



EVERY HABITAT HOME

BUILDS A

**STRONGER
COMMUNITY**

Dear Habitat Ambassador

The year 2020 will long be remembered in the history books.

The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically and quickly altered lives around the planet with unprecedented social, political and economic implications. As individuals, families, and communities, we are trying our best to adapt to a rapidly changing world by implementing health measures to protect our loved ones and ourselves. Many are balancing remote work and schooling children from home. Still many more are unable to work from the safety of their homes, and many others are unexpectedly unemployed. All are trying to keep the flow of life somehow moving forward.

It is against this backdrop that over the past 3-4 months Hartford Area Habitat for Humanity has continued its mission of serving those in need within the communities we serve. While we curtailed our operations during this time, we considered home construction essential. By employing applicable safety precautions we were able to continue building projects already in progress. We did so with limited staff, without our usual volunteer workforce.

Because considerable uncertainty remains about the long-term impact of the pandemic, we adjusted our 2021 outlook accordingly. During the past few months, our CEO, Karraine Moody and the Habitat staff have done an excellent job navigating the COVID-19 challenges. We procured much appreciated Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) funding, built up our cash reserves, and employed strategic cost-cutting

measures, all of which positioned us well to resume full operations in early June, including the ReStore. We are excited about volunteers returning to our builds. They are the backbone of our workforce. In July, Habitat will welcome teams for a month of Women's Build, which was originally scheduled for May. In August, we will host our 26th 'Sticks for Brick's' Golf Tournament at Wampanoag Country Club in West Hartford, one of our major fundraising events. Please join us!

Unfortunately, these past few months also have presented another great challenge for our country, which is not unprecedented. The tragic death of George Floyd once again highlighted the great struggle our country has faced when it comes to matters of race, equality, and justice.

In responding to the George Floyd tragedy, Habitat for Humanity International CEO, Jonathan Reckford and Adrienne Goolsby, Senior Vice President, U.S. and Canada, co-authored a letter to the Habitat community saying in part:

"The way we approach our work at Habitat has been a vehicle for reconciliation and has broken down barriers between people. We work alongside those willing to partner with us, no matter their background or walk of life, and that will always be true.

Habitat can be a vehicle for reconciliation. But it only happens if we make it so. Habitat is more than a housing nonprofit. It's a vision of a world where we share one humanity. Habitat for Humanity was born on a farm in South Georgia on the theory of racial inclusivity, at a time when inclusivity was seen by some as an existential threat. It's a vision of a world we still believe in and fight to build every day."

For just over 30 years, Hartford Area Habitat for Humanity has been working in the greater Hartford community to fulfill this mission. Please help us share that vision. Help us improve all the lives of the individuals and communities we serve.

In partnership,
Mark D. Vasington
Board President, Hartford Area Habitat for Humanity

**To view the full letter, and learn more about Hartford Area Habitat for Humanity affiliate, please visit our website at: www.hartfordhabitat.org*

Message From Our CEO



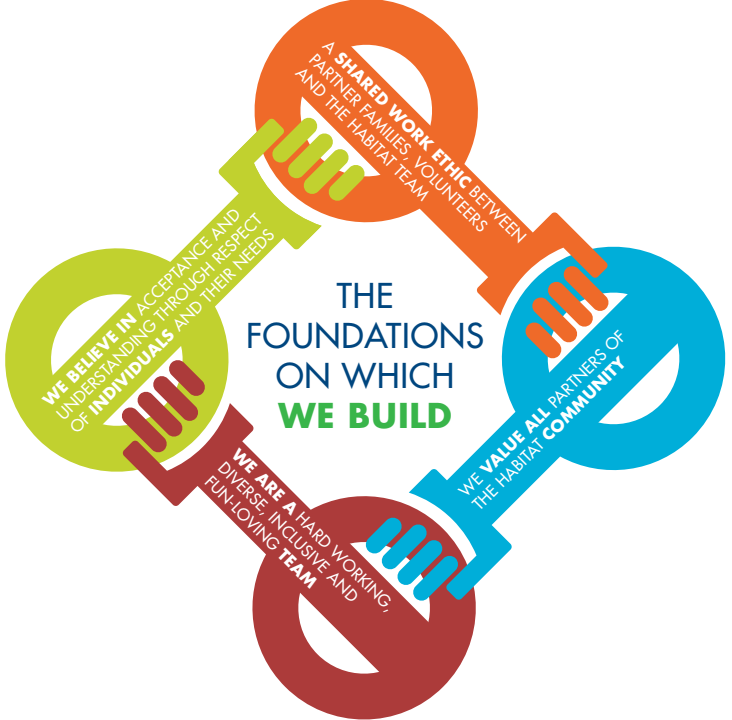
The past six months has been a roller coaster ride to say the least but I am confident that as a nation we can overcome the pandemic and create a permanent path to equality. I was amazed at how our community rallied again to support each other. **Thank You!**

