



Create housing opportunities for 1 million people through market development and 2 million people through advocacy efforts.

*“The idea of the one-week blitz is that if you asked me as a builder to build a house in a month for Habitat, I couldn’t do it, because I have other obligations. But if you can compress the time and enable a builder to do it in one week, it makes it a very manageable amount of time to build the home.”*

— Tom Gipson, founder and national chairman of Home Builders Blitz



STEFAN HACKER

## Home Builders Blitz

Since the first local event in 2002, Home Builders Blitz has racked up some impressive numbers:

**2,000+**

Participating builders.

**235+**

Participating affiliates.

**1,300+**

Homes built.

**4,290+**

People housed (estimated).

## How the blitz began

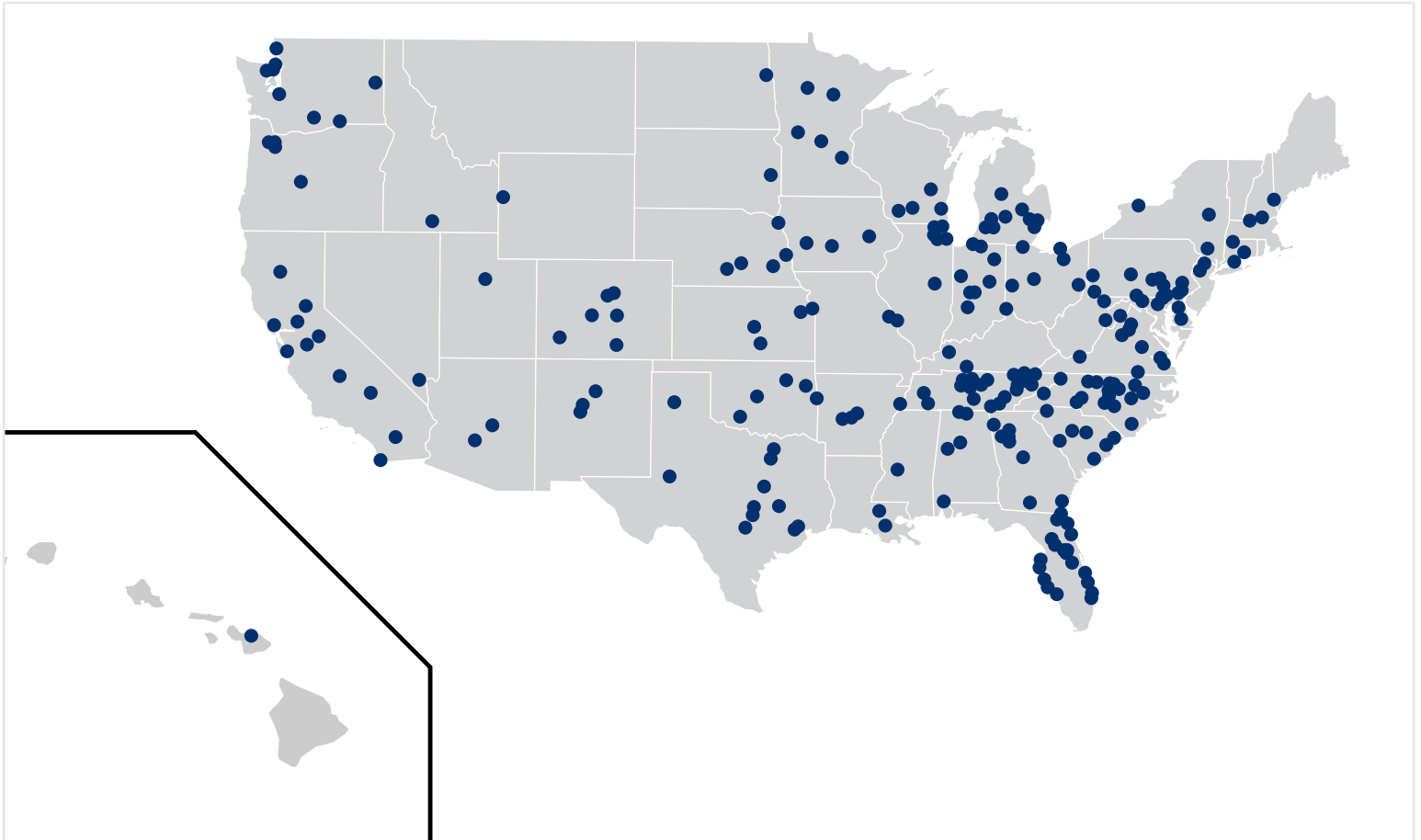
In 2002, Habitat and 12 professional homebuilders teamed up to complete 12 homes in North Carolina in just five days. Habitat paid for the land; generous builders took care of the rest of the expense. Nothing like this had been done before. The “blitz build” was the result of a collaboration between Habitat for Humanity of Wake County and local custom homebuilder Tom Gipson, who mobilized local contractors. The builders provided free labor and worked with subcontractors and suppliers, who also donated their time and materials.

