

Blueprint



Habitat
for Humanity®
of Greater Charlottesville

THE NEWSLETTER OF
HABITAT FOR HUMANITY OF GREATER CHARLOTTESVILLE

WINTER 2018-2019



Westhaven Father and Daughter are... *Home for the Holidays*

This Christmas Eve, eleven-year-old Dior will fall asleep in her Habitat home and awake to a special Christmas morning breakfast made by her dad, Kendell.

“Dior is so excited!” says Kendell, who works at a local restaurant. “She can’t wait to put up lights. And it’ll be great for me to have room to cook Christmas dinner with my family. I love our new kitchen.”

Kendell grew up on 5th Street in downtown Charlottesville and has lived in the Westhaven public housing community for the past seven years. After spending months working to rehabilitate his new home on nearby 10th Street, Kendell is thrilled that he and Dior will be able to move just in time for the holidays. He’s even more excited that his new home is close to his brother who will be able to come over to celebrate. “My sister-in-law is

going to help Dior decorate and we’ll be able to open presents together as a family!”

Kendell’s home is part of Habitat’s Neighborhood Stabilization Program, purchasing and rehabilitating distressed and/or abandoned properties and selling them affordably to new Habitat homeowners.

“Habitat has long been committed to building community and preserving neighborhood affordability,” says President & CEO Dan Rosensweig. “The beauty of this program is that it enables existing and neighboring families like Kendell’s to move up without having to move out.”

“It feels so great to finally own my own home,” says Kendell.

From the President & CEO



“
WHEN LOVE AND SKILL
WORK TOGETHER, EXPECT
A MASTERPIECE.
”

With these words, 19th century English art critic, social thinker and philanthropist John Ruskin sums up our beliefs about our core work here at Habitat. In the following pages of this special edition of Blueprint, you'll find incredible stories of families we've been blessed to walk with, partners who have drawn strength from others to resculpt their future and imagine pathways to a better life.

Long time Habitat homeowner and staff member Larry Scott (page 2) continues to draw inspiration from his home buying experience, constantly finding new ways to make a difference in his community. Current homebuyer Kristina Muldoon (page 3) is passing on her work ethic to her son and sharing her new construction skills with first time volunteers. “Early Adopters” Isabel and Angelina (page 4) have been working for two years to learn the basics of urban planning, architecture, finance and more to create a site plan for the new Southwood. And Sharon (page 5) recently took her first steps on the road to homeownership via our new Pathways to Housing program.

At Habitat we build opportunity for families in all different stages of their journey. But we can't do it alone. We rely on friends like you—community partners, donors and volunteers—to join hands with us to support local neighbors working to improve their housing. Together, we can dream, design and shape a Charlottesville where everyone can find a decent place to live.

In Partnership,
Dan Rosensweig

A Lifelong Partnership with Habitat

“The hardest thing about being homeless is the loneliness. Not having a warm home to go to on a cold night, searching for a safe place to sleep—it's a terrible feeling.” By 1991, Larry Scott had been homeless for almost a decade. “On holidays, I would go to the park to sit and think—and miss my family.”

When Larry moved into a shelter and began volunteering at the Salvation Army thrift store, the staff saw enormous potential and offered him a paid position. He eventually worked his way up to assistant manager and was able to save enough money to rent a small, but drafty apartment. It was then that he fell in love with a frequent shopper named Monique, who he later married.

After finding out they were expecting their daughter, Mary Beth, Monique encouraged Larry to apply for the Habitat homebuyer program. But Larry was hesitant.