Over 65% of our homeowners are considered essential workers so they continued to work at Hartford Hospital, Amazon, Walmart, Home Depot, and the various grocery retailers to keep our local community stable. Our staff and volunteers kept the mission moving forward without a second thought. Habitat for Humanity was birthed through crisis and the mission continues to weather the storms of segregated housing standards, affordable housing and equity.

This special newsletter was created to keep you informed of our progress and dedication to **PRESS FORWARD**. Throughout the pandemic, we urged citizens to stay home and for some Americans that was not possible. The housing crisis in America remains one of the largest hurdles on our path to an equitable society. My prayer is that you will continue to volunteer, donate, build and pray for us. With your support, we will continue to **MOVE** mountains and **BUILD** stable communities.

In Partnership,

 KARRAINE MOODY
 Chief Executive Officer



**HARTFORD HABITAT
 SHARED VALUES**

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Habitat for Humanity®

ReStore

500 Cottage Grove Road, Bloomfield, CT 06002

SHOP DONATE VOLUNTEER

hartfordhabitat.org/restore 860-519-0828

SHOP THE STORE THAT BUILDS HOMES.

Furniture, appliances, building materials, and more at **discount prices**. Proceeds help build Habitat for Humanity homes in the Hartford area.

SAVE 50-75% OFF RETAIL PRICES

on quality home improvement goods



500 Cottage Grove Road, Bloomfield, CT 06002
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Serving More Families: A Brush with Kindness



Veteran from Enfield, CT

With our **A Brush With Kindness Program (ABWK)** we have served six homes in need of major repairs. Repairs and renovations included roofs, ramps, insulation and siding, deck repairs and exterior paint projects. We also have partnered with the **Home Depot Foundation** to support those with military service throughout Hartford County. We are receiving applications for Fall 2020 and Spring 2021. Please contact **Family Services** with any questions at 860-541-2208 ext. 2210.



Before the restoration.



After the restoration of the veteran home in Hartford, in partnership with Rebuilding Together

CARS FOR HOMES



Put your old car to work,
BUILDING HOUSES!



Donating your vehicle could be
TAX DEDUCTIBLE!



hartfordhabitat.org/donate-a-car



Consider Habitat for Your Legacy Gift



On May 27, 2020, Hartford Habitat held its first COVID-19 home dedication at 40 Lyness Street in Manchester. While only seven of us were in attendance due to the CDC requirements on social gatherings, Kim Velez, our new homeowner, and Susan Biggers Hussey met for the first time. Susan is the sister of Wendy Biggers, the generous donor who willed her home to Habitat. Susan shared that Wendy was a strong, independent woman who lost her battle to cancer in 2018. She said, *“one of Wendy’s final wishes was to give the house to Habitat for Humanity so another family could come in and love it as much as she did.”* Kim and her



son, Akeem, shared their appreciation by thanking Wendy for her legacy gift of a new home. In tearful joy she said, *“We are so appreciative for her generosity and we will take very good care of this house.”*

How can you help like Wendy Biggers did? You can become a Legacy Donor. A legacy donation is a way you can arrange to leave gifts of money or other assets to fund our mission after your lifetime. While on some level all gifts are “planned,” a legacy gift to Hartford Area Habitat for Humanity as part of your estate plan helps us continue our work of providing opportunities for successful homeownership to deserving families such as the Velez family.



