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THE MAGAZINE OF HABITAT FOR HUMANITY INTERNATIONAL



Through
shelter, we
empower

MAY 2016
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Building for the future



I first met Alexandra during a 2009 visit to El Salvador and recently had the privilege of seeing her again. Her family has expanded their Habitat home, from which her mother runs a successful business. I was pleased to hear that Alexandra still likes math and still wants to be a lawyer.

Habitat for Humanity's efforts to create a world where everyone has a decent place to live have now spanned 40 years — long enough to engage multiple generations of supporters, long enough to alter the stories of many families for generations to come.

I have watched my own children mature, realize the things they take for granted and work exceedingly hard on build sites because of their deep desire to help families improve their living conditions. No longer just observers of why I am so passionate about affordable housing, they have become actively engaged in helping families change their lives. I have witnessed other families build amazing bonds through their Habitat experiences as well. Cultivating in our children a sense of service is so crucial.

For 17-year-old Taylor Thompson, being a third-generation Habitat supporter is bittersweet. His grandparents Henry and Ann Diercxsens have worked alongside more than 70 homeowner families to help them build strength and stability. The Diercxsens' daughter (Taylor's late mother), gave generously to Habitat in Austin, Texas, and used her professional talents to help others in need of a hand up. Now Taylor is building a special memorial to continue his mother's legacy.

The idea of building a better future is really what Habitat is all about. By empowering families to eliminate barriers and create stable homes, we help build successes that can impact others far beyond what we can imagine.

Countless homeowners tell us about their children who are the first in their families to go to college. Many tell us about new job opportunities and new leadership roles they have felt confident to take on in the community. By helping to build or improve a home of their own, those who partner with Habitat also build self-reliance, and they pass along a new confidence and determination to their children and grandchildren.

Talk of generations often leads us to remember the older members of our families and communities. For many of them, maintaining their homes becomes more and more difficult. In communities like Memphis, Tennessee, Habitat is privileged to participate in aging in place programs that help seniors make modifications and critical repairs so they can safely live in the places they call home. What a wonderful way to honor those who have given so much.

What great family stories do you have to tell about those who came before you? What can you do to express your thanks? What kind of world can you imagine for future generations? What will you pass along?

Jonathan T.M. Reckford
Chief Executive Officer
Habitat for Humanity International

HABITAT'S VISION

A world where everyone has a decent place to live

Driven by the vision that everyone needs a decent place to live, Habitat for Humanity has grown from a grassroots effort that began on a community farm in southern Georgia in 1976 to a global nonprofit housing organization in 1,400 communities across the U.S. and in over 70 countries.

People partner with Habitat for Humanity to build or improve a place they can call home. Habitat homeowners help build their own homes alongside volunteers and pay an affordable mortgage.

Through financial support, volunteering or adding a voice to support affordable housing, everyone can help families achieve the strength, stability and self-reliance they need to build better lives for themselves.

Through shelter, we empower. To learn more, visit habitat.org.

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Habitat for Humanity®




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No matter who we are or where we come from, we all deserve to have a decent life. Every single one of us deserves the opportunity for a better future, and decent shelter is something we all need to thrive.

Habitat homeowners receive financial education, help build their houses and pay an affordable mortgage. When they partner with us, they start down a new path – one with far fewer barriers to a better, healthier, more financially stable life.

With a little help, we all have the potential to stand on our own. Every child, every parent, every person deserves to feel strength and stability day after day. And every single one of us can do something right now to help make that possible for another family.

Your financial support, your voice and your time will help bring strength, stability and self-reliance to families in need of a decent place to live. Donate today!



LATIN AMERICA

Better masons, better homes

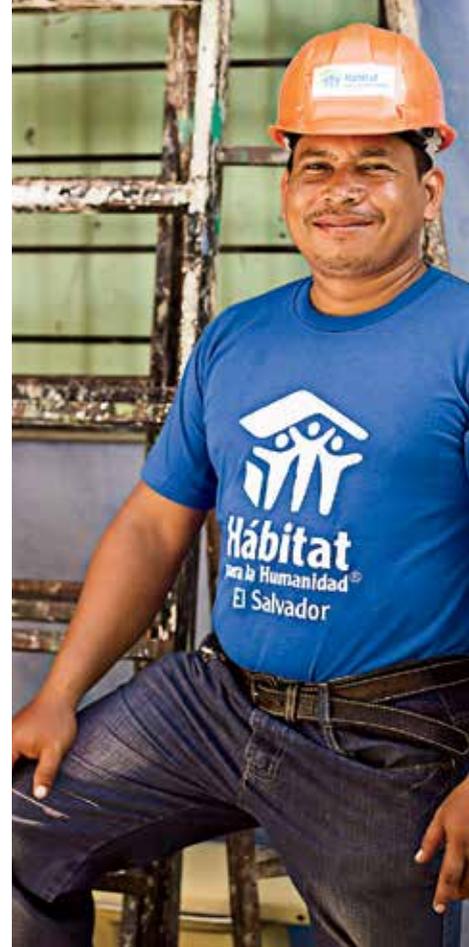


Knowing that expert masons are key to building decent homes, Habitat for Humanity offers specific training in three countries in Latin America: El Salvador, Nicaragua and Peru.

