Habitat Happenings fall 2022

on the cover
Brianne and her boys celebrate the dedication of their new home
Dear Habitat Community,

Our 35th Anniversary has been a year of celebrations, looking back and planning ahead. It also has been a year during which Cleveland Habitat has prepared for new staff leadership.

Once again, we will set records this year, all possible because of the growing financial, volunteer and staff resources dedicated to advancing affordable homeownership in Cleveland.

These are exciting times at Cleveland Habitat. As we plan to conclude our 100-house campaign in Buckeye-Woodhill started in 2016, we will soon announce an ambitious 400-house, $30.5 million initiative for both the East and West sides of Cleveland. Did you ever imagine Cleveland Habitat would be in the position to help so many families?

This large initiative is premised upon $5 million in American Rescue Plan Act funds being awarded by the city of Cleveland – if you know Mayor Bibb and/or Cleveland City Council members, please put an encouraging word in for Habitat’s affordable homeownership program.

Nobody does what Habitat does in Cleveland, and we can and will do more with your continued support.

We are excited that Habitat’s new president and CEO – John Litten – is starting October 1. You will have the opportunity to meet John in the next few months, and we know you will warmly embrace and support him.

It is an honor, privilege and joy to lead this outstanding organization. We wish you all the best.

John Habat
President/CEO
Michael Owendoff
Board Chair

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Habitat Snapshots

1. James and his family celebrate at the dedication of their new home.

2. The fifth class of Building Great Futures students spent the summer working in Buckeye-Woodhill.

3. Cleveland Habitat teamed up with the Western Reserve Land Conservancy to plant some beautiful new trees in the yards of our Habitat homeowners.

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Greater Cleveland Habitat for Humanity names new President and CEO

John Litten joins Cleveland Habitat after serving as executive director at the West Side Catholic Center since 2017. Previously, he served as executive director of the Diocese of Cleveland’s St. Vincent de Paul Society and was director of the Cleveland Catholic Charities Camp Christopher. He brings a wealth of nonprofit and fundraising experience, a deep understanding of poverty issues and Cleveland’s housing crisis, and solid relationships with civic and corporate leaders and government officials.

Save the date
The Volunteer Dinner will take place November 16th.
Cleveland Habitat to expand into Lorain

We have no intention of slowing down after celebrating our accomplishments of the last 35 years — and our expansion into Lorain proves just that.

This decision wasn’t made lightly. There were several factors to consider, chief among them being if this move would affect our ability to serve those in Cleveland. After careful consideration, we determined that we can help others secure affordable homeownership in Lorain, without impacting our work in Cleveland.

“We’re approaching this expansion through the lens of our mission,” says John Habat, president and CEO of Cleveland Habitat. “There is a great need in Lorain County, and we want to help more families and individuals secure safe and affordable housing.”

The first step of the expansion process will be to reopen the Lorain ReStore, located in Amherst, in November 2022. Other elements of the Habitat plan will begin to fall into place in the months following the store’s reopening.

But first, we have some work to do. Earlier in 2022, Habitat for Humanity International dissolved the local Lorain affiliate following staff leadership issues.

“We’re looking to earn back Lorain County’s faith in Habitat’s mission,” says Habat. “The Cleveland Habitat program works and we can use our experience and successes to develop a program of service in Lorain.”

First stop is the local faith community.

The church is a key part of the foundation of Habitat. We’re eager to connect with local churches and faith leaders, and, based on our track record of rallying the religious community in Cuyahoga, we hope to have similar success in Lorain.

Next, we need to connect with local government agencies to identify resources available, much like we have with the city of Cleveland.

Finally, we must talk with the philanthropic and corporate communities. There is a vibrant community in Lorain. Once we have a plan of action, it will attract the community to get involved.

We’re excited to start this next chapter in Cleveland Habitat’s history and we’re looking forward to growing our Habitat community.

Construction Update: Union-made Habitat house

The Construction Employers Association (CEA) broke ground on the 14th Habitat house on Grandview Ave. in April. Since then, its members have been hard at work building another affordable home for a Cleveland family.

