It was a sunny day in June when Mayor Catherine Pugh, community leaders and dozens of volunteers, family and friends gathered to welcome four new homeowners to the Woodbourne-McCabe community. In Alhambra Park, the centerpiece of the up-and-coming neighborhood, homeowners were presented with bibles and keys. Butch Darrell, a long-time volunteer with Church of the Good Shepherd, gave a heartfelt invocation, expressing gratitude for all of the hands that went into building the homes. Mayor Catherine Pugh followed, remarking on the transformation that is taking place in Woodbourne-McCabe and across Baltimore, thanks to Habitat homeowners.

Among those new homeowners was Madear Rheubottom (above), whose three young daughters presented flowers during the ceremony and then ran happily down the street to cut the ribbon on their new house. Looking fondly at them and the other children playing on the Alhambra Park playground, Madear said “I made the right choice. This is a good place for my daughters to grow up.”  

Get a first-hand look at this Baltimore City neighborhood on the rise!
Letter from the CEO

What does Habitat for Humanity do? It’s not a question I hear often. Habitat is one of the most recognizable charities on the planet, with a glowing reputation for building homes for families in need. Yet, I worry that while many people know our name and may have even volunteered with us, they don’t know the full extent of our work.

Habitat is a very unique - and challenging - model. It takes immense coordination to align fundraising, design and permitting, volunteers, skilled trades and family matching for a single house - nevertheless the 25+ we are actively working on at any given time. It all starts with assessing building opportunities, including the need in particular communities, costs to acquire property, other developments underway, and appeal for families. We strive to have all pieces of the puzzle line up so that families are not waiting for homes and homes are not built without a family matched. Of course, for any of this to work, we need funds - an average of $175,000 per house from start to finish.

Is it worth it? We think so. Our mission statement says we “bring people together to build homes, communities and hope.” Building homes is the most visible part of our mission, but it’s not the only thing we do. We are simultaneously building (or rebuilding) communities, meeting with residents, leveraging investments from public and private partners and ultimately raising property values, which helps to attract more families and businesses long-term.

And, we are building hope - for a family, a community and society itself. If thousands of people and partners can align to achieve the herculean task of completing a Habitat home, what else can’t we do?

Mike Posko
Chief Executive Officer
On the Move (cont’d)

As guests mingled in the park, enjoying celebratory cupcakes and music, it was hard to believe that not long ago more than half of the homes in Woodbourne-McCabe were vacant - ravaged by decades of gang violence. The turnaround began in 2010, when the City’s Vacants to Values program launched and 5 abandoned structures were demolished. Habitat Chesapeake immediately became a strong partner, committing to rebuilding 20+ homes and working with community leaders and other key stakeholders, like Loyola University to activate green spaces, engage young people and attract private investment. To date, thanks to generous grants from the State Department of Housing & Community Development, Wells Fargo, the Episcopal Coalition of Churches and Uptown Metro Presbyterian Coalition, we have renovated 14 beautiful homes and demolished several unsafe structures.

With these investments and a growing number of dedicated, long-term homeowners, Woodbourne-McCabe’s stock is definitely rising. Home values - which are still highly affordable - have quadrupled in the past year alone! We have no doubt that given the beautiful, kid-friendly park, walkable routes to schools and easy access to businesses and public transportation on the York Road Corridor, Woodbourne-McCabe will be a great place for Madear’s children and many others to grow up.

Cover: Front, top left: New homes in Woodbourne-McCabe; bottom left: Outreach Coordinator Nina Anderson hugs Madear at settlement; center: Madear and daughters pose with Mayor Pugh; top right: the playground in Alhambra Park; bottom right: The girls cut the ribbon on their new home. Above: Construction is underway on 10 more homes.
Mt. Winans is a quiet, historically African-American community in South Baltimore that was founded by a B & O Railroad magnate and later became home to Negro Baseball League Hall of Famer Leon Day. On the eastern edge lies Mt. Auburn Cemetery, where former NAACP president Lillie May Carroll Jackson and other prominent African-American leaders are interred. Beyond its deep history, Mt. Winans has a lot to offer. There is green space in every direction, a school and playground in walking distance and access to major thoroughfares like I-95 and 295 minutes away. It’s also one of six neighborhoods set to receive millions of dollars for new and improved amenities like recreation centers, athletic fields and more as part of the redevelopment of Port Covington.

All of this makes it the perfect setting for Habitat Chesapeake’s latest project - 9 brand-new townhomes on Huron St. The project was in the planning stages for several years as we successfully lobbied alongside community leaders to have an abandoned school building and dilapidated public housing demolished. Simultaneously, organizations like Parks & People Foundation renovated the local playground and installed green infrastructure features to manage stormwater flow.
Wells Fargo has been an enthusiastic Habitat for Humanity of the Chesapeake supporter for nearly 13 years. That support was on full display at this year’s Women Build Week - where more than 40 female associates came ready to work with a generous $15,000 check in-hand!

