



Hearts & Homes



BUILD SEASON IS BACK!

Over the past few weeks, our ears have been buzzing with the sounds of nails being hammered into 2 x 4's, trowels being scraped across new brick walls and jackhammers breaking through old concrete slabs. These sounds can only mean one thing – **Build Season is back!**

At Habitat, we like to think of it as the most wonderful time of the year. Not only does it mean that our construction team is happily moving full steam ahead framing, insulating, drywalling and painting; they're also doing it alongside our dedicated partners to transform houses into homes. It's a job that will change the lives of the several families currently in the program and many others applying every day.

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LETTER FROM THE CEO

There are many elements that go into building a Habitat home and supporting a first-time Habitat for Humanity homebuyer.

There is the strategic work of securing funding from our partners, and donations from our ReStores to make affordable housing an option for our partner families. We must find the right families to fit our program, guiding them through sweat equity hours and Homebuyer Education courses.

We also work hard at finding the right properties and sustainable neighborhoods for our homebuyers to reside. Finally, there is the actual construction – getting our crew of volunteers and staff on site to frame, hang dry wall, install flooring and cabinets, mount doors, paint and finish the home.

From concept to creation, my favorite step in bringing a family home is the build.

It's not too often that I get a chance to ditch the office shoes for construction boots. However, when I do, I take full advantage the opportunity. Recently, a group of board members and I participated in our very own build day.

Our day consisted of working on a home in the Woodbourne – McCabe neighborhood, cutting wood beams down to size, and framing what was the shell of a soon-to-be living room space. There's just something about digging in and putting hammer to nail that makes the Habitat mission much more tangible. This also gets me excited for what is to come during these warm weather months...build season!

Not only do we get to host a great deal of volunteers during our various build events this season, but volunteers also get to feel the same exhilaration of being on our construction sites as I do – all while making an impact of their own.

It is an impact deeper than building a house, extending well beyond the day our homebuyers receive the keys to their home. The impact of build season is key in establishing a legacy for our homebuyers that will remain a part of their families - sometimes for generations.

There is no better example of this than our presence in the West Baltimore neighborhood of Sandtown-Winchester where we are celebrating 30 years of work (read the full story of Habitat's presence in Sandtown on page 3).

With more than 310 homes built in Sandtown alone and over 100 mortgages there paid in full, a great number of fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, grandchildren, and even great-grandchildren have a safe, affordable, and healthy place to call home. And it all begins with a build – made possible by volunteers, donors and friends like you.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike".

Mike Posko
Chief Executive Officer

Cover Images – Top Row: Team from Kelly & Associates Insurance Group lending a hand at the Strength 2 Love Farm during our Friends & Family Build; HabiCorps Volunteer John with volunteer from Core Maryland during Home is the Key Build; Great team from Apex Tool Group putting finishing touches on a home during Home is the Key Build; Bottom Row: Volunteers from DAP Products lending a hand during our Home is the Key Build by painting the basement walls of a framed home in Sandtown-Winchester; Volunteer receives hand-on instruction for HabiCorp Trainee on how to cut a wooden beam for framing during our bi-annual Friends & Family Build. Above Image: Mike Posko pictured on working construction site during a build in Woodbourne-McCabe.

30 YEARS OF HABITAT IN SANDTOWN

VISION CASTING

Habitat's work is one of the most tangible demonstrations of the revitalization of a neighborhood. It can be seen in a house that was once vacant being rehabilitated, or a once blighted street now bustling with children riding their bikes. It can be seen in homeowners filling blocks with sounds of life, holding family events in backyards, putting potted plants on their front steps and greeting neighbors in the morning. When more long-term residents put down roots, one has the makings of a thriving community.

That is certainly the case in Sandtown. Beginning with Baltimore's population decline and loss of tax revenue in the 1960's, the neighborhood experienced decades of disinvestment. By the 1980's there was a mixture of strengths and serious challenges: families who had lived there for generations had built strong personal networks, but there was an increasing lack of development or amenities. In that context, determined Sandtown residents began gathering to strategize about revitalization and they were joined by two recent transplants: Allan Tibbels and Reverend Mark Gornik, who were inspired by the Christian Community Development movement that called faithful individuals to move to and support under-resourced communities. Together, this group envisioned a "Community depicted by people walking on the streets in joy, a new church, safe and sturdy houses filling vibrant blocks, a job training center, and the sun shining brightly over Sandtown." One of the most immediate needs they saw was for decent, affordable housing, since many residents were paying high rents, but living in deteriorating, substandard apartments. And, thus, Sandtown Habitat was born.