“It’s great to see so many groups coming together to build this house,” says Tony DiGeronimo, vice chair of CEA. “We’re doing good in Cleveland and having some fun, what could be better?”

A family has already selected the house and construction should be wrapped up before November.

Want more regular updates from Cleveland Habitat? Subscribe today to get our e-newsletter at clevelandhabitat.org
the total is in and this year’s Walk/Run/Mosey raised...

$215,619

That wouldn’t have been possible without the help of our amazing Habitat community. Whether you joined us at the Walk, donated online, volunteered or helped us spread the word of our mission, you helped us have the most successful Walk yet. Thank you!

The money raised will be going toward the construction of 8 new houses on Shale Avenue, providing 8 more families the chance to purchase an affordable home and helping revitalize an entire neighborhood.

715 attendees

43 teams
Thank you to our sponsors!

Presenting Sponsor:

Cuyahoga Land Bank

Neighborhood by Neighborhood:

Enza Financial

Street by Street:

CIBC

Block by Block:

Squire Patton Boggs

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Cleveland Clinic

Marymount Hospital
When was the last time you visited the ReStore?

Whether you’re a do-it-yourselfer, homeowner, renter, landlord, contractor or treasure hunter, make Greater Cleveland Habitat for Humanity ReStore your first stop when shopping for your next home improvement, renovation or DIY project.

Visit us today to check out our large selection of furniture, appliances, lighting fixtures, flooring, paint and so much more!
Meet Jenavione and her family

Jenavione is a mother, a full-time employee with the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (RTA) and a student.

Her daughter, Cemyrah, is 14 years old and just started 9th grade.

A year before she started the process of becoming a homeowner, she was homeless in the Atlanta area. At that time, she found out about Habitat and started the application process. As we all know, this process takes many months, so she returned home to her mother’s rental unit and is currently sharing a room with Cemyrah.

Once she settled in and found a full-time position with the RTA, she started the Habitat Homeowner process again here in Cleveland.

Jenavione is a student at Cleveland State University and is on schedule to graduate in December 2022. Her professors really value her classroom contributions, life experiences and have encouraged her to continue with a master’s program.

They are both very artistic. Jenavione is involved in theatre and Cemyrah has a true gift as a makeup artist.

She and her daughter are very laid back and self-proclaimed “homebodies.” They enjoy a nice quiet night in.

Jenavione has big plans for when they move in: she plans to design and build her own deck by herself!

many thanks to our faith partners on the 2022 Faith Build

Brecksville United Methodist Church
Calvary Hill Church Of God In Christ
The Church of the Covenant
Church of the Gesu
Church of the Redeemer United
Church of Christ
Church of the Western Reserve
First Lutheran Church of Strongsville
John Knox Presbyterian Church
King’s Church
Lord of Life Lutheran Church
Old Stone Church
Plymouth United Church of Christ
Church of St. Dominic
St. Joseph Catholic Church of
Strongsville
St. Mark Parish Westpark
St. Mary Catholic Church Berea
St. Mary of the Falls
St. Paul’s Episcopal Church
Strongsville United Methodist Church
The United Methodist Church of
Chagrin Falls
Valley Presbyterian Church

It’s not too early to start thinking about the 2023 Faith Build!

Each year a group of 12-20 churches come together and either build or rehab a home for a local family in need. We pray, volunteer and financially sponsor a home. Interested in joining the Faith Build next year? Join us Friday, December 9th for a tour and open house. Please carpool if you’re able and meet at our west side ReStore located at 2110 West 110th Street, Cleveland, @ 10am. Your faith group will receive a short tour and explanation of the Faith Build and then we’ll head out to a construction site. Call Michelle Killin-Keith, manager of Faith Relations, at 216-318-0274 to hold your spot on the tour.
Since our founding, we’ve helped more than 300 families realize their dreams of homeownership. **Together, we can do even more in the next 35 years.**

clevelandhabitat.org/donate

I have often asked myself, how did a guy like me get so lucky to represent the collective goodness of the people that make Habitat what it is?” I am deeply appreciative and forever thankful.

- John Habat