

# the **BLUEPRINT**

Fall 2023 Newsletter



Read  
Paul's  
story on  
page 3

**every veteran**  
deserves to age in the comfort  
of their own home

# Dear Friends,

## Hope is blossoming at Habitat Douglas County!

We recently approved six new Habitat homebuyers. This is a life-changing opportunity, and it's impossible without you: a community that believes we can do better. Your support of these homeowners expresses compassion which builds hope and homes with Habitat. What an incredible cause to celebrate!

These future homeowners are embarking on their courageous journey to homeownership, expanding their horizons in pursuit of bringing life to their dreams. They will learn skills beyond hammers and nails. They will find empowerment in education and support. They will attain homeownership, impacting their physical and economic foundations for generations. They are surrounded by helping hands who lend their time and tools to help them build a brighter future.



**Lori Anderson,**  
**Habitat Executive Director**

As we conclude our fiscal year, we are thrilled with the work we have accomplished together! During FY 2022-2023, Habitat served 11 adults and children through our affordable homeownership program and completed 14 Aging in Place projects. The Aging in Place program partners with older adults to improve their homes and their quality of life so they can flourish where they live.

## A big opportunity is coming!

Habitat is a leader in providing new affordable/entry-level homes in Douglas County. With the current critical need for affordable housing, we continue to seek new opportunities to serve more families.

At the June 26, 2023, meeting, the Alexandria City Council approved a request from Habitat Douglas County for a planned unit development on existing vacant property located near Scenic Heights Road in northeast Alexandria, called Summer Meadows.

Summer Meadows will be the largest development in Habitat Douglas County's history.

This project will create stable and affordable housing for up to 42 households over the next 10 years. Infrastructure – streets, sidewalks, sewer and storm drainage, and water for the project will be completed at the beginning of construction, starting next spring.

Like our future homeowners, we are dreaming big and courageously broadening our horizons in pursuit of finding ways to serve even more people. By sharing your time and support, you make the Habitat mission possible and you inspire us as we intently pursue our vision of a world where everyone has a decent place to live. Thank you for yet another incredible year together.

With gratitude,

*Lori Anderson*

- **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.

**Because of your support, since 1997, we've served:**

<b>154 families</b>
<b>84 new or improved homes</b>
<b>70 Aging in Place projects</b>

# Home is everything

Paul's family contacted Habitat earlier this year after learning about the Aging in Place program. They wanted to have some improvements done in their dad's home so he could safely and independently remain there.

For Paul, home is "everything" and he wants to stay there as long as possible. His biggest fear is falling because then he "might not get up." Having lived there for over 30 years, Paul has done a lot of work on the home, including remodeling his own kitchen and refinishing furniture in his basement workshop. Paul enjoys talking about his four years of service in the Air Force. "I went to England by ship, a trip that took nine days." Paul worked with sheet metal and helped maintain aircraft around the time of the Korean War. He is proud of his service and is a lifetime member of the VFW. Paul served as Mayor of Alexandria from 1980-1987.



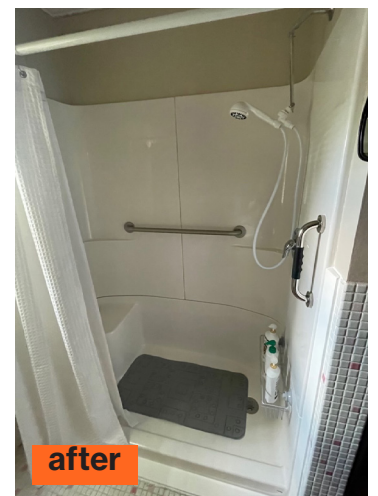
**Paul Nelson,**  
Aging in Place homeowner

After meeting with an Occupational Therapist and participating in a free home assessment by our Certified Aging in Place Specialist and Construction Coordinator, Tyler, Paul and his family decided on having a new walk-in shower installed in his bathroom which is "very easy to use and get in and out of." Paul commented, "Tyler was very good, thorough, and careful to do things right. I am very pleased with the work." Paul enjoyed visiting with the volunteers who assisted with the demolition of the old bath tub. Overall, the project was a great experience for Paul, and the improvement to a walk-in shower will allow him to remain in his home for many more years.



**before**

Did you know that the Minnesota State Fire Marshal recommends smoke detectors be replaced every 10 years? Through a partnership between our Habitat affiliate and the American Red Cross, Aging in Place homeowners can receive free, up-to-date smoke detectors. Because of this partnership, Paul also had new smoke detectors placed in his home. To learn more about this partnership, contact Denise at 320-762-4255.



