



# NEWSLINK

We build affordable homes on the foundation of Christian love, where families are provided a secure environment and together a community is established.

## She almost didn't fill out the Habitat application because "It sounded too good to be true."



**Elisa, Logan and Little Nala.**

After her divorce, Elisa, her two young boys and her mother Marge moved constantly from one rental to another, barely able to afford the rent that was sometimes over \$1,000. With no help from the boys' father, money was tight. Elisa said she wonders how they ever managed to pay the amount of rent they paid. Her mother said it seemed like they didn't have roots anymore.

Her younger son, who was having a difficult time with the divorce and moving from place to place, was struggling in school. The guidance counselor at his school, who was aware of their living situation, suggested Elisa apply to Habitat as a way to be able to afford a decent, stable home. Elisa is grateful to that guidance counselor and to the school for helping her children with clothing and food when she was having to spend most of the money she earned on rent.

She said she almost didn't fill out the Habitat application because "It sounded too good to be true." Once their application was approved, she said "The whole process was incredible. Putting in the hours of sweat equity was fun." Her older son helped and her mother babysat the younger son and helped paint. She smiled at the memory.

Elisa said she was so happy for the opportunity for her and her mother to own their own home and stop the cycle of renting houses they could barely afford. "Just getting a house with walls was enough," she said. Then she was able to pick her lighting fixtures and there were appliances, a shed, a trash can, even a garden hose. "They thought of everything," she said.

They moved into the house in 2011. Elisa, Marge and the boys finally had a home. The stability of a permanent home and the community neighborhood helped her younger son settle down and do better in school. He even discovered friends from school living in Habitat homes in the same neighborhood. The boys, now grown and living on their own, maintain the friendships they made there. Her oldest son, Brendon, graduated from NC State and is a Business Analyst in Raleigh. Her youngest son, Logan, who lives in town and works as an Independent Sales Consultant, stops in frequently.

Elisa is a professional gardener and had been working for a landscaping company. She recently started her own business. She also got married last June to a man who, amazingly, had a dog with the same name as her dog Nala. Now they call them Big Nala and Little Nala. The dogs have a large, fenced back yard and a doggy door.

The Habitat development of Shuey Knolls is a quiet neighborhood off Route 64 in Edneyville. Elisa and Marge's home sits on a large lot. The yard is immaculately maintained. Their home is beautifully decorated and well-cared for. "We love our house," Marge said. "It seems like a lifetime ago that things were so bad."



## Bright College Days

President & CEO Ron Laughter

This year my granddaughter began her first year of college at Augusta University in Georgia. She was all set up in student housing and was filled with excitement and expectation as she began moving into the dormitory for the first time.

Do you remember college? It might have been recently, if there are any young readers in the audience, as it was for my granddaughter, or more likely, several decades ago. It was a big change. For most of us, that dorm was perhaps just a bit nicer than the local minimum security prison. Or perhaps not, since some prisons these days can be quite nice, as we've see from CNBC interviews of high flying financiers who have been brought down to earth.

Things are a little different these days. Everyone from incoming freshmen to grad students has a whole different set of expectations. They want living on campus to be like what they had living at home, or perhaps even better. Forget the penal colony dorms of the past. Cell-like dorms are out in favor of apartment-like residences complete with baths, laundries and furnishings that sometimes look like they came out of the *Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous*.

But the living conditions of the majority of folks applying to be one of our Habitat homeowners make the dorm rooms of old seem palatial. Seriously! Most people can't even imagine what passes for housing in our service area. Everyday we see people who are contending with mold issues, serious electrical problems, inoperative plumbing, failed septic systems, and the list goes on and on. It is an appalling reality.

And these poor excuses for housing do not come cheap, averaging well over \$800 a month for a two-bedroom unit. This is why Habitat's program is so vitally needed here. Instead of renting out apartments where rent can go up every year, we sell qualified individuals a decent, energy-efficient home with a stable monthly mortgage payment that the homebuyer can afford.

I am proud of the contributions your Habitat makes in this community. And it's the generosity of people like you who make our work possible. We greatly thank you for your donations. Without your help, we would not be able to achieve our mission. And our partner families, the Habitat homebuyers, are indeed, deeply grateful to you for all that you do to help them improve their lives.

## Would You Like To Make a Gift and Forge Your Legacy?

So many people love Henderson County Habitat and wish they could make a big impact with a significant gift. **YOU CAN!** When you name "Henderson County Habitat for Humanity" in your will or estate plan, or include Habitat as a beneficiary of your IRA or retirement plan, you can ensure a gift that will transform the lives of hard-working, income-qualified families and revitalize our community's under-served neighborhoods for years to come.