Through this program, financed by a Citi Foundation grant, masons like Jose Alvarado in El Salvador attend workshops where they learn skills such as construction site assessment and material storage so that they can help families who partner with Habitat to build or improve a place they can call home.

“We believe that construction workers play a key role in the process of building safe and affordable homes,” says Maria Teresa Morales, Habitat Latin America and the Caribbean’s director of market development and housing finance. “They become not only the leaders of a construction project, but a technical adviser that will contribute in improving the life standards of an entire family.”

For Jose and 13 of his colleagues, the workshop was a first step. “Every day I strived to learn more because it is useful not only for me, but it also helps me serve others,” Jose says. “If I do better construction, the families are happy and safe in their homes, so I think it is mutually beneficial.”



According to the Centre for Affordable Housing Finance in Africa, only about 3 percent of Africans are able to afford a traditional mortgage, with other available financing generally through informal and much more costly means.

Last fall, Habitat hosted an event in Naivasha, Kenya, that brought together participants from the financial and construction sectors to strengthen the ties between them and to explore the continued expansion of affordable housing finance in the region.

AROUND
THE WORLD

Key to ending poverty: land

Whether you are reading this from a high-rise apartment in the United States, a Soviet-era social housing complex in Bulgaria, an informal settlement in Brazil or a one-story house in rural Zambia, you can be part of ending poverty.

Solid Ground, Habitat’s innovative global advocacy campaign, is designed to remove one of the biggest obstacles to a world where everyone has a decent and affordable place to live: access to land for shelter.

Shelter takes different forms and shapes around the world, but no matter where you live or what you live in, you depend on land. “Land” doesn’t necessarily mean soil itself, though that’s included. Think of land as “space,” as a place to cook your meals, to relax and sleep, to feel safe. Land is the foundation for life.

While the global population is growing, the planet isn’t. As an increasing number of people move into cities and urban areas, land for shelter is becoming less available and more contested. Just a few examples: In Nepal, people are struggling to return to their land after devastating earthquakes. In the

SOLID GROUND



INDIA

Helping flood-affected families

Incessant rains late last year caused flooding in Tamil Nadu, as well as the neighboring state of Andhra Pradesh. Hundreds of thousands of homes were damaged or destroyed. In response, Habitat India distributed emergency shelter kits containing tarps, ropes, water filters, buckets, kitchen sets, bio-mass stoves, mats and personal hygiene items.



Read more online

Find this issue and more news, features, photos and videos at habitat.org/magazine.

In December, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees recognized Habitat Zambia for excellence in their work with long-term Angolan refugees in Meheba. Habitat Zambia has coordinated with government agencies and partnered with nongovernmental organizations to relocate 300 refugees from a camp where they had lived for more than 40 years to a new area with startup shelters, plots for agriculture, a school, access to water and sanitation, and health care.



self-reliance

Dominican Republic, people who live in slums are being evicted from their homes because they can't get legal title, even to a place they've occupied for years.

Solid Ground addresses such challenges by advocating for better policies, laws and systems in four key areas:

- expanding security of tenure
- promoting gender equality in property rights
- upgrading slums
- making communities more disaster resilient.

Access to land lies at the heart of ending poverty — without land, there can be no housing, and housing is key to helping families achieve stability, strength and self-reliance. The goal of Solid Ground is to ensure that everyone has access to land for shelter so that everyone can have a decent place to live.

Join Habitat's global network in making a worldwide impact! Learn more by visiting solidgroundcampaign.org.



ARGENTINA

Financial education

"Although we tried to have a decent life, it was very difficult," says Cristina, who lived with her husband, Diego, and their three children in a one-bedroom shack in Los Ceibos. "The cold, the rain, the flooding, the fear of the roof falling over our heads proved to be too much. One day, I said, 'Enough.' We cannot go on living this way."

After seeing a group of volunteers working at a neighbor's home, Cristina decided to attend an economics and housing workshop held by Habitat Argentina, a requirement for anyone interested in participating in Habitat's neighborhood development project.

"The workshop was so helpful," Cristina says. "It made me realize how much money I was spending, how to start saving and how to get our house built. Once we were selected, my husband was worried about the loan payments, but I was not. I had faith, and I knew we were going to make it."

Cristina and her family now live in a Habitat home they helped build and feel proud also to be helping other families achieve their own dreams. "Every month when we make our loan payment, I feel happy that I am giving back to other families," she says. "For me, the most important lesson has been to never lose hope. And teaching my children to value the blessings we have received."

“Because of Habitat, I am able to give Nevea something that I never had in my childhood: a place where she can stay and grow for many years, a place where she can make lifelong friends, a place with a yard for her and our family dog to run and play, a place she can come back to when she is all grown up — a place to call home.”

LaGail, Habitat Huron Valley homeowner



Ana and daughter Bianca

NICARAGUA

Small loans, big changes

When Ana’s husband had to leave their town of Esteli to find work, she was left alone with their two children and no decent home.

“At that time, my children were young and did not want to live in that shack,” says the 28-year-old mom. “They never told their friends where they lived because they were ashamed that the walls were full of holes.”