POWERING CHANGE

The vision brought together Sandtown residents, and organizations like Stanley Black & Decker and MECU of Baltimore to break ground and bring change. In the blink of an eye, the volunteer count grew to nearly 10,000 a year! They worked to found related organizations to address other needs, like high-quality education at New Song Community Learning Center. Habitat homeowners became friends, as well as neighbors, with many of their children playing and learning together. Through Sandtown Habitat's work, homes were not only renovated and rebuilt; lives were transformed.

Sandtown Habitat merged with Habitat Chesapeake in 2014, and today more than 310 Habitat homes have been built, offering decent, affordable housing to countless children, parents, and grandparents. Habitat homeowners pay a monthly mortgage of no more than 30% of their gross income and receive a zero-percent interest rate. This solidifies their ability to be self-reliant and invest in other critical needs, like reliable transportation, the

^o Gornik, M. (2015, May 5) Mark R. Gornik: A New Song on the streets of Baltimore. *Faith & Leadership*. Duke University. <https://www.faithandleadership.com/mark-r-gornik-new-song-streets-baltimore>



Sandtown Habitat for Humanity founder Allan Tibbels unites with residents and supporters on a demolished Leslie Street in 1997.

pursuit of continuing education and new job opportunities and, perhaps most importantly, their children's future.

Thirty years after work began, Habitat has proven to be a vital part of the community. More than 150 mortgages have been paid in full, more homes are under construction, and more families are deciding to put down roots in a neighborhood that feels like a family. Sandtown remains one of the most close-knit communities in Baltimore City.

30 YEARS & COUNTING

This year marks the 30th anniversary of Habitat's work in Sandtown and while we have carried on the dream of the visionary founders, the dream doesn't stop here. In the coming years, Habitat Chesapeake will rehabilitate 12 more homes and undertake a facelift on the Sandtown ReStore and offices. The neighborhood also remains an active classroom for Habitat Chesapeake's workforce development program, HabiCorps, where trainees work alongside construction staff and volunteers to build the houses families will one day call home.

Beyond the tangible work, we are focused on enhancing support systems for soon-to-be homeowners, making our construction as efficient as possible and kindling further growth in a neighborhood that has come so far. Stay tuned for more news on this vibrant neighborhood that so many of our families proudly call home!



HOMEOWNER SPOTLIGHT

When we last caught up with Habitat homebuyer James, he was accepting the keys to his new home in Sandtown-Winchester at our **Home for the Holidays Celebration** in December. Nearly seven months later, James is enjoying the freedoms and joys of homeownership that were not an option to him as a renter.

"I love that where I live is much quieter than where I used to live. Homeownership also gives me the freedom to think long-term. I am most looking forward to actually growing equity in my house, both through paying down my mortgage and increased property value!"

↑ BUILD SEASON IS BACK!

(Continued from cover)



The warm weather and sunny days lend themselves well to our mission of building homes, communities and hope, and we expect to welcome more than 700 volunteers, homebuyers, family members and neighbors during the next few months!

This year, we ushered in Build Season with a bang, hosting 20 volunteers for our first ever **Martin Luther King Jr. Day Build** in early April (rescheduled from a snowy January). There, we honored Dr. King's legacy through service and answered what he called "the most persistent and urgent question: what are you doing for others?"

Together, volunteers from the Beth Israel Congregation of Owings Mills and Wells Fargo got to work building alongside soon-to-be homeowner Shelly, in the West Baltimore neighborhood of Sandtown-Winchester where she grew up and still has many family members.

Just one week later, we launched Home is the Key month with our annual **Home is the Key Build**. More than 75 realtors, contactors, building supply manufacturers and other experts from Core Maryland, DAP, Richardson LaGrant Group of Cummings & Co. Realtors, Harkins Builders, and Apex Tool Group came together again in Sandtown to put a different spin on how they bring homebuyers one step closer to home - through building!