By planning a legacy gift you are helping build a strong foundation for your community’s future and ensuring that Hartford Habitat can continue serving others in our mission to eliminate poverty housing in the Greater Hartford Area. The first step is to develop a charitable giving strategy. To discuss the possibilities, please call Rose Vigdal, our Engagement Manager, at 860-541-2208 ext. 2205.

Welcoming Our New Director of Development

I am excited to join Hartford Area Habitat for Humanity team in July. I have been working in the not-for-profit world for over 20 years as a fundraiser focused on individual major gifts and am looking forward to getting to know the Habitat community. My career has concentrated on the health and human services industry most recently at Foodshare, American Red Cross and Jewish Federation of

Greater Hartford. My personal values align strongly with the mission of Habitat for Humanity. When I am not working you can find me cheering at West Hartford Little League baseball games! Please reach out to me any time at 860.541.2208 ext. 2202 or deborah@hartfordhabitat.org. I look forward to hearing from you and the day we can meet safely in person. **Have a great summer!**



Deborah Zuckerman

CARES Act

As part of the government’s response to COVID-19, Congress passed the **Corona Virus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES)**. The purpose of this Act encourages charitable giving through tax provisions rewarding people who donate to charities.

- Up from 10%, the limitation for cash contributions from corporations to qualified charities increased to 25% of the corporation’s taxable income.

such as Hartford Area Habitat for Humanity. They cannot be made to a donor advised fund or private foundation. We encourage those of you who want to show you CARE through financial non-profit support to check with your financial advisor to see how these temporary rules may apply to you.

- 2020 Incentives given through the CARES Act include:
- An above-the-line deduction that allows an individual who does not itemize to deduct up to \$300 of cash contributions to a qualified charity.
 - Up from 60%, the deduction for cash contributions to a qualified charitable organization is increased to 100% of the individual’s adjusted gross income.



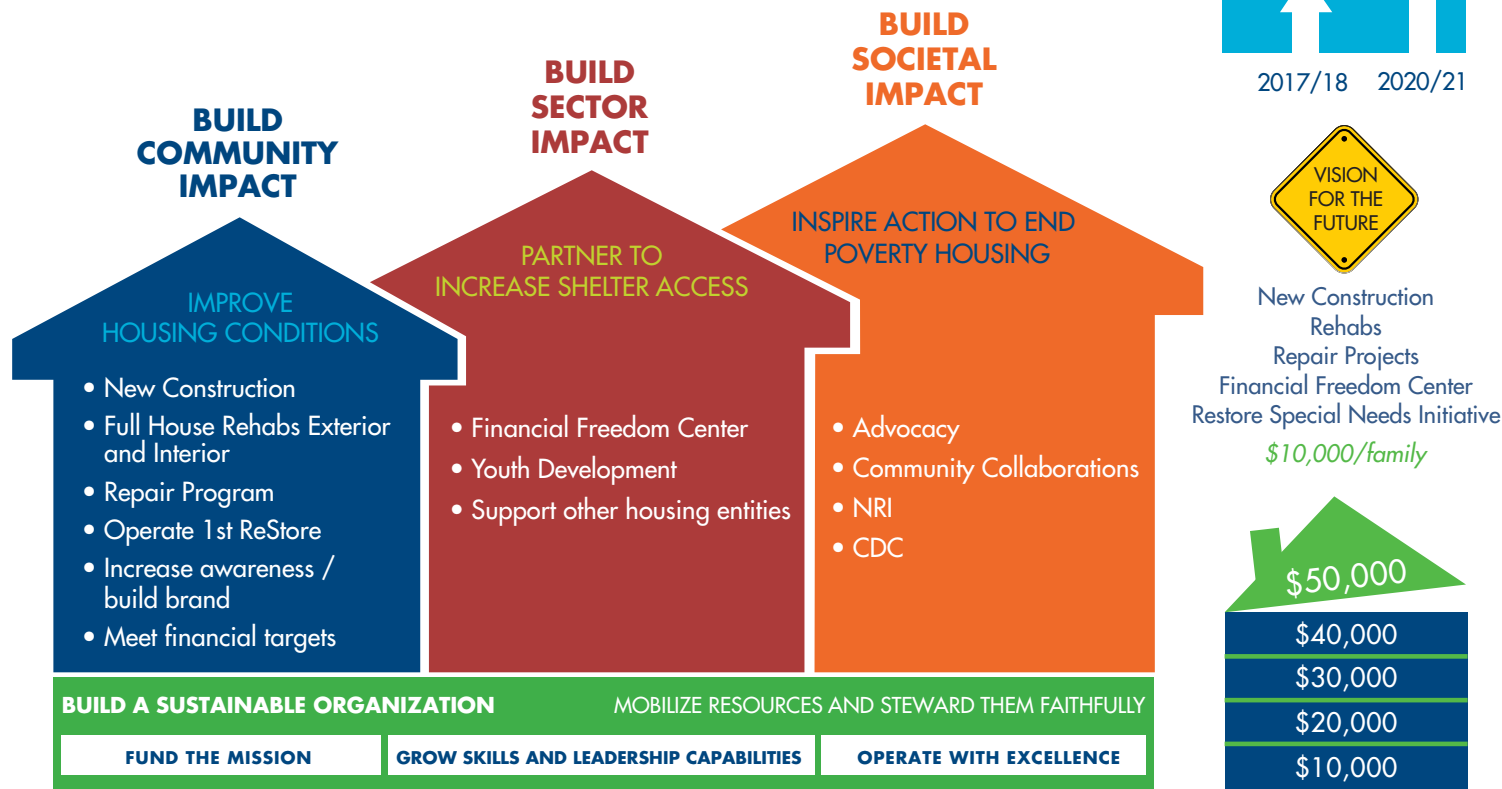
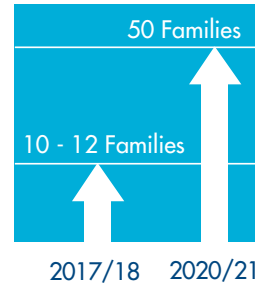
Please consider a tax deductible gift this year!