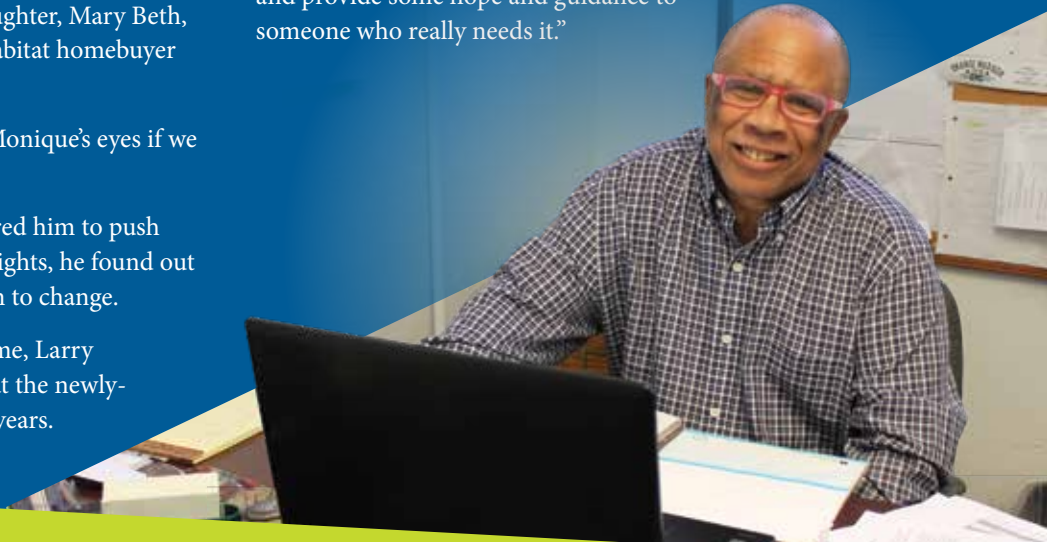
“I couldn't bear seeing the disappointment in Monique's eyes if we weren't accepted.”

However, his love for his growing family inspired him to push past his trepidation and, after a few sleepless nights, he found out they were accepted. Their lives had truly begun to change.

In 2004, after they purchased their Habitat home, Larry started working as a Donation Pickup Driver at the newly-opened Habitat Store where he worked for 14 years.

On any given day he could be seen driving through Charlottesville neighborhoods, honking his horn and waving out the window. “Larry has built relationships with people all over town,” says Habitat Store Operations Manager, David Winder.

Today, Larry is building on those relationships in his new role at Habitat as a Community Engagement Associate. “I love that in my new role I'm still helping the community, helping local people get the resources they need,” he says. “So many of the calls I take remind me of where I was twenty years ago. At the end of the day, what I needed was love and I got it from Habitat. Now it's my turn to share my story and provide some hope and guidance to someone who really needs it.”





BUILDING FROM THE GROUND UP

Four years ago, Kristina Muldoon was overworked, underpaid and living in a trailer that was falling apart. She knew that she needed to make a change for herself and her teenage son, Nevin, but she could not afford the cost of renting an apartment in Charlottesville.

“I saw my cousin go through the Habitat homeownership program, and I knew that I could do it,” she says, adding that “it’s so important to me to be a positive example for my son and show him what hard work can accomplish.”

Kristina applied to purchase a home but was initially denied due to poor credit.

“Being denied was tough, but it gave me the motivation to improve,” she recalls.

“Habitat gave me the courage I needed to get my finances in order and I was able to pay off my debt in eighteen months. I also found a new job at Halo Salt Spa that pays a lot better. I love it.”

These changes lifted a weight off her shoulders and put her in a better position to apply for homeownership. Two years ago her application was accepted and she began her partnership with Habitat, volunteering to build homes at her future neighborhood, Lochlyn Hill. She loves to learn, so the construction process has been an opportunity for her and her son to master new skills that will help them maintain their home.

“I have put my hands on every part of my house.”

Additionally, she has become a leader on the jobsite, encouraging and supervising new volunteers during Habitat’s Women Build Week.

Kristina’s greatest source of pride is reflecting upon how much seventeen-year-old Nevin has grown since they started their journey in Habitat’s program together.

“I’ve seen him gain a lot of confidence since he started working to build our home,” she explains. “Living in a trailer has been hard for his self-esteem. He hasn’t felt comfortable inviting people over. But he’s already getting excited about bringing friends to our new house. I’m giving Nevin a lift so future generations can do better.”