Over the years, Wells Fargo has given over $750,000 to Habitat Chesapeake projects and sent hundreds of employees to job sites!

Thank You Women Build Partners and Sponsors!

Above: Director of Volunteers, Matt Metzger, assigns Women Build Week participants to various units.

With much progress already made and strong partnerships in place, construction officially kicked off in March. Among the first volunteers on site were 150 female executives participating in Women Build Week - a nationwide campaign that engages women in affordable housing issues. The event was poignant, since 80% of Habitat Chesapeake homeowners are women and many have young daughters.

Thanks to generous support from Women Build sponsors like Wells Fargo and Harkins Builders, nine more families will have decent affordable homes in a neighborhood with a very bright future!
In a few short weeks Simeon Ainsworth will celebrate successfully completing HabiCorps, Habitat Chesapeake’s 10.5 month-long construction training program. He credits his involvement to the Project JumpStart program, a 14-week introduction to construction trades that’s operated by Jobs Opportunities Task Force and Associated Builders & Contractors.

Approximately 25% of Project JumpStart graduates are unable to find adequate employment post-program and that’s where HabiCorps comes in. Needing more time to perfect his skills and unsure of what type of construction work he wanted to pursue long-term, Simeon applied to find “more than just a job, a career.”

In HabiCorps, Simeon and his peers have spent the last 9 months learning how to build porches, decks and exterior walls; install windows and doors; hang drywall, tile and many other tricks of the trade!

Just weeks away from graduation, Simeon is excited to begin an apprenticeship, confident that he has a successful career ahead. I’m really looking forward to starting my career, being financially stable, and pursuing my next major goal of purchasing a house for my family.”

“I never saw myself doing trades as a career... Now I like working with my hands and seeing a task transform from nothing, to something. It feels like victory every time we finish a project.”

-Simeon Ainsworth, HabiCorps Trainee

Beyond The Build

It takes more than building skills to succeed in the highly competitive construction industry. Thankfully, one of the global leaders in recruiting and staffing, Aerotek, is based right here in Maryland and has been working with HabiCorps trainees to write their resumes and prepare for interviews. In addition to their generous in-kind services, Aerotek recently donated $55,000 to support program costs like staff salaries, transportation to-and-from worksites and trainee tools and uniforms. We could not be more grateful for their support!

Thank You, Aerotek!
Coming Home: 35 Years of Hope!

Our 35th Anniversary celebration kicked off on June 22 with a reception hosted by the Cornerstone Society - a group of individual donors who generously give $1,000 or more each year. Guests enjoyed cocktails and hors d’oeuvres before a ceremony that honored our homeowners and vital, long-term donors and partners. Stay tuned for more birthday celebrations in the coming year!

Thank you for 35 years of homes, communities & hope!

A Little Goes A Long Way

Zack Gwiazda (left, with brother Alex) has been an avid Habitat supporter for the past two years, selling greeting cards and trading acts of kindness for donations from family and friends because he “wants everyone to have a home.” Thank you for helping many families toward a brighter future, Zack. You’re an inspiration!

2017 Partners of the Year

Individual Supporter
Steve Buck

Corporate Supporter
Wells Fargo

Foundation Supporter
Orokawa Foundation

Individual Volunteer
Kathy Hermann

Group Volunteer
Northrop Grumman

Faith Partner
Episcopal Coalition

Community Partner
Project JumpStart

Youth Partner
Park School

In Kind Supporter
Harkins Builders

Government Partners
Governor Larry Hogan
DHCD Secretary Kenneth Holt
Mayor Catherine Pugh
BHCD Commissioner Michael Braverman

Legacy Partners
Allan Tibbels
Bank of America
Bert Hash
Paul’s Place
Stanley Black & Decker
It's hard work keeping our six ReStores open and ready for business seven days a week, but fortunately we have a lot of help. Working alongside our store managers and staff are dedicated volunteers who generously give their time to greet customers, answer questions, price and place products on the floor, and repair items when necessary.

One such volunteer is Baltimore resident Margie Dorsey who has been on the team at our Dundalk ReStore for the past three months. Like many of our volunteers, Margie loves that Restores bring in a wide range of customers, so she’s meeting new and different people every day. More than anything, though, she’s there for the cause, showing up three times a week for 4 - 7 hours at a time to help ReStores raise money to build more homes! Thanks to Margie and other dedicated volunteers, we are able to put the maximum amount of ReStore’s profits toward our mission. Last year alone, ReStores generated $3.6 million to to build homes, communities and hope!

If you enjoy meeting new people, or have special skills to share, like furniture refinishing or repair, consider joining our ReStore team! We have a wide range of opportunities - from greeting customers, to assisting our drivers with donation pick-ups, to leading do-it-yourself workshops. Call 443-297-5226 or email us at volunteer@chesapeakerestore.org to learn how you can help at the store that builds homes!