

## Elementary school

### Objective

Learn how decent, affordable homes affect children's daily lives.

### PREPARE

- Print out a copy of the attached story and collage template for each child.
- Gather colored pencils, crayons or markers, scissors, glue, and recycled newspapers and magazines.

### LEARN

- Together, read aloud the attached story, "The new house." Explain that this story is based on a real family who worked with Habitat for Humanity to build and own their new house. Tell children that Habitat for Humanity helps build decent, affordable homes with people all around the world.
- Ask your children to think about how living in the small, cramped apartment might have affected the lives of the family members. Children's responses might include: Maybe it was hard for the kids to do homework with so many people living together. Maybe it was hard to keep the house clean. The roaches made it an unhealthy place to live. Maybe the kids got sick more often. Maybe the kids felt sad or embarrassed.
- Talk about how the children have "a brighter, healthier future" now that they are living in a clean, safe house.
- Share the following facts about children and housing in the United States:
  - Owning a home leads to better test scores for kids and less problems with behavior.
  - Children of homeowners are more likely to stay in school.
  - Children who live in unsafe or dirty homes are more likely to get sick.

- Give each child the collage template, art supplies, and recycled newspapers and magazines. Ask children to complete the sentence: "A safe and healthy home helps kids \_\_\_\_\_." Help children fill in the blank with an appropriate response, such as learn, be safe, stay in school, be healthy, etc. Then, together, find words and images in the newspapers and magazines that reflect your answer. Create a collage. Children may also draw illustrations that apply to the concept.
- Display the collages in your home so your children can help "spread the word" about the need for good, safe housing to visitors. You also might decide to send the collages to your local Habitat for Humanity affiliate to be displayed in its office. Go to this link to find your local affiliate: <http://www.habitat.org/local/>.

### REFLECT

- Together, discuss how Habitat for Humanity helps to ensure that children and their families have good housing. Visit the Habitat Trekkers section of Habitat for Humanity's youth programs Web site: [http://www.habitat.org/youthprograms/ages\\_5\\_8/ages\\_5\\_8\\_default.aspx](http://www.habitat.org/youthprograms/ages_5_8/ages_5_8_default.aspx). Have children explore how Habitat is helping people around the world.
- Explain to children that although they are too young to build houses, there are many ways they could help Habitat. Read about opportunities to help by visiting [http://www.habitat.org/youthprograms/ages\\_5\\_8/you\\_default\\_ages\\_5\\_8.aspx](http://www.habitat.org/youthprograms/ages_5_8/you_default_ages_5_8.aspx). Contact your local Habitat affiliate to ask questions. Together, decide how your family could help.

## The new house

Mary Gallagher doesn't see anything special about her life. She says she does what she must to get by, but many see it differently. This 25-year-old single mother is raising three children, one of whom has a disability. She is also raising her 16-year-old sister.

Mary works her shift job putting together circuit boards. She lived in a cramped home that didn't give her and her four family members much space. In order to pay rent, Mary had taken on three roommates. Space got even tighter. To make matters worse, roaches also moved into the home. All eight people shared a two-bedroom apartment.

Now Mary and her family live in a new Habitat house. The house is in a Habitat community that college students helped build.

"Habitat has truly healed my family, as it has so many others," says Mary. "Not only has Habitat helped me gain a beautiful new home, but also a brighter, healthier future for my children. Thank you so much for your kind and loving hearts. Without people like you, my family would still be lost in the crowd."



A safe and healthy home helps kids

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