**after**

## Who qualifies for the Aging in Place program?

You may qualify for the Aging in Place program if you meet the following criteria:

- \* be income qualified
- \* are age 65 or better, someone in your home is age 65 or better, or are medically disabled
- \* have current insurance on your home
- \* reside in the home full-time
- \* have lived or worked in Douglas County for at least 1 year

Repayment is determined on a sliding scale based on homeowner income to ensure affordability. Applications accepted year round.

**Contact Denise at our office to learn more about our Aging in Place program. Call 320-762-4255 or email [denise@hfhdouglascounty.org](mailto:denise@hfhdouglascounty.org)**

## Build Updates

In fiscal year 2022-23, **755 volunteers** shared **10,352 volunteer hours** with Habitat. With very grateful hearts, we celebrate the amazing commitment of our volunteers! Thank you for making Habitat's mission your own and helping build a future where every child, every family, and every person has a decent place to call home.



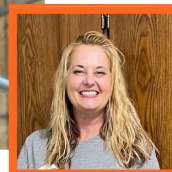
### Team Build Home

Insulation and sheetrock were added to the home this summer. Homebuyer Courtney selected the new blue siding color. The transformation is quite amazing. Courtney shared, "My boys and I are so excited and beyond blessed." This is called the Team Build as many local businesses sign up as a group to help build the home and sponsor a build day.



### Faith Build Home

Insulation and sheetrock were also added to Anthony's home. Homebuyer Anthony loves the siding color he was able to select. He shared: "It's starting to look like a home! We're excited to see the progress and can't wait to move in." This is called the Faith Build home as many local churches help build the home and sponsor a build day.



### Women Build Home

Construction on Jackie's home began in July. From a cement slab on July 10 to walls, trusses, windows, doors, insulation and sheetrock, Homebuyer Jackie has greeted many of the volunteer groups with excitement and hugs. She is happy to be able to move back to Osakis where she grew up and is closer to her dad. "It is so exciting to see how much the crew and volunteers get done in a week! So grateful," proclaimed Jackie. This is called the Women Build because several women have agreed to be Team Leaders who recruit a small group to help build as well as fundraise. Though called the Women Build, everyone is welcome to help onsite.



# Starting Soon!



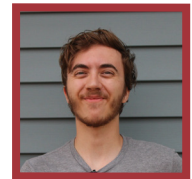
## Legends Build

Habitat for Humanity is pleased to announce a renewed partnership with Alexandria Technical and Community College. Students in the carpentry program will be building a home using Habitat's plans and materials on a Habitat lot in Alexandria. This build is called the Legends Build in honor of the partnership with ATCC Legends. "We are excited to be working again with the carpentry program to increase our capacity to serve more families," stated Lori Anderson, Habitat Executive Director. Michael Seymour, President, Alexandria Technical & Community College commented, "We are very happy to be partnering with Habitat for Humanity again this year. Increased enrollment in our Carpentry program allows us to work on a Habitat House. This is a great project for our students and a great partnership for the college." This home will be for Katrina and her family. Construction on this home will begin in September and continue throughout the school year. Homebuyer Katrina is eager; "I'm excited for my big back yard which will be great for my daughter and dog to go exploring!"



## Cardinal Build

This year we celebrate our fifth Cardinal Build! Construction on this home will begin in October in Carlos. Students from the Alexandria Area High School EMTNR Caps class will help build the home during their class time alongside volunteer groups, which is why it is called the Cardinal Build. Homebuyer Andrew has been working on his sweat equity hours and shared, "This is an enjoyable and rewarding program with lots of great people involved."



### Habitat homebuyers meet these criteria:



**Need for housing:**

live in unsafe, overcrowded or overly expensive housing



**Ability to pay:**

have steady income and not too much debt



**Willing to partner:**

willing to complete sweat equity hours



**Live or work locally:**

live or work in Douglas County for at least one year

### Accepting applications!

Do you know someone who is in need of affordable housing? Applications are accepted year round.

Anyone interested in learning more is encouraged to contact Denise at 320-762-4255 or [denise@hfhdouglascounty.org](mailto:denise@hfhdouglascounty.org).

## Board Updates



**Jenna Hill**  
**New Board Director**

Habitat for Humanity of Douglas County recently elected a new board director: Jenna Hill. Tara Bitzan, Executive Director of the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce, installed Jenna and the new Executive Board at the July 27, 2023 board meeting.