Strengthening Communities Through Homeownership!

THROUGH PARTNERSHIP... WE EMPOWER

Did You Know?

- Habitat has served 300 families
- Over 4,000 volunteers are hosted annually
- \$8 million+ has been added to the Greater Hartford Region's tax base
- 82% of our homeowners' children graduate from high school



Volunteer Spotlight



Millicent Cox

Ambassador
Site Host
Stuffing Party Volunteer
Crew Leader Trainee

A New Jersey native, Millicent earned a bachelor degree in education from the University of Hartford. Millicent taught middle and high school mathematics in Windsor and Windsor Locks for more than 35 years before retiring in 2018. She has turned her hobby of gardening into an opportunity to provide yard services to senior citizens in the town of West Hartford where she resides with her husband and daughter. Millicent also is an active member of the Fern Street Food Ministry.

Not ready to "retire to the rocking chair" Millicent joined Hartford Area Habitat for Humanity as an Ambassador and Site Host and is currently training as a Crew Leader. "Through my service with Habitat for Humanity I get to learn new skills, meet new people, and most importantly; to help families experience the joy of home ownership."



Will Macdonald

CHS Chapter President
Youth Ambassador
Site Host
Special Events Volunteer

Will got involved with Habitat for Humanity during his sophomore year at Conard High School when he founded his school's Habitat Chapter. Since then he has volunteered as a Site Host and as a Youth Ambassador sharing the Mission with fellow students. Will looks forward to continuing his work with Hartford Habitat in 2020 and beyond!

"Working with Hartford Habitat has allowed me to make a positive impact in our community, and has also shown me how my service can help to improve the lives of others. The individuals I have met through Habitat and their corresponding stories have offered unique perspective on homeownership and a greater sense of empathy for all."



Annie McDonnell

AmeriCorps National Construction Crew Leader (2019-2020)

My name is Annie and I am from Boston, MA!

After working at an affordable home repair non-profit in West Virginia and working in education back in Boston, I wanted to

continue to connect these two passions of service and teaching with Habitat!

One of the most beautiful parts about serving with Habitat is the community. Whether it is with our volunteer corps, the staff, or our Habitat prospective homeowner families, the relationships that are formed from folks coming together to create and build something new is wonderful! I am so thankful to be serving here and to have become a part of this community!



