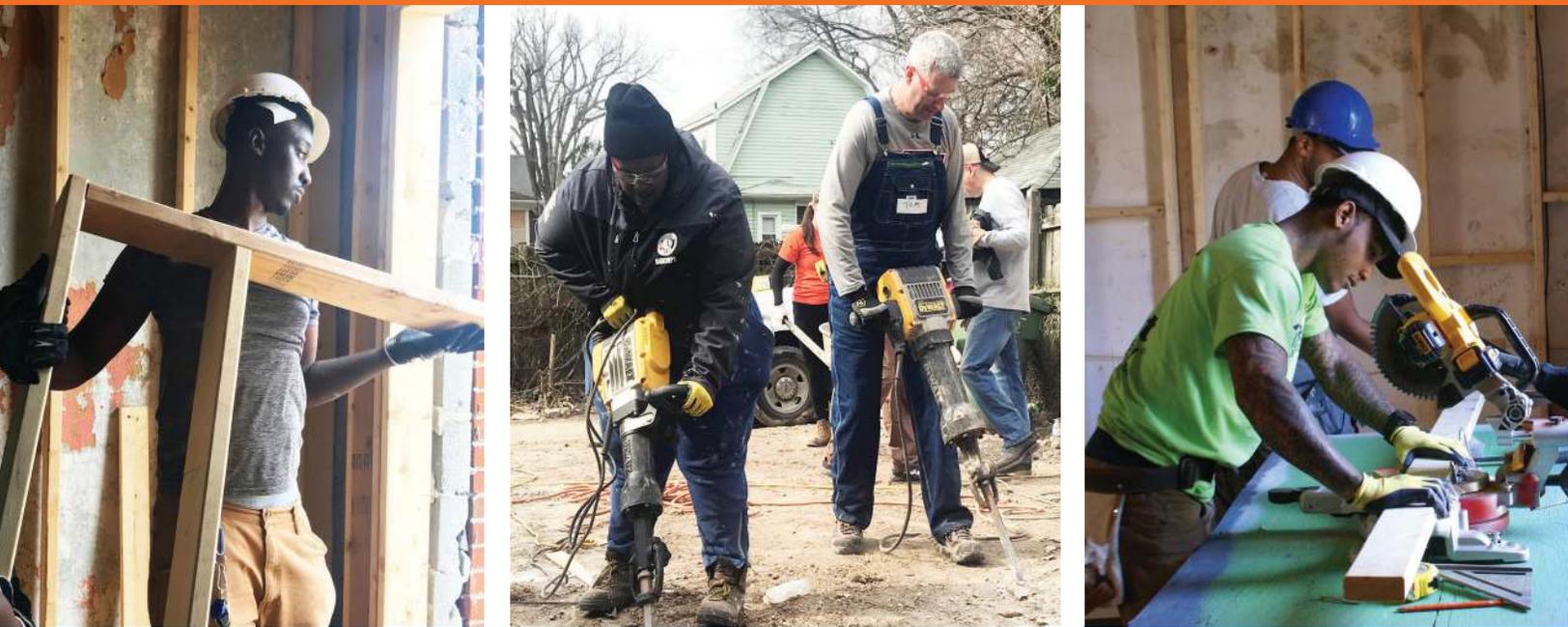




Hearts & Homes



BUILD OR BUST!

Warm weather is here and with it, dreams of beach vacations with lots of time for rest and relaxation. For our construction team, though, sunshine and blue skies mean only one thing: Build Season! With 12 families currently waiting for homes and more applying every day, we have to take advantage of the beautiful weather to get houses “under roof,” i.e. fully framed and ready for insulation, drywall, and paint inside and out. We’re also using sunny days to break ground on yards and gardens, which many homeowners look forward to after life in small apartments surrounded by concrete and few trees.

This year, we kicked Build Season into high gear early with the launch of the *Home is the Key Build* in April. More than 60 realtors, contractors, building supply manufacturers and other experts from DAP, Harkins Builders, Whiting Turner, TW Perry and the Key Home Team with Keller Williams came together in the North Baltimore community of Woodbourne-McCabe to do what they do best: build dream homes. Then, in May, we hosted more than 70 female supporters from Bank of America, Under Armour and other long-time corporate supporters at *Women Build Week*! This event is especially poignant for volunteers since



www.habitatchesapeake.org



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LETTER FROM THE CEO

You'll see a lot of numbers in this newsletter - the number of volunteers we've hosted at build events this spring and summer (400 and counting); the number of homes we've dedicated to date (750 and counting); and the number of graduates from our HabiCorps Workforce Development Program (16 and counting) to name a few. These statistics are important to understanding the scope and volume of our work and how donations are stretched for maximum impact.