The results were so impressive that in 2006, Home Builders Blitz became a national initiative, partnering Habitat for Humanity affiliates with local builders to help people in need of housing. The goal was to deliver homes at no cost to Habitat. That year, Home Builders Blitz became the largest homebuilding effort in Habitat’s history, with more than 1,000 builders working with 130 Habitat affiliates on about 450 homes across the United States.

After successful national events in 2008, 2012 and 2014, Home Builders Blitz is taking the next step: becoming an annual nationwide happening. This event has added a total of more than 1,300 homes to communities by mobilizing builders and volunteers as hearts, hands and voices for the cause of safe, decent, affordable housing. To date, nearly 250 Habitat affiliates have participated.

**THE 2015 HOME BUILDERS BLITZ IS SCHEDULED FOR JUNE 8-12. THE EXCITEMENT IS BUILDING FOR RAMPING UP THE EVENT’S FREQUENCY, AND WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO ANOTHER HIGHLY PRODUCTIVE WEEK OF CONSTRUCTION.**

## MAP OF ALL HOME BUILDERS BLITZ LOCATIONS



### WHAT'S IN IT FOR HABITAT AFFILIATES

The Home Builders Blitz model is simple: The affiliate identifies a contractor who will commit to lead the construction project and raise funds. The affiliate also secures the site and selects the homeowner partners.

Affiliates can decide to build one home or 15 – the partnership model works regardless of scale. Habitat for Humanity of Greater Birmingham (Alabama) has achieved great participation from local builders, constructing 86 homes since 2006, including 13 in 2014 that housed 37 people.

“Home Builders Blitz should work in almost every community to some degree,” said Charles Moore, president and CEO of Greater Birmingham Habitat. “Not everybody is going to be able to do 13, but others can do more than that.”

Habitat affiliates that participate in Home Builders Blitz forge and maintain exciting partnerships with local builders and their subcontractors, suppliers and business partners, allowing them to reach more partner families.

Habitat for Humanity of Greater Newburgh (New York) has been involved in every blitz since it became a national initiative, with more than 100 local builders taking part. The

event has allowed Habitat Greater Newburgh to partner with eight more families in need of housing.

“Our relationship with the Hudson Valley Building Association has been strengthened as a result of our participation in Home Builders Blitz,” said Cathy Collins, Habitat Greater Newburgh’s executive director.

Nearly 90 percent of participating affiliates reported that they were able to boost production through Home Builders Blitz without significantly increasing their overhead.

“We get an increase in production, and we get great connections with builders,” Moore said. “We would have to add at least two more full-time staff to get what this one week does for us.”

The event also draws homebuilders who are new to Habitat: In the 2012 blitz, 24 percent of participating builders were partnering with Habitat for the first time. A majority returned to participate in the next blitz. Many builders who participated have become regular volunteers on Habitat builds, and some have gone on to serve as board members at local affiliates.



Alabama homebuilder Taylor Burton chats with Mentae Swanson at the site of the home where the boy and his mother, Oneasha Swanson, will live. The home was built in five days during Home Builders Blitz 2014.

## WHAT'S IN IT FOR HOMEBUILDERS

Builders flock to participate in Home Builders Blitz because it is an opportunity to give back to their communities.

Andy Stahl, president of Hearthstone Contracting in Newburgh, New York, began engaging with Habitat for Humanity of Greater Newburgh when he donated construction materials left over from an "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" project he supervised. He became progressively more involved with the affiliate and eventually became a member of its board of directors.

"It's a way to change lives," Stahl said. Habitat "is changing communities. It's just a special organization, and I'm happy to be a part of it."

Taylor Burton, immediate past president of the Alabama Homebuilders Association, has experienced both personal and business benefits from participating in Home Builders Blitz.

"I love the blitz," he said. "It's a great way to do something that just really makes you feel good when you get done."

"There's nothing about it that's easy," Burton cautioned. "It's hard work for a week, it's at times stressful for a week, but it's the most fun stress you'll ever have."

Builders work together on blitzes, so friendly competition is balanced with socializing, networking and a sense of

teamwork, he said. "I really enjoy the camaraderie and the lasting friendships you can make."

Finishing a house in just five days is a big challenge, Burton said, but a great feeling of accomplishment comes with it. Habitat's application process ensures working with people who truly need and appreciate the help, and Habitat takes care of punch lists and any other issues after the build. "I've never seen a builder have a bad experience with the blitz," he said.

Everyone involved benefits from media coverage of Home Builders Blitz.

"There are a lot of business benefits that you don't expect," Burton added. "You get a tremendous amount of advertising and positive publicity. Habitat has a great name in the community, so to associate my name with that is really good for business."

Still, it's the intangible rewards that keep Burton and other builders coming back.

"It's one of the most rewarding things that you'll ever do in construction," he said. "Seeing someone move into the American dream at the end of the week – that I've built in a week – is very rewarding. If you like homebuilding, there's nothing better to do than the blitz."



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