



coming home

The importance of homeownership

Does it really matter that a family lives in their own home? Even if we ignore the fact that available rentals, especially affordable ones, are in very short supply in our county, there are many compelling reasons why we all should encourage homeownership. It is significant for the long-run health of a family as well as our community at large.

pride

Homeownership is deeply rooted in pride. The Habitat model requires partnering families to earn sweat equity hours, which enables them to learn repair and maintenance techniques, something many first-time homebuyers do not always learn. Just look at the photo here of LaTarsha's home on Liberator Street - she obviously loves her home!



stability

Habitat works to eliminate barriers to a better, healthier, more financially secure life. Successful homeowners are able to build bright financial futures. With lower housing costs, Vicki and Brian are able to focus on advancing their training and education, assuring better financial stability for their family.



sense of community

Homeowners are more apt to be involved in their communities. Habitat families start out working side-by-side with volunteers from their community who serve as mentors and even become friends. Dave takes every opportunity to spend time with his neighbors, leads the board of his HOA and encourages the youth in the neighborhood to get outside and play.



health

A safe and secure home leads to better mental and physical health. A national survey of Habitat homeowners found that 74 percent said their families' overall health had improved since moving into their homes. Children also thrive when they can remain in place instead of changing schools every time they need to leave a rental.

In partnership with Habitat Bucks, 102 families have become homeowners, and 37 families can now remain safely in their homes by making necessary repairs. All of this happened with the help of thousands of volunteers and financial supporters who know that the achievement of homeownership for even one family has a positive ripple effect upon our entire county!

Impact: Global and Local

If you make a gift to Habitat for Humanity International (HfHI), your contribution is directed to the area of greatest need wherever HfHI operates worldwide. You may be surprised to learn that as an independent local affiliate, Habitat for Humanity of Bucks County does not receive operating support from HfHI. If you currently support HfHI and want to ensure that your gift also has impact locally, you can request that any portion of your donation can be directed to Habitat Bucks, or send your gift directly to this affiliate. Whether you choose to support Habitat locally or globally, thank you for helping us achieve a world where everyone has a decent place to live.

GIVE LOCALLY TO HABITAT BUCKS NOW.



coming home

In the season of gathering with family and friends, a new Habitat house is getting ready to welcome guests, too! Petro and Iryna with their son, Daniel, will become homeowners on Harrison Avenue, Morrisville. This family currently rents a one-bedroom apartment. To be able to move into a three-bedroom home with their own yard is a dream come true! “This house is a castle for us!” Iryna said.



Habitat Bucks is seeking qualified homebuyers for two new homes in upper and lower Bucks Counties. Quakertown Borough is the site of an existing townhouse that Habitat Bucks will be renovating. A ranch-style home will be constructed in Croydon this spring. Applications for both properties are being accepted now!

To find out how you can build your financial strength, contact Stefanie Clark, Family Program Director, at s.clark@habitatbucks.org

almost home

This summer, we launched “Almost Home”—a six-month program to provide the financial tools and support that empower low-income families to become successful homeowners. Of the applicants who apply for the Habitat Bucks homeownership program, at least 75% do not qualify due to poor finances resulting from the long-lasting, long-reaching effects of the recession. While we have always provided referrals to our credit counseling partners, we wanted to do more.

Almost Home kicked off this July with a six-month Financial Boot Camp presented by Clarifi, a financial literacy non-profit. This program provides workshops, credit counseling and one-on-one coaching—14 people are actively participating. This fall, the Almost Home participants will participate in Bucks County Housing Group’s First-Time Homebuyer Workshop, which will further enhance their readiness for homeownership.

A Brush with Kindness now does interior safety repairs

A Brush with Kindness has been helping low-income homeowners make needed repairs to the exterior of their homes since 2011. This Fall we expanded. Now *A Brush with Kindness* also helps make health and safety repairs or modifications inside the home. A safety repair may be as simple as a well-placed grab bar or railings. And what a big difference this simple repair can make in helping a homeowner avoid a nasty fall and an unwanted visit to the emergency room. We are making a special effort to reach out to older or disabled homeowners who are most likely to need what *A Brush with Kindness* now has to offer.

Contact Karen Reever, Community Development Manager, at k.reever@habitatbucks.org



every hand makes a difference

If you would like to volunteer with Habitat Bucks for construction, one of our ReStores, offices, or to share your skills and gifts in other ways, contact us at volunteer@habitatbucks.org

Your values can live on in the legacy you leave to others

dream builders

Gift planning is finding the right path to make charitable gifts now, or after your lifetime, to organizations that have meaning to you. It takes a very special kind of person to make plans that benefit others. Our Dream Builders Society recognizes our forward-thinking friends who have done just that. We welcome new Dream Builders at any time; there are just two simple requirements for membership. First, make arrangements to benefit Habitat for Humanity of Bucks County after your lifetime. Second, let us know about your plans. We rely on donations to serve families in our communities. Every gift, no matter the size, is appreciated.