Ana turned to Habitat Nicaragua and applied for her first housing microloan. So far, Ana has applied for and paid off seven small loans.

“As soon as I paid off a loan, I asked for another one to continue improving my house,” she says. “At first, I didn’t think about plastering or having a tiled floor; I only thought of building block walls to stop having cardboard ones. My greatest joy was building a room for both my kids.”

In order to improve her income, Ana has attended beauty school and installed a small salon in her home. She also receives a monthly stipend from her husband who now works abroad.

“I had to make sacrifices to achieve the house that I have now,” she says. “Many times I could not celebrate my children’s birthday because it was either that or pay the micro-credit. I always thought a safe home was a better gift than a pinata anyway.

“My kids had to sacrifice a lot during their childhood, but now that they have grown up, I hope that they understand that everything was for them to have a safe home and live in a happy environment,” she continues. “I feel so at peace now. Sometimes I wake up in the morning and cannot believe it.”

UNITED STATES

Fundraising challenge

Inez McDonald issued a challenge to Habitat St. Augustine/St. Johns County to raise \$10,000 from 10 donors, each giving \$1,000 or more. Her challenge included the promise to match the money raised with a \$10,000 donation of her own, something she generously presented to Habitat earlier this year.

At one point, the longtime resident of St. Augustine considered setting up a trust for charitable organizations upon her death, but decided instead to donate now. “Why not enjoy giving money away while you’re still alive?” she says.

Plus, she can see the result of her support: “I can go out and see the houses.”

Alia Reimer, executive director of Habitat St. Augustine/St. Johns County, says, “We are truly grateful, not just for Inez’s donation, but for her challenge that sparked the donations of so many more. Donations like Inez’s have called attention to the need for our affluent community to also support affordable housing initiatives.”





more than **1/2**

Percentage of Poles who do not have a decent place to live, according to a report commissioned by Habitat Poland. Nearly 45 percent live in overcrowded houses, with an additional 14 percent living in substandard conditions.

6,900

Families who have achieved strength, stability and self-reliance through improved housing, thanks to Habitat Macedonia's 10 years of building.

twelve percent

Decline in total Medicaid expenditures after people moved into affordable housing, according to research published by Enterprise Community Partners and the Center for Outcomes Research and Education. The research represents one of the first studies to directly assess the impact on health care costs in the U.S. when low-income individuals move into affordable housing.



9

Communities where Habitat Sri Lanka is helping war-affected families rebuild their lives, thanks to a grant of 14 million euros from the European Union. Efforts include construction of homes, vocational training and improved community infrastructure.

1¢
at a time

How Josh Morrison hopes to raise a \$100,000 donation to Ontario's Habitat Durham. "I obviously want to reach the goal," the 14-year-old told *The Uxbridge Times Journal*, "but I also want to teach kids and adults alike that hard is not a synonym for impossible."



Youkhanna, Habitat Wake County
homeowner and advocate

I tell people in the grocery, in church, wherever I go, how Habitat for Humanity has changed my life. I am not throwing my money away. It is just a great feeling for me and my family to have this house.

I tell everyone I meet that they need to be ambassadors for Habitat. I will do that for the rest of my life. I want to help Habitat help other families.



everyone

deserves a decent place to live, and everyone can do something today to help make that possible for



Phun, Habitat Cambodia
homeowner

**I live with
freedom.**

Alex Kaul, Habitat Seattle/King County
community engagement coordinator and
AmeriCorps alum

There are so many families that I have interacted with since coming to Habitat. One comes to mind.

Yes, they had an apartment. Yes, they had a place to live. But the roof leaked, and there was water visibly running down the walls any time it rained. And so there was mold in their walls and their carpeting, and they were taking their children to the hospital several times a year with extreme asthma attacks and horrible respiratory issues.

That family moved into a Habitat house about a year ago. We talked to them a couple days ago, and they were like, "We haven't been to the hospital since." Habitat cured their illnesses, literally, by helping them build a safe and healthy house to live in.

It's things like that that really stand out to me because I think a lot of times it's easy to have the perspective of, "Yeah, but they have a roof over their head."

Just because people have access to housing does not mean that it is safe, decent or affordable to them.



Nahla Rajan, donor and volunteer

I would encourage anyone who has ever given or is thinking about giving to Habitat to go to a build. If you want to actually see what your money is doing, go to one of those builds.

It's really meeting these people and hearing their stories and hearing how their lives have changed as a result of having a home. That's really what brought it home to me.

can do
another family.



Natalie Martinez, volunteer

From my job as an architect to volunteering with Habitat, home building has always interested me because the places we live become the backdrops to the stories of our lives.

I can't talk about housing without talking about children or my own childhood. My mother was a single parent, at times struggling to make ends meet. Like Habitat families, she had a deep desire to improve her life situation for herself and her children and a willingness to make a home for herself, however modest it might have seemed to others.

Throughout my professional life, my volunteerism and financial support has gone to nonprofits that serve women and children. When I learned about an opportunity to build in Guatemala through one of Habitat's Global Village volunteer trips, it seemed like the perfect fit that brought together my personal and professional interests.