Up next was our bi-annual **Friends & Family Build** sponsored by Kelly & Associates. This 30-person build was special because it engaged volunteers who may have previously come with a corporate group and longed to return to a build site on their own. This was their chance to volunteer again and extend the experience to their families and friends. With sleeves rolled up and ready to work, volunteers put nail to hammer framing the shells of two homes and sprucing up the Strength to Love 2 Farm, a community farm located adjacent to the Habitat ReStore in Sandtown.

Soon thereafter, we kicked off **Women Build Week** in May with more than 60 female supporters from

Wells Fargo, Stanley Martin Homes, Harkins Builders and Aerotek, an Allegis Group company. The 2-day event consisted of volunteers placing a parge coat on the interior walls (a process of pressing a thin coat of mortar onto masonry for refinement of the surface) of 3 Habitat houses and framing another in Sandtown-Winchester. Women Build Week is an especially poignant event for us since roughly 85% of our partner families are female-headed households.

Last up was **Pride Build** sponsored by Wells Fargo where we embraced the beauty of diversity by gathering with supporters of the LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and

"...we honored Dr. King's legacy through service and answered what he called "the most persistent and urgent question: what are you doing for others?"

questioning) community. The event is a perfect celebration of what Habitat Chesapeake does best – bringing people of all different walks, faiths, backgrounds, and professions together to build homes for families in need.

With 9 families currently matched to homes under construction and 25 more houses in the pipeline, it's no wonder we're taking full advantage of these good weather days and striving to welcome as many helping hands as possible.

Soon-to-be homebuyers are anxiously awaiting safe and secure places to call their forever homes, all the while learning how to be responsible homeowners in homebuyer education classes; completing "sweat equity hours;" and strengthening their financial position as they inch closer and closer to their dream of becoming a homebuyer. Build season is here to make sure their hard work yields results and their dreams are achieved.

As the building rush continues through summer and well into fall, you can be sure we are grateful for the dedicated and generous volunteers and donors who understand the urgency and impact of our work. Together, we are rewriting the narrative of families and neighborhoods in need across Central Maryland. Together, we are inspiring action. Together, we are building homes, communities and hope.

Photos on the Right – Top Row: Volunteers from DAP Products on a build site being led by HabCorps Trainees John, LeShawn and David at the Home is the Key Build; Friends & Family Build volunteer stands with Strength to Love 2 Farm organizer; Bottom Row: Habitat Homeowner and owner of Scipio Catering, Selena Scipio not only provided lunch for our build volunteers but took time to speak about her path to homeownership and becoming a business owner; Volunteers from Beth Israel Congregation of Owings Mills, Wells Fargo, stand with soon-to-be homeowner Shelly H. at the start of our first ever MLK Day Build in Sandtown-Winchester; Wells Fargo Volunteers embrace diversity through service as they participate in our annual Pride Build. Photos Below: A group of ladies from Aerotek, an Allegis Group company get their hands dirty paring walls during Women Build; Our eager and helpful volunteers from Apex Tool Group took charge in painting a home during the Home is the Key Build.



A team from Stanley Black & Decker poses outside a house in Sandtown after a long, hot day of demolition during Summer Build.

STILL BUILDING!

Warm weather marks the start of Build Season and the action will reach a fever pitch at **Summer Build Week** July 15-19 when more than 200 volunteers from Stanley Black & Decker and Whiting Turner descend on Sandtown! As Habitat Chesapeake celebrates a 30-year presence in Sandtown-Winchester, we are also celebrating 28 years of partnering with Stanley Black & Decker for *Summer Build Week*. This year, the company's associates will continue the work they kicked off last year on five homes in the close-knit community. And once again, the event will exemplify the tool manufacturer's motto, "For those that make the world home," putting a wide range of tools to use to build new homes and safer, happier, healthier, more hopeful worlds for a handful of deserving families. Every tool used that week – and many more – will be donated in-kind to sustain our work throughout the year! We are overwhelmed by Stanley Black & Decker's long and loyal support and exceedingly grateful for their continued commitment to our mission of building homes, communities and hope!