“As a member of the Habitat Bucks Board of Directors, I believe in this mission. I am happy to give my time and energy now to help bring affordable housing to our region, but I wanted to do more. Designating Habitat Bucks as one of the beneficiaries of my retirement funds was an easy change to make and did not require an attorney. It makes me feel great to know that Habitat Bucks will benefit from my estate, long after I am gone. That’s a legacy I’m proud of,” said Neil McKeon, Habitat for Humanity of Bucks County Board President (pictured here on the build site in Sellersville).

While we cannot provide tax or legal advice, we do have access to planned giving experts who can provide information. We are happy to help you navigate your choices, so you can better prepare for a visit to your professional advisors.

For more information about becoming a Dream Builder, contact Candace Clarke, Resource Development Director, at 215.822.2812, ext. 316 or c.clarke@habitatbucks.org

save the date

For an evening of fun with friends, featuring cocktails, dinner, and live and silent auctions

Friday, April 28, 2017

6:30-10:00 pm

Spring Mill Manor, Ivyland, PA

For information about sponsorship opportunities, contact Candace Clarke, at c.clarke@habitatbucks.org

Tickets will be available on our website in January.



A benefit for Habitat for Humanity of Bucks County



5K run

Post-Thanksgiving 5K Race

Join us for the Fifteenth Annual Habitat for Humanity 5K and Kids Run on Saturday, November 26th. Co-sponsored by the Quakertown Rotary Club and Quakertown United Methodist Church, all proceeds benefit Habitat Bucks. Register online at <https://runsignup.com/Race/PA/Quakertown/QuakertownRotaryHabitat5K>.

ReStore news

Anyone who has ever been in a Habitat for Humanity ReStore knows that we sell new and gently used goods at a fraction of the retail price. The Bucks County ReStores alone keep 100,000 pounds of materials out of landfills each month while financially supporting Habitat for Humanity’s mission to build affordable homes for local families.

What you may not know is that the Habitat ReStores in Langhorne and Chalfont aren’t just thrift stores. They also serve special needs, seniors, students, and low-income individuals in a variety of ways.

Although donations and sales are important to our mission to build strength, stability and self-reliance through shelter, we continue to meet community needs through our employment, work-study and charity initiatives.

achieving work skills and life success

The ReStores offer opportunities for individuals to gain work experience and life skills. Diverse learners and those with special needs are empowered to be more independent, gain



confidence and develop their communication and interpersonal skills by volunteering in the ReStores. Individuals from The Comprehensive Learning Center, Bucks County Intermediate Unit, Middle Bucks Institute of Technology, and other organizations obtain valuable experience at the ReStores.

Another important initiative is the ReStores’ work-training program designed for Bucks County seniors

seeking employment. Through collaboration with Goodwill Industries, the ReStores provide on-the-job training to help those aged 55 and older to update their job skills, build work experience and confidence, and have economic security.

educational partnerships benefit students

Educational institutions in Bucks County have partnered with the ReStores, enabling their students to benefit from work-study programs and community service hours. Bucks County Community College (BCCC) campuses each have a Habitat for Humanity chapter on campus, and students from BCCC work at the ReStores as part of the school’s work-study program. Holy Family University in Newtown is now officially a campus chapter of Habitat. Students are building and rehabilitating homes, as well as fundraising and advocating for the mission Habitat Bucks. Students from Delaware Valley University’s Experiential Learning Program and Foundations Community Partnership’s Summer Youth Corps engage in work-study and internship opportunities. On the high school level, students in the National Honors Society, L.I.N.C.S. and Key Club volunteer at the ReStores and earn community service hours.



Board of Directors: Neil McKeon, President; Sandie Bauder; Michael Block; Nancy Buckner; Sherry Cordery; Heath Dumack; Susan Eckert; James Esposito; Brian Formisano; Mary Pat Holewinski; Mike Keim; Tracy Mellor; John Richardson; Michael Savona; Karl Schmidt; Mark Silverman; Chris Tuck

Staff: Florence Kawoczka, Executive Director; Kalena Alexis; Ave Amoroso; Laura Blair; Daniel Block; BJ Breish; Colleen Brink; Todd Brosky; Stefanie Clark; Candace Clarke; Jerome Culmer; Elijah Dupree; Mike Fallon; Zach Fowler; Karen Hayes; Rosemary Huether; Paul Kopanycia; Gavin Lane; Jacob Lightner; Sam Martin; Tracy Mulvaney; Janet Northcott; Krystal Oliver; Steven Prescott; Karen Reeve; Jason Rupe; Patty Saylor; Matthew Tomlinson