Equally important, though, is the *quality* of our work. While we strive to take advantage of sunny days and "build or bust" as our cover story says, we are also building for the long haul. Each year, our construction team re-evaluates the materials and products used in Habitat homes to ensure that they are both well-made and cost-effective. Site supervisors educate volunteers and HabiCorps trainees daily on the proper processes for everything from safe demolition to drywall installation, so that tasks are not just done fast, they're done *right*. And, we work closely with subcontractors like plumbers and electricians and agencies like the Department of Public Works to ensure that systems are up-to-date. Despite the fact that many of our homes begin as vacant shells, by the time they are complete they are essentially brand-new, with nearly every original part replaced to ensure strength for many years to come.

Likewise, our homeowners and trainees in our HabiCorps program are prepared for long-term success. Homeowners spend three months in classes covering everything from personal finances to homeowner insurance to home repairs and improvements. Through their "sweat equity" hours, they build lasting relationships with fellow homebuyers and soon-to-be neighbors. By the end of their time in the program (1 year on average), they are ready for anything that might arise and have a ready-made support system. Similarly, HabiCorps trainees spend 10.5 months with us, gaining hands-on experience in carpentry and construction management. And, it's important to note, our partnership with homeowners and HabiCorps team members never ends. Habitat Chesapeake will be there to guide them through financial challenges, offer resources whenever possible, and celebrate achievements - whether it's graduating college, finding a new, better-paying job, or making their final mortgage payment.

We *build* for the long haul and we're *in it* for the long haul because that's the only way we know how to build homes, communities and hope. Together.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Mike".

Mike Posko
Chief Executive Officer

🏠 BUILD OR BUST (cont'd)

85% of Habitat Chesapeake families are female-headed. Finally, June 25 - 29, we hosted the 27th Annual Summer Build Week, welcoming 250+ Stanley Black & Decker associates to the Sandtown community of West Baltimore where Habitat has built 310 homes and counting! The event was the perfect example of Stanley Black & Decker's motto: "tools for those who make the world" - in action, as they worked to make the worlds of Sandtown and of several deserving families brighter. In addition to supplying hundreds of helping hands, Stanley Black & Decker provided generous financial support and an in-kind donation of tools that will be used throughout the year. Over the course of the week, their employees and interns did everything from demolishing unsafe walls, to insulation and drywall, to landscaping. Local companies Harkins Builders, MECU, Bakery Express and Honeybaked Ham also pitched in on *Summer Build* with generous financial and in-kind sponsorships.

The event also coincided with our first-ever *Pride Build*, sponsored by Wells Fargo. From the beginning, Habitat has been about bringing diverse groups of people together to build homes. At *Pride Build*, we celebrated those roots and embraced the diversity and generosity of Central Maryland's LGBTQA (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, ally) community. While this will be our last event-style build for awhile, Build Season will continue well into the fall, with dozens of volunteers sweating it out to get more houses complete.

It's a good thing, too, because there are families anxiously awaiting these homes! Families who have patiently attended homeowner education classes, volunteered at community events and worked hard alongside volunteers building homes as part of the "sweat-equity" hours that every Habitat partner family commits to. Build Season is our chance to get them into safe, stable homes as soon as possible. It's our opportunity to bring visible change to communities that desperately need investment. And, it's our time to spread the word far and wide; to engage and inspire many more people with the power of Habitat for Humanity. In short, Build Season is the embodiment of our mission: bringing people together to build homes, communities and hope!