“Our Board of Directors guide the strategic plan for our affiliate,” stated Lori Anderson, Executive Director. “The addition of Jenna to the board will provide key insights as we continue to grow and expand our programs.” Jenna is a Special Education Teacher with Alexandria Schools. She became passionate about Habitat’s mission as she went through the process of purchasing her Habitat home. She is eager to share her first-hand knowledge of the process with the board to continue to help Habitat grow.



**Sandy Susag**  
**Retiring Board Director**

Thank you to outgoing board member, Sandy Susag, who served on various Habitat committees in addition to being Board Secretary. We are grateful for her leadership and vision.

Habitat for Humanity of Douglas County is honored to have an innovative and passionate board of twelve members who govern our work. Other Board Directors include Brooke Zabel (Past Chair), Tony Loosbrock (Chair), Angie Krebs (Vice Chair), Jeff Hohn (Treasurer), Rick Sansted (Secretary), Tom Klemenhagen, Scott Kluver, Stephanie Lucy, Erin McCoy, Kevin Taylor, and Carmon Watkins.

## Give HOME for the holidays

Holidays inspire us to gather, give thanks, and count our blessings. Habitat homeowners have shared their appreciation for things that many of us take for granted: closets, a driveway, our own room, a back yard, a garage, a space to hold family gatherings, and the list goes on. During the upcoming holiday season, give the gift of home and help multiply blessings for Douglas County families. Whether you have already given this year and want to do a little extra - or if you've been meaning to make a gift and it just slipped your mind - you can make a gift that has a permanent impact on families in our community. There are many ways you can make your tax-deductible gift - choose the option that is right for you.



Gifts of cash or check - use the enclosed envelope or stop by in person, we'd love to see you!



Sign up for our monthly giving program - these gifts help our mission grow by providing consistent funding. Visit our website at [fhfdouglascounty.org](http://fhfdouglascounty.org) and click Donate.



Planned giving - consider including Habitat in your estate plans. Call Lori at 320-762-4255 for more information.

# ReStore Corner

The ReStore is home to many items full of potential and possibility. Inventory changes daily so you never know what you might find - and that's why it's so thrilling to shop the ReStore. With a little creativity and elbow grease, you can transform almost any piece of furniture into something completely different and fun.

This fall, the ReStore is partnering with three Alexandria Area High School DECA students for their Community Awareness Project. Emma Paulson, Faith Odland, and Lauren Revering are planning an **Upcycle ReSale Event!** The event will help raise funds for Habitat as part of a State Farm Youth Matching Grant.




**Pictured above, left to right: Emma Paulson, Mona Strege, and Lauren Revering**

## Introducing the


# UPCYCLE ReSale

A ReStore DIY Challenge


- **Store hours:**  
Wed - Sat  
9 am to 5 pm
- **Donation hours:**  
Mon - Sat  
10 am to 4 pm
- **Questions?**  
Call 320-759-1989  
ask for Mona

**Oct 4-7:**  **Check out an item from the ReStore**  
or use an item of your own you're willing to donate.

**Oct 7-23:**  **Create an upcycle project.**

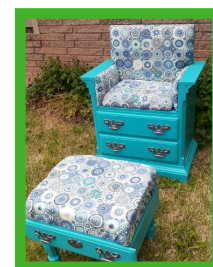
**Oct 24:**  **Return your item to the ReStore.**  
Donate your upcycled item for our auction and compete for Best in Show!

**Oct 25-28:**  **Upcycled items will be displayed in the ReStore.**  
Stop in to vote for your favorite item during store hours!

**Nov 2:**  **Attend the Upcycle ReSale event at 5 pm.**  
Winners will be announced! Bid on one-of-a-kind, handcrafted items upcycled by do-it-yourself enthusiasts and creative community members. Money raised goes back to Habitat to build affordable homes. Your impact will be **doubled** through a matching State Farm grant!



Be sure to take a **BEFORE** and **AFTER** picture!



From a simple dresser to a workout station  
...or...  
a chair and ottoman!





**everyone**

deserves to age safely in  
the comfort of their own home



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

.....

## Fun times at the Friends & Family Picnic!



After a three year hiatus, our Friends and Family Picnic returned this summer. About 75 homebuyers, family members, and volunteers joined together at City Park for a night of fellowship and delicious hot dogs and hamburgers from Lake Country Meats. The night was filled with laughter and fun! We plan to host the event again in 2024.