



## Habitat for Humanity's Commitment to the 21st Century Challenge

The ultimate goal of Habitat for Humanity International is to eliminate substandard housing from the face of the earth. Each affiliate adopts that goal as it accepts the name of Habitat for Humanity. On March 1, 1999, HFHI launched an initiative to help affiliates and their communities set specific goals for the elimination or significant reduction of substandard housing in their service areas within 20 years. The 21st Century Challenge had begun.

Clive Rainey, director of the program, says, "Habitat for Humanity International should encourage a new and growing wave of affiliates to step forward each decade of this new century with a plan to simply eliminate substandard housing from their communities by repairing what can be fixed and replacing what cannot be fixed with simple,

decent, affordable houses. Developing that plan is the aim of the 21st Century Challenge."

Affiliates in Anniston, Ala., Covington, La., (West St. Tammany Parish HFH); Highlands County, Fla., and High Point, N.C., are among those that have embraced the challenge. These affiliates and many others are preparing themselves to partner with other agencies in their communities to accomplish the goal of no more shacks.

As local Habitat for Humanity affiliates take on the challenge of mobilizing and leading their communities to provide decent housing for all residents, HFHI provides support to build capacity and strengthen affiliates for their new role. This includes raising the affiliates' profile in their communities and helping them to develop the financial and volunteer resources needed to meet the challenge.




---

### BY THE NUMBERS: *Meeting the Challenge*

---

When an affiliate and its community are certified to participate in the 21st Century Challenge, goals, timetables, commitments and partnerships must be in place that predict successful completion.

- 1) The affiliate must be strong enough to build at least one third of the housing needed to accomplish the goal.
- 2) The affiliate must be committed to the global vision of HFHI and tithed to that work in accordance with the Affiliate Covenant.

- 3) The affiliate must be prepared to enter into legal partnership with other housing agencies to accomplish the stated goal.

- 4) The goal must be clearly defined and the partnership organization must have a plan to meet the goal. For example, cooperating housing suppliers—including the Habitat affiliate—commit to increasing the housing they provide by a certain percentage over the 20-year span projected to meet the housing shortfall.



## CASE STUDY *Sumter County Declares Victory Over Substandard Housing*

In 1992, Habitat for Humanity International and Americus-Sumter County (Georgia) HFH, along with local nonprofit groups and government agencies, formed a partnership called the Sumter County Initiative. The idea was simple enough: Everyone in Sumter County should have an opportunity to own or reside in decent, affordable housing.

With the completion of Vera Thomas' house in Americus during Jimmy Carter Work Project 2000, the SCI's goal was realized. Standing on her front porch during the "Victory House" dedication, Thomas echoed the sentiments of countless other homeowners, "I've been struggling...I thank the Lord for Habitat." Michelle and Eugene Hughley, shown above with the keys to their new home, joined Thomas and 33 other families as new homeowners during the build in Sumter County. The Hughleys' house was declared Habitat's 100,001st house—the first of the next 100,000 houses to be built by the end of 2005. By that time, fully 1 million people will be living in Habitat for Humanity houses.

While enjoying the success of the Sumter County Initiative, partners realize that ongoing work on a smaller scale will be needed as housing needs of the community evolve. The network is in place to ensure that happens. "Sumter County is an example—it's a monument to what a community is capable of when it joins together to help its citizens in need," said Clive Rainey, director of HFHI's 21st Century Challenge.