I focused on the trip as a work activity and underestimated how personally meaningful it would be. At the beginning of the week, one of the future homeowners prayed that the work we were about to do would be a blessing to us, as it would be for them. I had never thought of work as a form of a blessing, but those words stayed with me and resonated even more by the end of the week.

We're looking forward to the next Global Village trip so that I can enlist even more people to join me on this deeply rewarding home-building journey. I like that with every house I design or build, I'm a part of someone else's story of success.



Melissa Estrada, volunteer

In Nicaragua, the family was with us every day that we were there. It was a really great experience to get to work with them. The woman who owned the land, she was touching the bricks as we were putting them down. Every day she'd see her house growing.

At the end of each build day, we had a big bring-it-on-home session where we sat around and talked about our experience that day and how it made it us feel – and how much we understood the impact we were having.

Matthias, growing up in a Greenwood Area Habitat home

My mom worked really hard to get this house.



Kavanagh Hewitt, volunteer

I really love Habitat's mission, and I like that Habitat homeowners are out there doing the work, too. Habitat is all about a hand up, not a handout.

It is a great way to meet new people. You learn a lot of good skills. And with Habitat, you get to help your community out and make it a better place.

Peter Znika, Habitat Chicago construction manager

Just prior to my beginning here at Habitat, my son had graduated from Indiana State University with an education degree. He got his first job at kind of an underprivileged school that had a lot of underprivileged kids. It was a pretty rough school. He would come home and was pretty disgruntled after a couple of weeks of school.

He was telling me stories about how he turns his back to write on the board, and the next thing you know, they're walking across desks. He said he spent about 90 percent of his time in the classroom just trying to get the kids wrangled in. So, I was getting pretty upset when I was hearing that.

Peter's son then explained how many of his students would often spend one night at one relative's home, and then the next night with another relative, how they didn't have a stable place to call their own.

When he starts explaining the story of these kids, I was upset thinking about how these kids don't have a home to go to. That struck a chord with me.

This is my calling. Quite frankly, I think God put me here. How could I say no?

Your financial support, your voice and your time will help more families like Youkhanna's, Phun's and Matthias' achieve the strength, stability and independence they need to build better lives. Donate today!



Dan Biller, volunteer

We work on a lot more than a house when the whole neighborhood gets involved. Other homeowners see what's going on, and that inspires them to take more of an interest in their own homes. It is great to see what we can do for an individual homeowner – and equally as satisfying to see what we can do for the community as a whole.



families
ability and



help build more homes

by filling out a simple form



Request and submit a company matching gift form if you are an employee, retiree or employee's spouse. Your company-matched gift could help Habitat **DOUBLE** or even **TRIPLE** the impact for families in need of a safe, decent, affordable home.

Visit [habitat.org/match](https://www.habitat.org/match) today to find out if your employer matches donations to Habitat.

An anniversary of gifts

“A house is to a family what soil is to a plant,” Millard Fuller once said. “A plant needs to be rooted. A family is like that. If a family is not rooted, it will not flourish. But once a family is well-rooted, all kinds of wonderful things will begin to happen.”

This year, Habitat for Humanity celebrates 40 years of wonderful things happening for families in your community and around the world. Decent shelter is something we all need to thrive, and the years have shown us again and again what a strong foundation a Habitat house can be for a family.

Like a seedling, the idea that became Habitat for Humanity first grew from the fertile soil of Koinonia Farm, a community farm outside of

Americus, Georgia, founded by farmer and biblical scholar Clarence Jordan.

It was on the farm that Jordan and Millard and Linda Fuller developed the concept of “partnership housing.” The concept centered on those in need of adequate shelter working side by side with volunteers to build decent, affordable houses. Sound familiar?

Beau and Emma were the owners of the first home built by Koinonia’s Partnership Housing Program. They and their five children moved into the home in 1969, and they paid off their mortgage in 1989, six months ahead of schedule. The concrete-block home with a modern kitchen, indoor bathroom and heating system replaced the family’s previous dwelling: an unpainted, uninsulated shack that had no plumbing.

The times have changed, the build site locations have grown in number, but the very real change that Beau and Emma’s family experienced is shared by families today who partner with Habitat to build or improve a place they can call home.

We now work in 1,400 communities across the U.S. and in more than 70 countries. In 2015, Marcy was just one Habitat homeowner who made her final mortgage payment. The Habitat home she helped build is “an accomplishment that gives me chills,” she says. Empowered by





her partnership with us, she has raised two children in her home, children who know healthier, more stable lives than they would have before.

“The reality,” writes Habitat CEO Jonathan Reckford, “is that if children don’t live in decent homes, the odds of their staying healthy plummet. If they’re not healthy, they don’t get educated; and if they don’t get an education, they don’t get decent jobs, meaning they won’t be able to care for their families or break out of the stranglehold of poverty.”

That’s what Habitat helps change. Through shelter, we empower. Join us this year as we celebrate every Beau and Emma, every Marcy, every family that we’ve encountered in our four decades of building. Every single one deserves the opportunity for a better future that your support of Habitat makes available to them. ■

Celebrate our anniversary online with new content each month at [habitat.org/magazine](https://www.habitat.org/magazine). We look back, look ahead and observe four decades of building with families in your community and around the world.

