

Making a Difference: Habitat Results by the Numbers

By Sylvia Oberle
Executive Director

It is that time of the year when we thank all who have supported us so faithfully and ask for your continued support in helping us fulfill our mission of providing decent, affordable housing in our community.

As we reach out to you, we are constantly challenged with communicating the full impact of that mission: just what it means to work diligently every day to strengthen not only families and individuals but also entire neighborhoods.

Distinguishing ourselves from all of the worthwhile organizations and crying needs in our community is a considerable challenge, indeed. So we are attempting this year to provide some specifics about the impact that Habitat for Humanity has locally – day in and day out, year in and year out.

Since our founding in 1985, **Habitat Forsyth has served more than 350 families** by amassing financial and volunteer resources to build and renovate houses throughout Forsyth County. It means that almost **1,300 individuals** – based on an average family size of four – are now living vastly different lives. Instead of enduring overcrowded, unsafe, or unhealthy living conditions, they have a well-built, affordable home and long-term asset on which to build a more solid financial future. It means that instead of navigating chaotic living conditions, children have a room of their own, and can remain in one school, concentrate on school-work and build valuable social skills. They can live free of rotten floorboards, moldy carpets and drive-by shootings.

And this isn't just a one-time outreach to people in need of decent housing. **It makes a difference every day of every year, for 20 to 30 years.** As a colleague who is executive director of a neighboring affiliate puts it, "Habitat's impact is exponential, once a day, 365 days a year, for a lifetime."

Doing the math generates numbers that are too massive to comprehend. But what is easy to understand are the smiles on peoples' faces as they tell us about children who are graduating from college, new jobs they have found and the joy of finally having a home to call their own. For one family recently moving into their new home, it is the first time the 7-year-old son has lived in a house and not a motel room. Seeing him riding a bike safely around his cul-de-sac is priceless. Inside this newsletter, you'll find a testimonial from another homeowner who describes the wonderful impact of owning her first home.



We also make a difference in the bottom line. Since 1985, Habitat Forsyth has added **\$25 million to the city-county property tax base**, often taking empty lots or foreclosed houses and turning them into productive properties. Our families – all first-time homebuyers – pay an **average of \$1,200 a year in property taxes**.

In addition, as we work increasingly within target neighborhoods, we help contribute to a drop in crime rates and an increase in quality of life. Since our work

in the Boston-Thurmond neighborhood began, **serious crime has dropped by more than 50 percent**. A neighborhood association is being strengthened, playgrounds and community gardens are being built, and people have a renewed sense of hope.

This year, many of you have been instrumental in helping us reach our goal of building a new, more visible and accessible Habitat ReStore. Not only will this help us generate more operating revenue for Habitat, it will also help keep more hard goods – furniture, appliances, building supplies – from being thrown away. Each year, the Habitat ReStore keeps more than **50 tons of material** out of the county landfill while giving a low-cost alternative for home furnishings and supplies. That's a substantial investment in a better future for all of us.

And among the **4,000 people who volunteer** with us each year, contributing more than **100,000 volunteer hours**, even more lives are changed – from grieving parents and spouses working together on the first-ever Hospice Healing Build, to corporate teams learning how to work together better, to high-school and college students learning first-hand valuable leadership and volunteer skills.

So what difference does Habitat make, you could ask? We believe it is substantial, and we hope that you agree. As our vision states, Habitat is a "life-changing home-building ministry that uplifts everyone it touches."

Please help us continue to make a difference – day in and day out – by supporting us with your annual gifts and volunteer support. An easy way to do that is by going to our website, www.habitatforsyth.org, and clicking on Donate Now, or register to volunteer at habitatforsyth.volunteerhub.com.

All of us in the community thank you!



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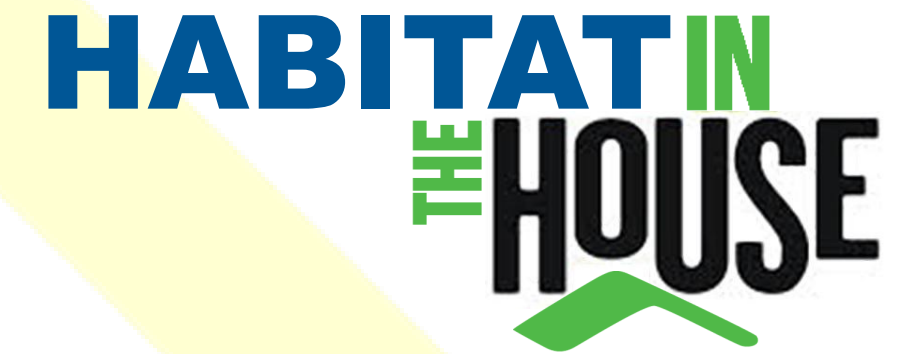
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Winter 2013

New ReStore Opens January 2! Volunteers Needed.