IMPACT AT A GLANCE: STANLEY BLACK & DECKER



20+ YEARS



125 HOMES BUILT WITH THEIR HELP



4,000 VOLUNTEERS



700+ hrs WORKED

HABICORPS 4 YEARS LATER

 **HabiCorps began four years ago** as an effort to support local communities, strengthen our organization and address needs in the construction industry simultaneously. We saw that many of the communities we worked in needed more job training and employment opportunities and quickly realized that Habitat was in a unique position to provide them - offering a wide range of hands-on training opportunities in an increasingly understaffed, yet well-paying industry. With funding from the Governor's Office of Service and Volunteerism, and crucial support from Aerotek, an Allegis Group company and the Skip Viragh Family Foundation, HabiCorps was born.

In 2016, we launched a 3-year pilot program training economically disadvantaged city area residents in construction skills as they built Habitat homes. Long-term partnerships with fellow nonprofits and for-profit contractors aid trainees in securing full-time positions following the program, helping to fill a growing labor shortage in many construction trades.

A solid program framework and network of strong partnerships resulted in 80% of graduates successfully moving onto full time employment. Some graduates have been able to continue to leverage their training with apprenticeships in specialized fields like HVAC and electrical work. Others have advanced to supervisory positions and still others have moved onto other pursuits.

Five of our trainees began the program unemployed, and now all of them have found full-time employment. One even went from unemployment to earning \$24 per hour! What has been determined is that a program like this is needed to rebuild homes and lives, and can work to positively impact the community in myriad of ways. Word of the program's success is spreading rapidly with Habitat affiliates across the country hoping to replicate HabiCorps in their city!



“With this expansion, 5 more disadvantaged individuals will have an opportunity to learn marketable skills in a similarly understaffed field and earn pay, benefits and job placement support following the program.”

Here in Central Maryland, HabiCorps will continue to host 10 trainees focused on framing, flooring, masonry and other building skills in the coming year. We will also add a 5-person team focused on landscaping, hardscaping and property maintenance. With this expansion, 5 more disadvantaged individuals will have an opportunity to learn marketable skills in a similarly understaffed field and earn pay, benefits and job placement support following the program.

HabiCorps landscape design and maintenance of Habitat properties and nearby green spaces, will amplify Habitat's impact in underserved communities. Enhanced landscaping, streetscaping and beautification projects have long been proven to inspire additional investments, improve property values and foster civic pride.

We thank the key supporters who have made this possible, including Aerotek, the France-Merrick Foundation, the Middendorf Foundation, the Maryland State Department of Housing and Community Development, the Henry and Ruth Blaustein Rosenberg Foundation, and the Bunting Family Foundation. Habitat for Humanity of the Chesapeake is eager to continue the work of building homes, communities and hope through HabiCorps!

Photo Above: The most recent group of HabiCorps Trainees (now graduates) pose at their Kick-Off Ceremony last fall.

Coming HOME

DONOR RECEPTION

On June 27, we were elated to gather Habitat Chesapeake Cornerstone Partner Society members and other especially dedicated supporters at our third annual **Coming Home Reception**. In addition to recognizing Cornerstone Society members, we welcomed a wide range of organizational and community partners to formally acknowledge exceptional generosity as *Habitat Supporters of the Year*. This year's honorees included *Corporate Donor of the Year* Brown Advisory and *Government Partners of the Year* Commissioner Michael Braverman of the Baltimore City Department of Housing & Community Development and Janet Abrahams, Executive Director of the Housing Authority of Baltimore City, among many others.

Held at Brown Advisory's headquarters overlooking the picturesque Baltimore Inner Harbor, the event featured delicious hors d'oeuvres, compliments of Wegmans Food Market, live music from the Todd Marcus Jazz Trio and effortless hosting from Tom Hall of Middy on WYPR. Cornerstone Society members were moved by touching story after story from HabiCorps Alumni and homeowners who all saw their time with Habitat Chesapeake as a defining moment, changing the trajectory of their lives. And all expressed immense gratitude for the donors, volunteers and partners who made their journeys possible.