No place like home

Habitat for Humanity helps people stay in their homes as they age.

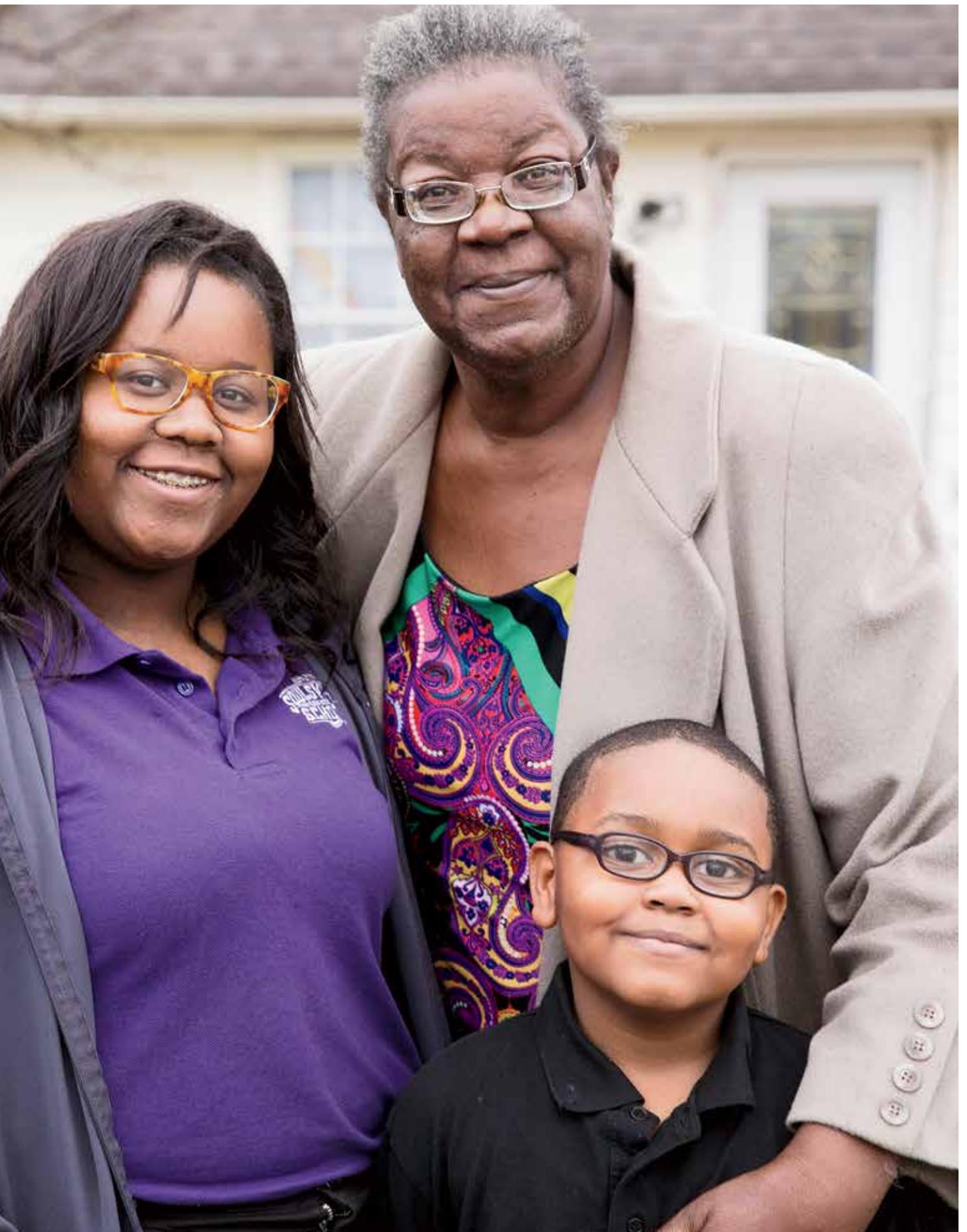
After raising her own kids, Carrie has signed on once again for days filled with homework, basketball games, music lessons, dance team, choir practice. The former Memphis schoolteacher is parenting her 14-year-old granddaughter, Angelique, and 7-year-old great-grandson, Joshual — and doing so joyfully. “I tell them all the time that they are the reason I get up in the morning,” Carrie says, “and they are why I have to stick around, to see what they become.”

This round of parenting has come with some new challenges. Her health is one. And like so many older people throughout the United States, Carrie couldn’t afford to keep up the maintenance on her house.

Through a repair program for older homeowners led by Habitat for Humanity of Greater Memphis, Carrie’s house has

Major house repairs help Carrie provide a stable home for her granddaughter and great-grandson. “I want to give them love, a lift up, knowledge and a good home,” Carrie says.





a new roof, water heater and lighting. The door to her house has been made wheelchair accessible, for the days when Carrie has trouble walking. “When they put that roof on, my great-grandson said, ‘We don’t need the pots and pans in my room anymore.’ He is so excited,” Carrie says. “We all are.”