Cameron Midder-Sherrod

Youth Ambassador
Build Site Volunteer
Stuffing Party Volunteer
Special Events Volunteer

My name is Cameron Midder-Sherrod and since 2018, I have been an active volunteer with the Hartford Area Habitat for Humanity. I have participated in numerous events sponsored by this organization such as the Public Build Days, Youth Conferences, Playhouse Building and Stuffing Parties.

I have found it to be extremely fulfilling to service my community as well as other towns in CT. It is my hope that my public service will inspire others to take on the responsibility of playing a role in their community.

"Volunteer and be a Habitat Hero!"

YES, I want to help Habitat build homes and hope in Hartford County!

Enclosed is my tax-deductible gift of \$ _____

I wish to make a monthly contribution of \$ _____

My enclosed check is made payable to: Harford Area Habitat for Humanity

To pay online please visit www.hartfordhabitat.org/support

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

I am making my gift:

In Honor of _____

In Memory of _____

My company will match my gift. (form will be forwarded)

I am interested in Volunteering.

Please send me information about Planned Giving.

All contributions are tax deductible in accordance with IRS regulations

Where Are They Now?

by Don Shaw, Jr. - Director Emeritus of Hartford Area Habitat for Humanity



Shelter Beds at Immanuel Congregational Church, Hartford CT

This photo haunts me. How are the Hartford area homeless families that once slept in these beds coping today? Where are they? Where is home?

WE NEED TO LEARN FROM THIS CRITICAL MOMENT ENGULFING OUR WORLD

On a freezing February 11, 2020, one of the 15 Tuesday nights from this past December through March that Hartford's Immanuel Congregational Church volunteered as an overflow shelter during the coldest months of the year, I paused to take this photo of the shelter's "bedroom." The photo's image has stuck in my mind ever since.

An Immanuel teammate and I had just set up Hartford Fire Department supplied cots in the church chapel, covering them neatly with fresh, clean sheets and pillows, and warm blankets. The converted chapel would sleep 12 members of homeless families that night. Where are they now? How are they? Where is home?

In November 2019, with Hartford's citywide shelter system rightly anticipating being pushed beyond capacity, Immanuel Congregational Church leadership answered the city's call for help. It rallied 80 church members and friends to volunteer hosting an ad hoc shelter with the express purpose of serving overflow homeless families: parents, teenagers, and toddlers unable to secure shelter anywhere else in the Hartford.

Championed by church members Nancy Rion and Barbara Shaw (no relation), the Immanuel team was one of several Hartford faith communities committing one night a week during the winter to host homeless families. Its mission was to welcome, feed, and house stressed and confused families desperately seeking warmth, comfort, and nourishment. Homeless families swallow their pride moving from one place to another night after night, eating dinner with strangers, sleeping in crowded lodgings, accepting their surroundings silently, all the while tearfully hoping for a miracle. Their stories are complex, heartbreaking, and compelling.

With the current COVID-19 crisis mandates to stay home and maintain social distancing, the participating faith communities closed their volunteer shelters mid-March. Wreaking countrywide havoc, the pandemic is affecting our lives in ways never imagined. Thousands of

individuals and families heretofore living within relatively stable and secure comfort now face the daunting, if not overwhelming, challenges of finding food, employment, childcare, housing, and healthcare. The homeless are even more vulnerable. So, what do we do?

We need to learn from this critical moment engulfing our world. We need to learn what's truly important in life. We need to learn the importance of dignity, equality, and respect. We need to learn to share our world's abundance. We need to learn the importance of healing healthcare for everyone. We need to learn how to help others help themselves. We need to recognize that everyone has a personal story of a real life filled with the hopes and dreams most of us share, and most of all to be accepted and pursue a purposeful life.

While I may be haunted by the photo of the empty beds, and thoughts of the safety and well being of the homeless we served, I believe we all need to step up and learn how to build a better world. How do we begin? Consider the words of my friend Rev. Dennis P. (Denny) Moon, Senior Minister, South Congregational Church of Granby: *"Living in our society isn't just about individual rights, but also the common good. In order to understand the common good, you must enter into the suffering of others."*

VOLUNTEERS BUILD RESILIENT COMMUNITIES



Visit Don's blog, *Red Truck Stonecatcher* at redtruckstonecatcher.com

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"Building More Than a House"

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 for Humanity®
 Hartford Area

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