Cover (l to r): HabiCorps team member Chervez prepares to install window frames at a home in Sandtown during Summer Build Week; HabiCorps trainee Debra works alongside a volunteer from DAP to break up concrete in Woodbourne-McCabe during April's Home is the Key Build; HabiCorps team member Mavrek cuts two-by-fours to size for framing a house in Woodbourne-McCabe during Women Build Week. This page, top to bottom: A team from Stanley Black & Decker poses outside a house in Sandtown after a long, hot day of demolition during Summer Build; Stanley Black & Decker volunteers install drywall in the ceiling of a Sandtown home during Summer Build Week; Volunteers from Wells Fargo pose in rainbow shirts as part of the first-ever Pride Build in June.



Build Season is just beginning. Can you help?

It takes a lot of resources to build dream homes! On top of volunteers and in-kind donations, we need funds for lumber, drywall, doors, windows, flooring and more. **Give today at habitat Chesapeake.org/build-or-bust and help us keep up the pace!**

75



HOMES & COUNTING!



THE PAST

Just days before our June home dedication ceremony, Habitat Chesapeake's Construction Site Supervisor Gary Mitchell (pictured below) sat in a forklift on McCabe Avenue and ruminated on his journey from a 12-year old Habitat volunteer, to staff person to homeowner. As he stood facing the crowd in Sandtown-Winchester more than 20 years ago, he said, the only thought in his mind was trying not to cry. "The feeling I had on that day was the same feeling of those who had received a Habitat home before me - like my own mother who received her own home years prior, all those that are presently receiving homes and those that will be blessed with their own home in the future."

For Habitat homeowners like Gary, we see time and again the overwhelming emotion that comes from having a home of one's own. In a region with an increasingly high cost-of-living and few decent, yet affordable housing options, having a safe place to raise a family creates a palpable sense of hope. We often see Habitat homeowners go on to find better paying jobs or gain a graduate degree because they no longer have the stress of

instability. The same is true for their children. As another recent homeowner told us, since moving from a cramped apartment to a home of her own, her son's grades went from D's to B's.

THE PRESENT

In June, two more deserving homeowners, Sandria Sheppard and Britney Bennett, stood before Habitat Chesapeake partners, volunteers, and staff to accept the keys to their new home - marking our 750th home dedication to date! Sandria and Britney went through the program together, attending homeowner education classes that covered everything from monthly budgeting to basic home improvement, working in ReStores and on construction sites, and staffing community events. Together, they dedicated more than 500 hours of time building their home and others, and now they'll be next-door neighbors! Like many Habitat homeowners, they found comfort in working alongside other homeowners-to-be and are happy to join a community with 15 Habitat families and counting!

Every home dedication is special and we take immense pride in reaching the 750-home milestone - one of only a handful



"The same week I applied, I got a letter from my landlord saying I earned too much to live there. I don't know where I would be without Habitat."

-Britney Bennett, Habitat Homeowner



Opposite page, top (l to r): It's a tie! Brittney and Sandria cross the 750-homes finish line together; Homeowner Outreach Coordinator Nina Anderson hugs Brittney; Homeowner Support Coordinator Kyle Tilghman and Homeowner Services Director Lauren Hughes look on proudly at Sandria; Sandria and her daughter pose next to their new home. Opposite page, bottom (l to r): Gary at age 16 with Sandtown Habitat founder Allan Tibbels and Habitat for Humanity Founder Millard Fuller; Gary today, a happy Habitat homeowner. This page: Home dedications are family affairs! Dozens showed up to support Brittney and Sandria and celebrate their achievement.

of Habitat affiliates to do so. At the same time, we know that number is just a mile marker on a long road ahead. We currently have 12 deserving families powering through “sweat equity” hours and we continue to receive dozens of inquiries each week. Our application process is rigorous and so are our guidelines - to ensure that we serve families who will be successful homeowners, and who are willing to be partners throughout the program and beyond. Every Habitat Chesapeake family is screened for income and credit worthiness, and once accepted to the program, tirelessly dedicates 250 - 350 “sweat equity” hours just like Brittney and Sandria.

THE FUTURE

Ultimately, our goal is to make Habitat homeowners feel as confident and prepared as possible, so they can maximize all of the benefits that come with owning a home - including a sense of peace and stability, improved physical and mental health, better academic success for children and an opportunity to build wealth across generations. Our homebuyers aren't the only ones that benefit. Every new Habitat home helps the neighborhood around it - bringing visible investment, engaged new families and a sense of vibrancy and community. We need look no further than Gary Mitchell, who has been volunteering with Habitat since age 12, became a Habitat homeowner and now builds homes as a Habitat staffer during the day while spending his evenings and weekends running an after-school program that teaches young people in Sandtown how to repair bicycles and earn their own through community service.