“One of the most important issues”

Carrie is among a growing number of grandparents raising grandchildren. As a whole, the U.S. is getting older — one in five Americans will be 65 years or greater by 2030, and their numbers are expected to double by 2050.

One thing has not changed. People want to grow old in their own home and expect to do so, according to research by AARP Foundation. Habitat recognizes the long-term contributions these older residents have made and continue to make in their communities, and we’re intensifying our work with them as part of our neighborhood revitalization efforts.

“The housing needs of older adults are one of the most important issues this country is facing,” says Sue Henderson, Habitat for Humanity International’s vice president for U.S. operations. “We recognize something far more important — the simple fact that seniors are special. Their contributions paved the way for our successes. We want to be part of the solution that helps them stay in their homes.”

Part of the solution

In 2014, the Plough Foundation, a Memphis nonprofit, awarded \$3.9 million for house repairs and rehabs for low-income seniors living in Shelby

County, which includes the city of Memphis. Memphis Habitat was selected as the lead agency of the initiative and is partnering with Service Over Self, a nonprofit that also does home repairs, and MLGW, the local utility company that looks for energy-efficient ways to save homeowners money. In 2016, this consortium plans to repair or rehab 250 homes.

Alice was among the first homeowners to apply for help. Her daughter lives close by and wants

A new roof and some home modifications help Alice remain independent and living in her own home. “My mom has always been a caregiver, and she wants to take of herself,” says Cleola, Alice’s daughter.



Alice to stay with her. “I want to be in my house, to sling my own pots and pans,” Alice says. A bad knee makes the 80-year-old a little unsteady on her feet, but a new no-step entry into the house, a high toilet and handrails in the hallway provide her with more sure footing, as well as minimize the likelihood of her falling. Alice also has a new roof.

One of the biggest improvements, Alice says, is that her HVAC system was fixed, so she now has heat

“Habitat
helped me
do better.”

ALICE



when it's cold and air conditioning when it's hot. The house used to get so oppressive in the summer that Alice didn't cook. She could barely even catch her breath, she says, because her lungs don't work very well. "I was just going to suffer till I could do better," Alice says. "Habitat helped me do better."

In addition to their repair work, Memphis Habitat recently expanded their team to include a social worker who steers older homeowners to additional community resources, including ones focusing on nutrition, health and transportation. The initiative isn't just about keeping someone in their home. It is about improving their quality of life.

In a recent round of surveys, all of the homeowners reported feeling more stable and proud of their

homes. They should be proud of themselves, says Mary Claire Borys, manager of Memphis Habitat's aging in place initiative. "We couldn't task for better role models for our new Habitat homeowners. Who knows better how to pay the mortgage and be a good neighbor than people who have been doing it for 30 and 40 years?"

"A whole new world"

Carrie is a proud woman. She is proud to count herself among the first African Americans to graduate from the University of Mississippi. She is proud of her ability to connect with kids — she taught middle-school math and counseled teenagers with drug and alcohol problems before she got sick. Carrie is mostly

BY THE NUMBERS

44.7 million

Americans are 65 years and older. The number is expected to double by 2050.

80 percent

of older Americans own their home.

25 percent

are widowed, most of them women.

Almost 1/3

of Habitat's work in the U.S. in fiscal year 2015 involved partnering with older, low-income homeowners to make critically needed house repairs on their current homes.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; Habitat for Humanity International

Orlen says that minor repairs — grab bars in the bathroom, drawer pulls in the kitchen and lever handles on the doors to his house — have dramatically improved his life, as has work on his central heating and air conditioning system. The Shelby County resident is scheduled to have a wheelchair ramp installed this spring.



“Habitat came in and put in a light, and it is like a whole new world.”

CARRIE



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give a habitat gift

Choose meaningful gifts to help provide decent housing

When you purchase gifts from the Habitat Gift Catalog, you are funding life-changing work to help families take a big step to a better, more stable life.

Our catalog offers symbolic gifts that are representative of the materials and services we use and provide to build decent homes in your community and around the world.

habitatgiftcatalog.org

proud of her granddaughter and great-grandson. “I have to admit they are some pretty good kids,” she says. “I want the house to be better for them.”

And it is. Both children have allergies, which are under control now that the house is dry. Carrie likes to cook with the kids. “We cook some greens and beans, something that will stick to them,” she says. “My kitchen was dark as a thousand midnights. Habitat came in and put in a light, and it is like a whole new world in there. It is like a whole new world for us.” ■

RESOURCES

Habitat for Humanity

habitat.org

Recognizes the stability that older residents bring to their communities and Habitat’s work to revitalize neighborhoods. Many local Habitats now have programs specifically aimed at helping people stay in their homes as they age. Check to see if your local Habitat does.

The Carters to build in Memphis

James lived through the bad times in the Memphis neighborhood of Uptown, always hopeful that the good times would come. He is glad he stuck around.

“The neighborhood has started coming back to itself,” says James, who is 69 and bought his house in Uptown 31 years ago. “And now, all different kinds of neighbors are coming in, all of them real nice.”

Even more people will be moving into Uptown, the focus of the 2016 Jimmy & Rosalynn Carter Work Project. From Aug. 21-26, President and Mrs. Carter and thousands of volunteers will join homeowners and future homeowners to build new homes, repair homes of older residents and complete beautification projects.