We are beyond grateful to the ever-growing number of Cornerstone Partner Society members, honorees and other guests who joined us for this special occasion. We would also like to extend our gratitude to Brown Advisory, Wegmans, the Bruery and Whitey's Liquors for their generous in-kind support of this fantastic event! To see more photos from the Coming Home Donor Reception visit us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/habitatchesapeake

2019 PARTNERS OF THE YEAR

Individual Partner of the Year
Margaret Dorsey

Corporate Volunteer of the Year
Bank of America

Faith Partner of the Year
North Baltimore Presbyterians

Community Partner of the Year
Loyola University – York Road Initiative

ReStore Partner of the Year
Timonium ReStore Volunteer Group

Individual Donor of the Year
Matthew and Shanna Balman

Corporate Donor of the Year
Brown Advisory

Foundation Supporter of the Year
France-Merrick Foundation

In-Kind Donor of the Year
Stanley Black & Decker

360-Degree Partner of the Year
Aerotek, Allegis Group of Companies

Government Partners of the Year
Commissioner Michael Braverman,
Baltimore City Department of Housing &
Community Development

Janet Abrahams, Executive Director, Housing
Authority of Baltimore City

Committee Volunteer of the Year
Susan Gue,
Homeownership Committee Member

Youth Partner of the Year
Broadneck Senior High School



DONOR SPOTLIGHT: CAROLYN ECKES

Carolyn Eckes (pictured left, with Habitat Chesapeake Director of Donor Relations Michael Garcia) has been an avid Habitat Chesapeake supporter since 2016, giving extremely generous gifts, often multiple times in a single calendar year. A Baltimore native and retired Baltimore City School teacher and principal, Carolyn gives to Habitat because she believes in "creating a diverse community and that opening doors to opportunity can turn most lives around." Thank you for helping many families toward a brighter future, Carolyn. You're an inspiration!



ROAD TO RESTORE: Meet Debra Smith, ReStore Logistics Manager

ReStores have been successfully supporting Habitat Chesapeake’s mission for decades. Between sorting through thousands of donations and hitting the road every day to pick up more, our loyal, hardworking employees strive to keep ReStore operations running with ease. It’s a hard job, requiring a lot of patience, excellent customer service skills, and the ability to balance a wide variety of tasks with utmost efficiency.

Debra Smith is a prime example of a ReStore star - managing to keep a smile on her face while masterfully juggling everything the job sends her way! As our Logistics Manager, Debra coordinates the entire fleet of brightly-colored ReStore trucks that collect furniture, appliances, cabinets, and more from individual and corporate donors across Central Maryland. Debra first became interested in working for Chesapeake ReStore while looking for part-time work to help control her shopping habit. “I used to be a shopper, and I mean a shopper of all stores! I thought 18 hours a week would be perfect for me to keep me out of trouble, so I applied,” she says. Nine years later, Debra has climbed the management ladder from part-time associate at the Dundalk ReStore to Logistics Manager for all six locations.

Debra grew up in a home that emphasized the importance of family and compassion for others. “When I was 9 years old, my dad began purchasing rental properties,” says Debra. “Year after year, he always kept rent the same for his tenants. He said that was their home.” Her father knew that many families struggled to find stable, affordable housing and did not see fit to raise rent if families could not afford it.

Debra’s father’s empathy for his tenants echoes Habitat Chesapeake’s belief that all families deserve a safe, affordable place to call home. How beautiful, that the same values that were instilled in Debra as a child are now being carried out by her as an employee of Habitat Chesapeake! In fact, our impact continues to grow thanks to Chesapeake ReStore staff members like Debra who see working for Habitat as more than just a job, but rather a calling to help many more families find decent and affordable places to call home.

“Year after year, he always kept rent the same for his tenants. He said that was their home.”

- Debra Smith, ReStore Logistics Manager

We Need You!

BUILD OR BUST Give Funds



You can get involved during Build Season too! Make a gift online at habitatchesapeake.org/donate to supply much-needed funds for drywall, doors, windows, flooring and more!

REDO WITH RESTORE Shop Summer Upgrades



Revamping a room? Updating a bathroom? Keep the Chesapeake ReStore in mind for your next renovation needs. There is always an assortment of building materials, appliances, cabinets, flooring and more! Visit chesapeakerestore.org to find a ReStore location near you.

LEAVE A LEGACY



Where there’s a will, there’s a way to help families achieve the dream of homeownership. Call Gregg Mitchell, Chief Advancement Officer at 410.366.1250 to explore legacy giving options.

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