexico from October 22-25. This build was in honor of Habitat Mexico's 30th anniversary.

Team members included Tom Sinning (Team Leader), Catherine Scholer-Kliewer and Debbie Hubner. Tom shared a few highlights about the trip:

- Since 1994, Habitat Mexico has provided 48,000 housing solutions, serving 1,700 families in Chiapas alone.
- In Chiapas, nearly 94% of the population lives with some form of poverty and 10 different languages are spoken. 82% of families are indigenous.
- Some of the most important solutions Habitat has helped provide include building masonry stoves which get rid of dangerous indoor pollution and are much more efficient at cooking and providing a heat source in the winter.
- The small community where the group worked is located about 45 minutes from the city with half of the way only gravel and dirt trails. It is located at about 8000-ft. elevation.
- The group's primary jobs were hauling 30-pound blocks, filling masonry joints, and moving the large piles of wet dirt from the workspace to fill the foundation in the rear rooms. They had to work hard between all the rain.
- Veronica, the homebuyer, made lunch for the volunteers of homemade chicken soup, tortillas, quesadillas, pineapple drink, and spicy tasty salsa. Her husband and son are in the US working to earn money for purchasing the home.
- Training for the Habitat families takes up to eight months and includes budgeting finances, healthy living, taking care of a home and a number of other areas.
- Habitat has helped 74 families in this community since 2004. It is making such a huge impact!



Volunteer Spotlight



Jim Peterson

Jim Peterson has a passion for woodworking... and helping others. As a young boy, he enjoyed helping his grandfather do various

projects around the farm, creating a passion to work with his hands. His love of helping others came from his mom, who was always finding a way for the family to volunteer. Prior to moving to Douglas County, Jim was an accountant in corporate America for 45 years, "business suits and all."

Jim's first Habitat experience in Douglas County was with the First Lutheran Church group, installing insulation and poly on a home in Brandon. Now a "regular" on the build site as one of our crew leaders, Jim enjoys seeing the desire of the homebuyer working to get a hand-up to homeownership as well as witnessing volunteers being successful in something they haven't tried before.

When not on the build site, Jim can be found working on projects in his garage, gardening, fishing, reading or spending time with family. He's also been elected as a Township Supervisor since 2015.

"It's fulfilling to volunteer with Habitat because it's such a worthwhile cause. You don't need building experience. Anyone can be of help in some way. Give it a try!"



We are in the final phase of the ReStore Capital Improvement Project. Previous phases included acquiring land, developing the south parking lot and new ReStore entrance. Our final phase is to improve the north parking lot and install a v-pan drainage system. The project will be completed in summer 2020. Our goal is to raise \$24,000. Donations can be made to Habitat for Humanity of Douglas County and note ReStore Improvement project in the memo line. Your gift will be doubled by a challenge grant! For more information, contact Lori at 320-762-4255 or lori@hfhdouglascounty.org. The ReStore is providing significant funding to our mission and is funding the building of one new home each year.

Organics Recycling Drop-Off Site



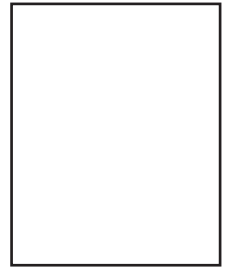
Habitat for Humanity of Douglas County has partnered with Pope/Douglas Solid Waste Management to provide a drop-off site for organics recycling.

According to Pope/Douglas Solid Waste Management, "Organics (food scraps and soiled papers) make up approximately 38% of what is still in the garbage – even after strong single sort recycling programs. Organics Recycling is an important part of effective waste management programs. Items are returned back to nature through commercial composting – reducing resource use and greenhouse gas emissions. Organics Recycling also reduces demand and wear and tear on local garbage processing facilities – such as Pope/Douglas' Material Recycling and Waste to Energy Facilities."

Visit popedouglasrecycle.com to learn more about what items are accepted for organics recycling.



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.



Save the Date!

After Christmas Party at ReStore

Saturday, January 11, 2020

5:00 pm Social Hour

5:30 pm Dinner and Program

Dinner will be provided. Bring yourself, your family and a cheerful Christmas spirit!