Memphis Habitat has been working with residents and other partners to revitalize Uptown since 2012. Habitat has been involved in the rehab and beautification of more than 85 properties, including 16 historical houses, several commercial properties, and the homes of more than 70 veterans and older residents, including James.

James, who served 20 years in the Army and two stints in Vietnam, raised three sets of kids in his house in Uptown, including a nephew whose father had died. Pearlina, James’ wife of 43 years, died in 2008. “I miss my wife, but this home gives me a peace of mind.” he says. “I can be free and relaxed here. I look out for my neighbors, and they look out for me because that is what neighbors do.”

James doesn’t like to drive anymore so he bikes around the neighborhood. He likes what he sees. “I see Habitat working all over,” he says. “I guess if you live long enough, you get to see things get better.”

Visit **habitat.org/cwp** to learn more about this year’s Carter Work Project and **habitat.org/magazine** to take a video tour of Memphis Habitat’s work in Uptown.

AARP and AARP Foundation

aarp.org, aarp.org/foundation

Offer practical resources to help people remain in their home as they age, including a guide on how to make your home fit for all ages.

AARP Foundation and Habitat for Humanity International have been sponsoring gatherings around the country where local Habitats can learn how to better partner with older homeowners.

Eldercare Locator

eldercare.gov

Connects older people and their families to community-based services and resources.

National Association of Area Agencies on Aging

n4a.org

Represents the country's Area Agencies on Aging and programs that enable older people and people with disabilities to live at home.



// what's new at **habitat.org**



VIDEO

Through shelter, we empower

Our shared vision is a world where everyone has a decent place to live. With our help, Habitat homeowners achieve the strength, stability and independence they need to build a better future for themselves and their families.



FEATURE STORY

Paid in full

In 1995, Victoria began pouring her heart and sweat into building Verde Valley Habitat for Humanity's first home. Twenty years later, she has paid off the house and set fire to the mortgage.

BLOG POST

What is sweat equity?

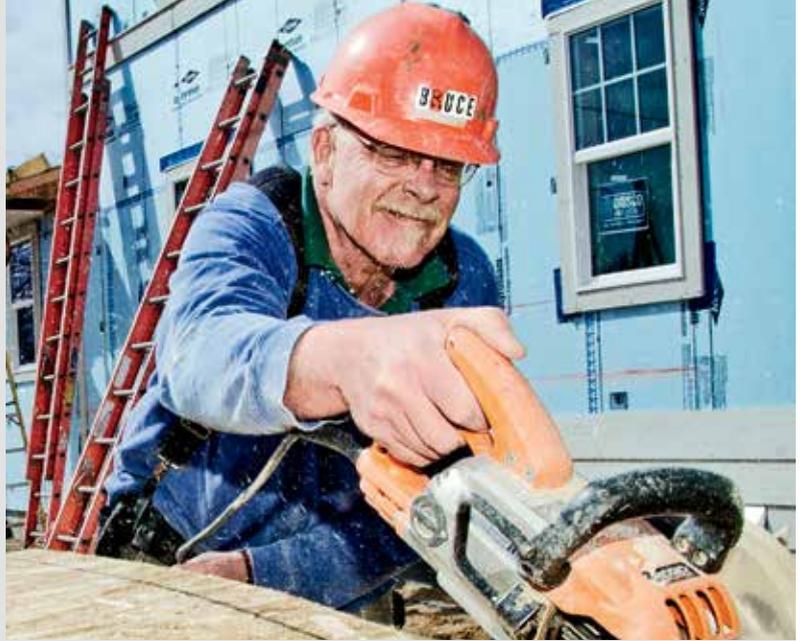
Future Habitat homeowners work alongside volunteers to build and improve a place they can call home.



FEATURE STORIES

Who does it take to build a Habitat house?

In every Habitat home, you find the work and dedication of so many people, all working in different ways but with a common goal. See stories that share the various roles that volunteers fulfill and meet some of the people you might build alongside.



ONLINE STORE

Shop and support

Browse the official online store of Habitat for Humanity. Every purchase supports our work.



BLOG POST

Benefits of volunteering

Find out our top 6 reasons why volunteering is not only good for the community but also good for you!



FEATURE STORIES AND BLOG POSTS

Connect with ReStores

In our stories section, spend a day inside a Habitat ReStore and then ride along for a truck run to pick up generous donations. Over on the Why ReStore? blog, get creative with DIY tips.

Visit us online to learn more and give today!



Maureen's legacy

As an architecture student, Maureen Thompson designed a Habitat house that would forever change the lives of dozens of families, including hers.





Taylor Thompson with his dad, Gary, and sisters, Kyla and Katelyn, on the Habitat build site. Taylor has raised \$85,000 to build a house to honor his mom, Maureen, who died from breast cancer.

“What would mom want us to do? Change the world.”

TAYLOR THOMPSON

Doing one thing, no matter how big or small, has the power to change the world, Taylor Thompson says. Take his mom.

As an architecture student, she helped design and build a house with Austin Habitat for Humanity. That one thing inspired her parents to volunteer with their local Habitat, where they have helped build more than 70 homes.