WITH GRATITUDE

We are incredibly grateful to all of the hardworking homeowners, volunteers, community partners and donors who have contributed to these 750 homes over the past 35 years - giving 2,500+ family members and 15 underserved communities a brighter future. Thank you all for helping us build homes, communities and hope!

Before & After



Since launching in 1976, Habitat for Humanity has grown to more than 1,300 affiliates in 70 countries. Each affiliate operates independently, using the same partnership-centric path to homeownership while also striving to meet the unique needs of its community. Here in Central Maryland, beyond affordable housing, those unique needs include job training and employment opportunities (see the next page for details on our HabiCorps program), and the revitalization of communities that have experienced decades of disinvestment.

The North Baltimore community that Sandria and Brittney now call home, Woodbourne-McCabe, is just such a neighborhood. When we partnered with the City of Baltimore in 2012 as part of the burgeoning Vacants to Value program, more than half of the houses were abandoned, and many, including Sandria's (above), were literal shells of their former selves. Fifteen rehabs later and with strong community leaders advocating for a new playground, speedbumps and demolition of abandoned, unsafe buildings, the neighborhood has become the first choice for prospective Habitat homeowners! Make no mistake, rehabilitating long-vacant houses is hard work, but it's more than worth it to see a community come alive again.

TRAINING WITH A PURPOSE



After the Baltimore riots in 2015, a lack of training and employment opportunities were cited as contributing factors. Habitat for Humanity affiliates have long employed AmeriCorps members to help build homes and guide volunteers on job sites. Traditionally, these were recent college graduates pursuing careers in the nonprofit sector and often used the program as a stepping stone. In 2016, recognizing the need for gainful employment in many of the neighborhoods we were actively working in, Habitat Chesapeake seized the opportunity to use the AmeriCorps model for true workforce development. We aimed to offer meaningful training to low-income, often previously incarcerated individuals. The benefits seemed clear: our subcontractors complained that they couldn't find skilled labor. Meanwhile communities where Habitat homeowners lived and worked suffered from extraordinarily high unemployment, which harmed the community as a whole. Quickly lining up partners like Project JumpStart, who could help recruit trainees, and the State of Maryland to supply funding, we launched HabiCorps in fall 2016 and became the first Habitat affiliate in the world to integrate job training with home building.



Since then, we've guided 16 trainees through 10.5 months of intensive on-the-job training in carpentry and construction management. What has set HabiCorps apart from the beginning is its focus on quality rather than quantity. Instructors work with a handful of trainees at a time to ensure that they truly learn the concepts, feel pride and a sense of ownership in the projects they work on and are supported throughout their journey. As they learn, trainees are encouraged to work alongside and help instruct volunteers, providing valuable management experience that will set them apart in the future. Additionally, thanks to lead sponsor Aerotek and fellow non profit Project JumpStart, every HabiCorps graduate leaves with a job. Aerotek, one of the nation's leading staffing firms, guides trainees through resume writing and interview preparation while Project JumpStart works with the Baltimore chapter of Associated Builders & Contractors to find contractors and firms looking to hire locally. Finally, and most critically, HabiCorps stands out from other training programs because it is funded with AmeriCorps grants - providing a vital incentive that many training programs lack: pay. The modest stipend helps sustain HabiCorps team members through the training period and also provides a post-program educational award of \$5,900 toward college or apprenticeship.

"I found out about HabiCorps when I was in a halfway house. I didn't have any carpentry experience before Habitat, and now I know the difference between power tools, how to install drywall, windows and laminate floors.

It doesn't get any better. It's building a home for a family from the ground up and giving me a career. It's awesome.

-Lamont James, HabiCorps Trainee

We could not be more proud of the HabiCorps program and the graduates who are bettering themselves while building homes for families and communities in need. The future is bright for them and a wide world of opportunity awaits!

Clockwise from top: Trainees Lamont (left) and Mavrek (right) sport shades on a hot day; Mavrek shows a volunteer how to use a jackhammer in a backyard filled with broken concrete; Trainees Saiquan (left) and Chervez (right) transfer framing through an upstairs window.