The new Habitat ReStore is a new building in a new location — but there are many new offerings on the inside as well.

The first thing visitors will notice upon entering the new store at 608 Coliseum Drive will be the large, open interior. Along the front wall, "room vignettes" organized by Shab to Fab and local interior design volunteers will demonstrate how various furniture pieces can be put together in appealing ways. Other items will be grouped in "departments" according to room type (i.e., living room, bedroom, etc.).

A "mission wall" will include news of our local affiliate and the work of Habitat around the world. A well-organized, cozy used book area will have free Wi-Fi access. Another exciting addition is the "DIY Theater," where members of Shab to Fab, the construction staff and other volunteer experts will hold classes about subjects like repurposing old furniture and laying tile.

Leading the effort is Dwayne Thompson, Habitat's new director of ReStore operations, who brings to Habitat a wealth of experience. During his seven-year tenure at the Charlotte Wender Avenue ReStore – three years as assistant manager and four as manager – annual sales increased from \$750,000 to \$2 million. Recently, Thompson also served as the interim director of the Statesville ReStore. The opportunity to open a brand new ReStore here was irresistible, Thompson said.



Dwayne Thompson, director of ReStore operations, and ReStore staff have been storing some special offerings, such as this brand new chest, for the Jan. 2 opening!

The Habitat Forsyth store currently brings in about \$720,000 in revenue each year. With a fresh new look and a much more visible location, the ReStore should be able to double its annual sales by June 2015 – which could lead to the opening of a second ReStore in the county, Thompson said. "Right now we are a hidden-away 'destination store.' People have to know we're here in order to find us. Even though we've had a ReStore for 14 years, there are still many Forsyth County residents who don't know we even exist! Now people who are just driving by will see us and, we predict, be intrigued enough to drop in."

The most important elements to making a good ReStore great, Thompson said, are (1) **plenty of high-quality donations** and (2)

great volunteers. A new drive-through drop-off lane outside the store will make donating items easier than ever before, and the ReStore is now actively looking for dedicated volunteers who will enjoy working in the various departments, at the cash register, or in the loading dock area on a regular basis.

In preparation for the new store opening, the ReStore staff has been quietly putting away many great items — including a large quantity of brand new, never used items that have been recently donated. While the store opens for business Jan. 2, a **grand opening celebration will be held on January 25!** There will be food, fun and lots of great deals!

Want to volunteer? If you'd like to volunteer for at least 4 hours per week in the new ReStore, please contact Dwayne Thompson at dwayne.thompson@habitatforsyth.org, or at 765-2951.

Neighborhood Revitalization Brings “Little Free Library” Program to Habitat Neighborhoods

As part of its Neighborhood Revitalization efforts, Habitat Forsyth has become a partner in the local “Little Free Library” movement, with a goal of placing a number of book distribution points in the Boston-Thurmond community and other Habitat neighborhoods.

A gang of volunteers gathered in the warehouse on Saturday, Nov. 16 to build 13 library boxes. All will be placed in community locations where people can donate, borrow and return books and share the love of reading with their neighbors -- a “grass roots” way to benefit communities without easy access to books.

The local project grew out of the national Little Free Library movement, which began in 2009 in Hudson, Wisconsin when Todd Bol built a box for his own front yard. The box was an instant success, so he erected several more in the neighborhood. By the end of 2011, the movement had grown to 400 Little Free Libraries across the U.S. In May 2012, Little Free Library was officially established as a non-profit corporation. It is estimated that the total number of registered Little Free Libraries in the



A group of volunteers built 13 “Little Free Library” boxes on Nov. 16.

world is now between 10,000 and 12,000!

Here in Winston-Salem, recent UNC graduate Sarah Maxey read about Little Free Library and decided to launch an effort locally. She established an online fundraising initiative on kickstarter.com, a website that allows people to pledge money for creative projects, with the intent of raising \$175. To her surprise, she raised more than \$10,000, which will allow her to place boxes throughout North Carolina. Maxey’s first “box” is actually a repurposed grandfather clock that resides at the Community Arts Café on Fourth Street.

Meanwhile, Habitat volunteer Bob Doty had also learned about Little Free Library and had prototyped a box. He and other Wednesday Crew volunteers John Valentine and Rich Andrews developed a design that was easy for volunteers to assemble.

“The Little Free Library project is a natural fit with our desire to work alongside our communities to improve quality of life in Habitat neighborhoods,” said Kelly Mitter, Habitat’s director of Neighborhood Revitalization. “There are few activities in the world that build a sense of community and bring people together like reading.”

Habitat Forsyth to Host 100 Students for Collegiate Challenge’s National 25th Anniversary

Thanks in large part to the rave reviews that hundreds of visiting Collegiate Challenge students have given Habitat Forsyth over the years, our affiliate has been selected as the host of the program’s national 25th anniversary celebration during the first week of March 2014.