And now Taylor, who is just 17, has raised \$85,000 to build a Habitat home, around the corner from the one his mother designed. He is dedicating the house to his mother, who died in October 2014 after a decade-long battle with breast cancer.

“There are so many different ways that our family could have taken the loss,” says Taylor, who has two younger sisters. “All of us ask ourselves, ‘What would mom want us to do if she was still here?’ For me, the answer is that she wouldn’t want us to sit around. She would want us to do things, to change the world.”

Because of Taylor, life is changing for Annette Lopez and her 4-year-old daughter, Isabella. Annette is the future homeowner of the house Taylor is sponsoring. The affordable Habitat mortgage gives Annette the opportunity to give Isabella something she didn’t have growing up: stability. “When I was raised, we moved around a lot and I went to six different elementary schools,” says Annette, a service representative with the state of Texas. “I am so excited for Isabella to grow up somewhere stable.”

On Saturdays, Annette and Taylor work alongside each other on the two-story house. “Taylor is such an amazing young man,” Annette says. “He is doing something in honor of his mom, something that she loved, that will make our lives better. His story is very touching to me.”

“All because of Maureen”

This Habitat story begins in 1996 when Maureen Thompson and several other architecture students at the University of Texas at Austin won a competition to design a Habitat house. Their vision for a U-shaped home maximizes cross-ventilation and airflow, and some of their design elements can be found in other Habitat homes in Austin.

The project intrigued Maureen’s parents, Henry and Ann Diercxsens, who had just retired to South Carolina. “I got so interested that I decided on our way back home that we would find out if there was a Habitat where we live,” Henry says. He and his wife started building with Hilton Head Regional Habitat, where they also have served on the board.

Taylor plans to become an architect like his mom. He wants to design homes, which he calls “places of the soul.”





is contributing to that legacy. “Taylor is the third-generation Habitat builder in our family,” Henry says, “and that is all because of Maureen.”

Places of the soul

Habitat is giving Taylor something in return, his grandmother says. “He has worked out a lot of his grief working on that house.”

For Taylor, building a Habitat home is the most meaningful way to honor his mom. “Her real passion was architecture,” Taylor says. “When she went into the office, she wasn’t Maureen with breast cancer, she was Maureen the architect. She worked up until the week she died.”

Taylor aspires to become an architect, too, and plans to design homes. His mom gave him a book, *Places of the Soul: Architecture and Environmental Design as a Healing Art*. “For me, homes are places of the soul,” Taylor says. “When you create a home, you create a space for someone to express themselves. You create a foundation. That is why I think Habitat is such a great organization. It creates that foundation for families to kick start their life into high gear and start doing big things.”

Raising \$85,000 to sponsor a Habitat home is a big thing in its own right. Maureen’s architecture firm made the first big donation toward the house. His father, Gary, who owns a technology company, also introduced Taylor

Maureen and her father, Henry Diercxsens, on site of the Habitat house that she designed and helped build 20 years ago. Maureen’s son, Taylor, is helping to build a Habitat home (above) in her honor.



“When you create a home, you create a space for someone to express themselves. You create a foundation.”

TAYLOR THOMPSON

They’ve lost track of how many homes they have worked on, but more than 70 is a pretty safe bet. The couple has volunteered in other communities, too, through Habitat’s Global Village volunteer trips.

These days, Henry is a regular on build sites, and Ann volunteers in the Habitat ReStore and serves on the committee that identifies future homeowners. “Habitat gives people a chance to have their own home and improve their living conditions,” Henry says. “People feel very strongly about their commitment to Habitat, and that is the way we feel.”

Those feelings have intensified since Maureen’s death. The Diercxsens view the homes that they have built — and the families living in those homes — as part of their daughter’s legacy. And now their grandson



Taylor spends his weekends building with future Habitat homeowner Annette. “He is doing something in honor of his mom,” says Annette. “Something that she loved, that will make our lives better.”

to some possible donors. “I learned as I went through the process. You have to talk to people and if they say no, you just have to talk to someone else,” Taylor says. He has started raising money to sponsor a second Habitat home — this one to honor all women who have battled breast cancer. He’s also planning to go on a Global Village trip to a location in Africa next year.

Meanwhile, the house in Maureen’s honor is well under way. “I can’t wait till Saturdays,” says Taylor, who has given up soccer to spend his weekends building with Annette. “It has been great to get to know her, and it is cool to share her story,” he says. “And I feel close to my mom. That is the best part of this experience.” ■

Want to be like Taylor and change the world? Your financial support, your voice and your time will help more future homeowners like Annette build or improve a place they can call home. Visit [habitat.org](https://www.habitat.org) today!



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[habitat.org/hopebuilder](https://www.habitat.org/hopebuilder)

CAMBODIA

Having a house gives me comfort, safety, strength, hope and the courage to keep on working and doing everything, without hesitation. It provides confidence for my children, hope for my whole family and strength for my soul.

Sann, Habitat homeowner





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ARV Users Association





The day Nayeli discovered Habitat for Humanity was the day she saw a way toward a better future for herself and her daughter through decent, stable, affordable housing.



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