 **REBUILDING**

“I Learned to Elevate My Voice”

For almost two years, Southwood community members Isabel and Angelina have been hard at work planning the rezoning for the first phase of redevelopment in their neighborhood. They are part of a group of Southwood “early adopters” working alongside professional architects and engineers to create the rezoning application for Phase I of building.

“We want a place where our families can play and grow,” says Angelina. “If it’s not for me, it’s for my children. It’s a long process, but thinking of my kids motivates me to believe that one day I can have an affordable home.”

Since submitting a rezoning application to Albemarle County, the planning team has been honing specific designs for the 30-acre parcel of land where the first new homes in Southwood will be built.

“Rezoning is a long process,” reflects Isabel. “It’s not as if you present one plan and then it is ready; it can take about a year to complete.”

In November, Isabel’s and Angelina’s participation intensified as they joined Habitat staff for a four-day conference at Habitat for Humanity International’s headquarters in Atlanta. The conference convened ten Habitat affiliates from across the country who are currently undertaking neighborhood revitalization projects in communities similar to Southwood.

While in Georgia, Isabel and Angelina shared their experiences of the planning process with residents from those neighborhoods.

“We heard ideas from people that live in other states,” says Angelina.



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“I began to think about the things those communities are doing that we can bring to Southwood to help people in different ways.”

For Isabel, the experience taught her a valuable lesson she will bring to her work at Southwood. “I learned to elevate my voice. If I don’t talk, I won’t be heard.”

Paving the Way to HOMEOWNERSHIP

When Sharon first came through Habitat's doors in February 2017, she was battling a series of harrowing challenges—job loss, physical injuries, a car breakdown, family deaths and, most recently, homelessness. After abruptly losing her housing in November, she and the three children under her care (two grandchildren and her two-year-old goddaughter) spent several months moving from place to place, sleeping on living room floors and living out of suitcases. She lost her job as a Certified Nursing Assistant due to a shoulder injury and was working full-time at Burger King earning \$9/hour.

But just as she has always done in times of unimaginable adversity, Sharon persevered by sheer force and grit. This time, however, with the help of Habitat's new pilot initiative—Pathways to Housing—Sharon, for the first time

in her life, sees a permanent path out of the grind of poverty.

Pathways to Housing is a holistic financial empowerment program that offers hard working families like Sharon's a chance to achieve lasting financial and housing success. Pathways identifies individuals and families that apply to Habitat's homeownership program but are denied because their wages are too low and/or they are mired in a cycle of debt.

The program then provides participants the support they need by leveraging multiple partnerships across various sectors including housing, workforce development, family services, commercial banking and philanthropy. Families receive intensive, one-on-one financial coaching to help them improve their financial knowledge, manage their finances, pay down debt,

increase savings, rebuild their credit and create a plan for better housing, most often as homebuyers in the Habitat program.

Since joining Pathways in August, Sharon is already demonstrating her own potential and the promise of this new initiative. With support, she acquired a housing voucher through the City's new rental assistance program, moved her family into stable rental housing, secured consistent, affordable childcare for her three children and moved from a \$9/hour job at Burger King to a \$12/hour job at UVA Dietary Services. She is working with PVCC on a training and employment plan to eventually return to her passion of nursing.

Finally, through her affiliation with the Pathways program, Sharon became one of the first recipients of United Way's new Family Self-Sufficiency grant, through which she will receive \$10,700 over the course of 2 years as she meets her self-sufficiency and homeownership goals. "My dream is to get my kids through school and buy a home for them to grow up in. Pathways is a great program. I would advise it for anyone who is ready to take that next step."





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**EQUAL HOUSING
OPPORTUNITY**



WHAT WILL YOU BUILD?



VOLUNTEER

Lend your skills to Habitat! From photography, to childcare, to preparing food, to building homes, EVERYONE makes a difference.



ADVOCATE

Attend community meetings and build relationships with others who care about affordable housing! Contact gtrent@cvillehabitat.org.



DONATE

Help build a more equitable and sustainable Charlottesville. Make a gift to the community today.

www.cvillehabitat.org