



“We are the type of people who run to the fire and stay through the hurricane.”

From “Koinonia Every Day,”
Charlottesville Habitat’s Statement of Values

April 3, 2020

Dear Friends,

We’re here and we’re staying!

In normal times, our mission calls for us to bring people together to build and rebuild homes and communities while catalyzing new pathways to safe, decent, affordable housing.

In this season of unprecedented challenges, while joining the global community in limiting the spread of the coronavirus by meeting and exceeding the guidelines of public health authorities, we are building on our culture of innovation and responsiveness to aggressively attend to community needs as they emerge.

As such, last night our Board ratified the following ***Interim Mission Statement and Strategic Framework*** to guide our work during the crisis:

We will...

1. Finish almost finished homes

We will strategically expedite home completions to allow families to safely shelter in place.

2. Support Partner Family Homeowners and Southwood Community Members

We will work with the 2,000+ neighbors already in Habitat homes or rentals to help them safely remain in their homes and weather economic

**Partner Families on the Front Lines:
Victoria Hawkins**



Victoria Hawkins, a participant in Habitat's Pathway Program, works for the UVA Hospital system at a call center. She is considered an essential employee during the COVID-19 crisis.

"I am an emergency operator. I take emergency calls," says Hawkins. "I also do paging for the doctors, like if someone is having a stroke on one floor and we need to get someone there."

Hawkins has two daughters. One, an adult, is a CNA at a nursing

and health challenges.

Our primary partners -- local families who earn between 15% and 60% of area median income -- are disproportionately front line providers of essential services (nursing, hospital maintenance, food preparation and delivery, etc.). We will keep them housed so they can keep everyone safe.

3. Support Partner Family Homebuyers and Applicants to our Program

We will help the 160 applicants to and 50 families currently in our Homebuyers and Pathways to Housing programs as they navigate financial and emotional challenges, keeping them on a path to better housing.

4. Direct resources to immediate community health and housing needs

- We will donate our inventory of masks, safety goggles and other personal protective equipment. When we can, we will also utilize the skills of our volunteers and staff to manufacture PPE's for emergency use in hospitals and elsewhere.
- We will utilize our vast network of trusting relationships built through years of asset based community development to help efficiently channel resources and disseminate information from partner agencies and donors to thousands of low-wealth neighbors.
- We will support our partners in homeless services so that everyone can shelter safely in place.
- We will share our resources (including staff if appropriate) with other service providers to address emergent challenges.

5. Advocate

We will use our voices and our policy expertise to ensure the most housing vulnerable neighbors are supported through federal, state and local policy.

home. Another is eleven years old and staying with Victoria's parents during the work week due to school being closed and a lack of available child care.

Many Habitat homeowners and participants in the Pathway Program are considered essential workers, serving on what have become the front lines in hospitals and grocery stores.

"The healthcare system in Charlottesville is expansive," says Kim Purdy, Habitat's Community Engagement Program Manager. "The janitorial staff, techs, nurses, receptionists, IT workers... Each and every one is clocking in to make sure that Charlottesville residents can be treated and have what they need during this crisis."

What do they need right now?

"Mental support," says Hawkins. "Just sitting down and listening to somebody... that's good support right there. Financially, if you are able to help someone who is struggling that is also good."

Reaching Out: Safely Supporting Habitat Partners



When we received 150

6. Communicate

We will provide weekly updates to our community partners, board, supporters and staff via digital and other media.

7. Stay grounded in equity and purpose

Through internal job sharing, we will ensure that staff members with less access to childcare and other supports are able to delegate some of their responsibilities to others who, because of the COVID-based change to our operations, have additional capacity to serve the community. And we will continue our commitment to equity in our housing and community development work, helping low-income families earn wealth through homeownership and addressing systematic patterns of inequity through appreciative and asset based community development.

8. Shore up our foundations

We will ensure that we are well positioned at every level organizationally to realize the goals of our strategic plan and address the housing needs of the community by...

- Implementing a contingency plan for financial resilience and preparedness.
- Continuing financial preparation with Southwood early adopters and keeping land planning moving forward to allow us to break ground as previously anticipated.
- Continuing to connect with donors who can provide resources to fulfill the promise of our strategic plan while also efficiently matching up philanthropists with emergency needs in the community caused or exacerbated by the COVID crisis.
- Increasing capacity and effectiveness of our E-tail operation at the Habitat Store.
- Continuing to entitle and prepare lots for future builds so that we can make up for lost time once we remobilize our full building operation.

gift cards from an anonymous donor, we were tasked with getting them to people in need as quickly as possible. Valued at \$50 each, the cards are redeemable at local businesses including Reid's Market and the Market Street Market. But how do you hand them out in the time of COVID-19?

Larry Scott, our Community Engagement Associate and a Habitat homeowner himself, personally delivered many of those cards on foot directly to our Pathways families and to Habitat homeowners. Using a five-foot long rake, he placed each gift card in the tines of the rake and used it to pass them to Habitat neighbors while creatively maintaining social distancing.

- Combining our core operations with work in Louisa and Greene Counties in order to realize greater regional impact.

This framework scaffolds the work we are currently doing and will continue to do to help the community weather the crisis. It also positions thousands of families in our community in need of safe, decent, affordable housing for long term success.

In this time of collective action and support, please join me in thanking the hundreds of Habitat families, like Larry Scott and Victoria Hawkins, featured here, who are working selflessly to keep us all safe, fed and connected. [To send a message of gratitude to Larry, Victoria, and other Habitat families or staff working on the frontlines of this crisis, please click here.](#)

In partnership,

Dan Rosensweig
President & CEO

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