Since Habitat Forsyth began hosting Collegiate Challenge teams about 15 years ago, a simple program to host a few students during Spring Break has turned into a year-round initiative. Many universities, colleges and even some private high schools along the East Coast are now sending teams during every school break, including the holiday season and the summer. In the last year Habitat Forsyth has hosted about 20 teams, some with as many as 20 students.

“Our affiliate is pretty unique in that we actually have a dormitory on the second floor of our office on Witt Street to house them,” said Debbie Cesta, manager of corporate and community engagement. “We also provide most of their meals while they’re here, and we’ve been very successful in finding community volunteers – often local alumni of their schools – to provide meals and fellowship. They also have the satisfaction of achieving a tremendous amount of work while they’re here, thanks to the leadership of our dedicated construction staff and Cornerstone volunteers.”

The 25th anniversary event will bring about 100 students from 10 schools to Winston-Salem, where they will start four



Volunteers and students from Villanova enjoyed food and fellowship in October.

houses in the Glenn Oaks neighborhood during the day and spend their nights in dormitories at the Children’s Home. So far Villanova University, the University of Florida, LaSalle University, the Milwaukee School of Engineering, Susquehanna University and Vanderbilt University have committed to sending teams.

If you would like to help with the 25th anniversary festivities, please contact Debbie at Debbie.cesta@habitatforsyth.org or 765-8854, ext. 105.

**REUSE
RESTORE
RENEW**

Time is Running Out



... to make a pledge to the **Reuse ReStore Renew** Capital Campaign!

Help us close out the campaign by Dec. 31, 2013!

Make a secure donation online at www.habitatforsyth.org. Click on “Donate Now.”



**Mark Your Calendar:
BirdFest 5K and Fun
Walk/Run on May 3**

As part of his New Year’s resolution to get in shape, the Hammerbird has taken up running! Join us Saturday morning, May 3 at the new ReStore, 608 Coliseum Drive, for the **First Annual BirdFest 5K and Fun Run!** More details to come!

A Homeowner Speaks

One of the most wonderful things about working at Habitat is getting to know our homeowners! We were very touched by this recent letter and wanted to share it with you as well! On behalf of all the homeowners and staff of Habitat Forsyth, thank you for making our work possible.

To the Habitat Staff,

We have been in our home almost a month and are loving every minute of it. The feeling we had that first night was a feeling like no other. (When we lived in a rental house) there were so many days we hated to come home. It was always so cold and was just falling apart. ... My daughter was always so scared to sleep in her room. Now every morning she tells me how good she slept.

The Habitat experience has been wonderful and worth every hour I put in to it. Some days you do feel like giving up but what you get in the end is a beautiful house built by loving and caring people. ... Can a house make a difference? It can make a world of difference and change your life in 101 ways. My children and I are forever grateful. There is nothing I can say or do that will tell you all how thankful we are. I thank you from the bottom of my heart for giving my family a place to call home, and putting smiles on my children’s faces every day when they walk into their new home. Keep doing what you do.

Holiday Ornaments, Cards Now on Sale!

Once again, our fabulous Shab to Fab volunteers have crafted a wonderful ornament as a holiday fund raiser for Habitat! This year’s ornament is a wreath made from a metal washer. It is already attached to a card on which you can write your name.

Ornaments are \$25 apiece and can be purchased at our office at 339 Witt Street. Also available are holiday greeting cards for \$5 apiece.

You may also order them online by going to www.habitatforsyth.org and clicking on “Get Involved,” then “Holiday Ornaments.” You can also designate whether you want your ornaments mailed to you or directly to your recipients.



Youth United Sells Turkeys, Throws Pies for Habitat

Youth United is off to a great start in its annual quest to raise \$65,000 to build a Habitat house.

During the first semester of the school year, the 2013-2014 Youth United group has already applied for and received a \$10,000 grant from State Farm Insurance.

Creative Youth United fund raisers so far have included the sale of Thanksgiving turkeys roasted by Bib’s Downtown restaurant and a very successful pie festival that included a pie-baking

contest for the first time. Guests at the event could purchase chances to throw pies at a few willing Youth United members and participate in pie walks and pie tasting.

Youth United is also renewing its focus on advocacy for affordable housing issues.

For more information about joining Youth United or helping the group in its efforts, contact Caitlyn Darnell at Caitlyn.darnell@habitatforsyth.org or 765-8854, ext. 107.



Youth United members serve up pie at the group’s annual pie festival in November.



Without You, It Doesn’t Happen

You can also safely donate online at www.habitatforsyth.org or pay with credit card by calling 765-8854, ext. 101.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

My Gift of (payable to Habitat for Humanity) will help “build it”:

____ \$50 (sink) ____ \$100 (window) ____ \$1,000 (roof shingles) ____ \$2,500 (kitchen cabinets) Other _____

My gift will be matched by _____

In honor of _____ In memory of _____

Mail to Habitat for Humanity, 339 Witt St., Winston-Salem, NC 27103