♥ COMING HOME AGAIN

On June 21, we were thrilled to host the second annual *Coming Home Reception* for donors in our Cornerstone Partners Society! Held at Brown Advisory's beautiful headquarters overlooking the harbor, guests enjoyed live music from the Todd Marcus Jazz Trio, delicious food by Wegmans of Hunt



Valley, a selection of craft beer from The Bruery and local wines. Host Tom Hall of WYPR kicked off the program with stirring remarks on the universal yearning for home. The true stars of the evening, though, were Habitat homeowners Brittney Bennett and Madear Rhuebottom, as well as HabiCorps trainee Lamont James, who gave tearful speeches about Habitat Chesapeake's impact on their lives. In fact, we loved them so much, we've included Madear's full remarks on the back cover of this newsletter. The evening closed with an awards ceremony recognizing our Supporters of the Year (see the sidebar for a full list).

The Cornerstone Partners Society is made up of individuals and organizations who give more than \$500 annually to support Habitat Chesapeake's mission. We are incredibly grateful to the growing number of Cornerstone Partner Society members, honorees, and other guests who joined us for this special night, as well as to Wegmans, Brown Advisory, the Bruery, Little Abner's Liquors and Tom Hall for their generous contributions! To see more photos from the event and learn more about the Cornerstone Society, visit habitchesapeake.org/cornerstone.

2018 Partners of the Year

Individual Supporter
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Savings & Loan

Clockwise from top left: Wegmans of Hunt Valley generously donated all of the food for the event; Homeowner Madear Rhuebottom hugs CEO Mike Posko; The Rosedale Federal team accepts their award; Habitat CFO Candice Van Scoy and Homeowner Services Director Lauren Hughes pose together; Host Tom Hall looks on as DHCD Secretary Ken Holt accepts on behalf of Governor Larry Hogan; Volunteer Irene McDermott with her award and CEO Mike Posko; HabiCorps trainee Lamont James with Alice Zients and Dave Benton of Aerotek.



HOMEOWNER UPDATE: MADEAR'S FAMILY

There wasn't a dry eye in the house when Madear Rhuebottom, a homeowner since 2017, talked about her Habitat journey at the *Coming Home Reception* in June. We were so touched by her remarks, we want to share them with everyone who made her new life possible - including you. Here, in her own words, is Madear's story:

"My habitat journey began one morning in 2014 as I was preparing for work. While listening to the news, I heard the reporter say "Four days ago, these homes didn't exist." As I sat to watch the story, the banner running across the tv displayed Habitat Chesapeake's contact number. I made the call and the process began.

While others may say the process was lengthy, I'd have to say it was seamless. I was never left without answers or had to wonder "what's next?" "I was always kept abreast of progress, road blocks, etc. and any time I sent an email or made a call, I was greeted with care.

My family's lives have changed for the better since I became homeowner. Not only am I improving my financial standing, my children have a safe and secure place to call home. Because I completed my sweat equity on McCabe, our neighbors were eagerly awaiting our arrival and we were greeted with so much love.

My girls have a backyard to play in and hearing their laughter throughout our home is heartwarming. My family will forever be grateful to have found such a wonderful program. Now, at their young ages, my children understand the benefit of giving. They understand that giving a little makes a HUGE impact. I am proud to have a legacy to pass onto my girls and to know that they will be able to share our story with their own children one day. A single phone call changed my life."



"I am proud to have a legacy to pass on to my girls and to know that they will be able to share our story with their own children one day."

-Madear Rhuebottom, Habitat Homeowner pictured above with Mayor Catherine Pugh and her three daughters at their June 2017 home dedication

WE NEED YOU!

JOIN THE CLUB



Cornerstone Partners Society members receive special invitations to insider tours and events like the one on the previous page. Learn more at habitatchesapeake.org/cornerstone.

STAY COOL AT RESTORE



Want to volunteer but hate the heat? Call 410-297-5226 or email volunteer@habitatchesapeake.org to schedule a shift at the ReStore. All proceeds help build homes!

LEAVE A LEGACY



Where there's a will, there's a way to build homes, communities & hope. Contact Chief Advancement Officer Gregg Mitchell at 410-366-1250 to explore legacy giving options.

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