

Combating Brain Drain with Strategic Housing Solutions

In Bucks County, essential workers such as EMTs, daycare providers, first-year teachers, and firefighters are increasingly unable to afford to live where they serve, a community condition referred to as “brain drain.” This phenomenon, where skilled and essential workers leave a particular area because they cannot afford to live there, results in a shortage of critical local talent and services, impacting not only their lives but also threatening the overall economic health and safety of our community.

One significant contributing factor is obstructive zoning and land-use regulations which restrict the types and quantities of housing that can be built, often leading to higher home prices and limited availability. This often discourages vital workers from relocating to areas where they can earn high wages but would be forced to pay too much in housing costs. To counteract this, we need innovative and diverse housing solutions. “Missing Middle Housing”, such as townhomes, duplexes, triplexes, and accessory dwelling units (ADUs), provides a balanced and effective alternative to traditional higher-cost, single family housing models. Other solutions can include converting underutilized commercial buildings to residential use and allowing housing around office parks.

Habitat for Humanity of Bucks County’s homeownership program directly addresses this challenge affecting working families by offering attainable homeownership and opportunity for inclusion of these vital citizens in the local community. We remain deeply invested in every home we sell, ensuring long-term stability and community growth.



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For our county to truly thrive, it is imperative that all local communities partner with, support, and advocate for attainable housing solutions. Together, we can ensure that more essential workers have the opportunity to live right here, where we need them to work!

Homeownership

Mariela's Journey to Homeownership with Habitat for Humanity

Mariela, a single mother of three, spent fourteen years living in a two-bedroom apartment, dreaming of a home where her children could have space and a backyard where they can play. Her rent continued to climb but her wages barely kept up. Despite her challenges, including storm damage to her apartment that temporarily displaced her family, she never gave up. With careful financial management, she improved her credit and was pre-approved for a mortgage, but still homeownership was out of reach due to high market prices.



"I am grateful to all the volunteers and donors that have helped build my beautiful home. You are all amazing and my future home couldn't be built without your help."

Encouraged by her daughter, who learned of Habitat's new project in

Croydon from a counselor at school, Mariela applied. Being selected as a Habitat homebuyer turned her dream into a tangible reality. She participated in the construction of her future home, and got to meet and build alongside her future neighbors and volunteers.

Mariela's story is a testament to perseverance and the power of community support. Now, as she watches her home take shape, she looks forward to the stability and space it will provide for her family. Grateful for the opportunity, she encourages others to apply to Habitat.

Home Repair

Safe Homes, Stronger Futures: Habitat Bucks' Mission in Action at Richland Meadows

Habitat's Home Repair Program has significantly impacted residents in Richland Meadows Mobile Home Park in Quakertown, assisting ten families with crucial home repairs that enhance their living conditions and safety.

Our outreach began by contacting the park manager and distributing flyers to inform residents about available assistance. Repair requests addressed various critical needs, including roof repairs, ramp installations for a mother and son to improve mobility, and water heater replacements. A notable project involved converting a tub to a shower for a person using a motorized wheelchair, with plans to install a ramp next, highlighting our commitment to accessibility.



Additionally, unsafe flooring issues were resolved by replacing particle board with sturdy plywood, ensuring safer and more durable floors. Plumbing and electrical repairs were prioritized, as our team emphasized the dangers of electrical issues and potential water damage from leaking faucets.

These efforts improve residents' immediate living conditions and contribute to the long-term stability and safety of their homes. Habitat Bucks' commitment to helping families maintain safe and decent housing continues to make a profound difference in communities like Richland Meadows.

Homeward Bound

In Simon and Garfunkel's 1966 Billboard hit, "Homeward Bound," the duo describes home as a place where comfort and safety are found, dreams take hold, and love flourishes. Through Habitat Bucks' core mission and the homebuyers, homeowners, volunteers, and donors who partner with us in the fulfillment of that mission, we have the joy of witnessing the building of "home" every day.



Pictured from Left to Right: Melissa with her boys / Luisa with her parents / Christian-Homeowner

In the 34 years since our founding, we've journeyed with homebuyers like Melissa, who committed herself to providing stability for her sons after her own childhood of living in cars and homeless shelters. We've witnessed homeowners' children like Luisa leave home to pursue higher education, taking with her the knowledge that her parents were surrounded by a community that would support them if needed. And we're walking now with Christian who, as the first of her family to own a home, looks forward to having friends and relatives join her family of four in celebrating holidays and milestones.

Habitat Bucks' 132 first-time homebuyers, the 267 homeowners who have worked with our Home Repair team, and the 402 participants in our *Almost Home* financial empowerment program represent EMS workers, teachers, social workers, and others who are intricate threads in the fabric of our community, making Bucks County such a special place to live, play, and work. Like the poet in the Simon and Garfunkel song, they are longing to be home. Whether you choose to volunteer in one of our ReStores, our construction sites, donate your financial gifts, or share your talents on one of our committees, together, let's make home possible, one family at a time.

#CarsForHomes

Donate a vehicle to Cars for Homes, Habitat for Humanity of Bucks County's car donation program, to help support local families. When you donate to HabitatBucks, we make it quick and easy.



Call (877) 277-4344 • habitatbucks.org/give/donate-a-car

Contact: Jennifer Drayer-McDonald
Donor Relations Director

j.mcdonald@habitatbucks.org | 215.822.2812 x316

Hard Hats & High Heels

HABITAT BUCKS' ANNUAL BENEFIT EVENT

Thursday, May 1
6-9:30 pm
The Warrington

Mingle with a diverse group of influencers and new friends who share your passion for positive change.

Save the Date

- A Culinary Delight
- Exciting Auctions
- Designer Challenge
- A Toast to Our Champions



Habitat for Humanity of Bucks County

Ask us about volunteer opportunities! Every hand makes a difference!

Durato International: A Flooring Gift That Transformed Lives

In a world where corporate success often overshadows compassion, Durato International stands out as a beacon of kindness. Founded in 2014 as an importer and distributor of flooring, this minority and disabled U.S. veteran-owned business expanded their mission to include philanthropic efforts.

Habitat Bucks' ReStores raised an impressive \$500,000 with 45 trailers of donated flooring. Through strategic sales and community engagement, those flooring materials were turned into a powerful force for good.

Durato International reminds us that businesses can create positive change. Their flooring gift, transformed into dollars and hope, echoes the spirit of humanity and a belief in kindness, community, and the power of giving.



ReStore Locations

Langhorne: 1337 Lincoln Hwy. • **Quakertown:** 38 N. West End Blvd. • **Warminster:** 539 Jacksonville Rd.
Store Hours: Mon.-Sat. 10am - 6pm • Call 215.822.2708 for FREE pickup of larger items



1,143 volunteers served our community with **25,615** hours of their time. FY24
Changing lives can include your own. Volunteer@habitatbucks.org