- You can leave Habitat a percentage of your estate in your will or living trust.
- You can leave Habitat a specific amount for a specific purpose in your will or living trust.
- You can list Habitat as a primary or secondary beneficiary of your IRA or retirement plan.
- You can become a "Perpetual Builder" by making a significant gift as an endowment. Habitat will use the investment income, while the initial gift remains and keeps on giving.

Please consult your personal financial team or call Angie Hunter at 828-694-0340, extension 111 or email [ahunter@habitat-hvl.org](mailto:ahunter@habitat-hvl.org) to discuss planned giving options.

**You can be a part of this important work FOREVER!**

## Meet the Grunts

By Rich DeSimone



**Volunteers load a newly-built wall on the trailer.**

Henderson County Habitat literally runs on volunteers. At the core of our volunteer corps are construction volunteers, a group that is always changing and adapting, but without whom our work would grind to a halt. Habitat is fortunate to count 116 volunteers in construction, male and female, mainly retired, and all are dedicated to the jobs they do. It would be impossible to build affordable homes without them. As well as home building, they work on Home Repair and Deconstruction projects.

Have you ever wondered about these folks, many now retired from various careers, who bring Habitat a variety of skills so important to fulfilling our mission? How and why did they get involved with Habitat? What have they worked on? What gives them the most satisfaction? Well, here are a few...



**Bill Durant works on siding a house.**

Bill Durant, a retired nuclear research engineer, has been with Habitat for 16 years and has worked in nearly all aspects of construction from the foundation up. What's his favorite? Framing and wall building.

Ed Frenier, a Pharmacist Manager for a regional healthcare system, has 5 years experience working on exterior and interior trim, wrapping exterior posts, installing attic access framing and hardware, closet doors and shelving. Interior trim and shelving get Ed's vote as favorites.

One of Habitat's newer faces on the construction crews is Paul Richards. In a little over a year Paul, recently retired as an industrial design engineer, has brought valuable computer-aided design skills. After starting with hands-on work on wall layout, Paul has begun improving construction plans and has also taken on duties with the Friday electrical crew.

With these varied backgrounds and work experiences with Habitat, it turns out that they also have much in common. None had prior construction experience, but all enjoyed working with their hands on a variety of DIY home improvement projects. All came to Habitat shortly after retirement looking for ways to use their talents; as Bill says, "Doing something for those who need help." Words one often hears from Habitat volunteers.

All mentioned how rewarding they find their volunteer experience. Ed notes "Knowing you've accomplished something at the end of a workday, and in a small way helped that homeowner." Paul commented on his experience meeting and working with other volunteers, "All great people and talented in what they do, and knowing that the homeowners are moving into a well built house." Of course, the ultimate satisfaction is that all have helped others make a better life for themselves and their families.

### Habitat's Aging in Place Program

helps elderly homeowners with repairs and renovations needed to ensure their health and safety, making it possible for them to continue to live in their homes as they age.

Since Habitat's participation in the program in 2018, we have completed repairs on eight homes, one home is currently being repaired and 17 more are on a waiting list.

Repairs and renovations include: secure doors, wheelchair ramps, grab bars, smoke detectors and carbon monoxide alarms, insulated windows, and replacement appliances.

This program receives funding to pay for 90% of materials, up to \$1,350 per home, from a grant from Henderson County. (Habitat staff and volunteers provide the labor.) When repairs exceed that amount, Habitat must cover the rest. **We need your help with this.** Your donation of "Aging in Place" funds will help make a significant difference in the lives of our local elderly residents. If you would like to help cover these costs, please send a check with "Aging in Place" in the memo-line.

### ReStores Support Our Mission

The first Habitat ReStore opened 25 years ago in Winnipeg, Canada. Now, over 930 of these stores provide funds to help build homes in their local communities. The Henderson County ReStores on the corner of Washington and Barnwell Streets in Hendersonville, and the new ReStore in Fletcher, support our local Habitat homebuilding program.

The Restores are always accepting donated items in good working, re-sellable condition (tools, paint, appliances, furniture, artwork, home decor, linens, puzzles, household goods, lumber, etc.).

The ReStore will pick up large donated items. Call **828-696-9524** to schedule a pickup. Otherwise, drop off your donations Tuesday-Friday, 9-5 and Saturday, 9-4.

Habitat crews will deconstruct kitchen cabinets and bathroom vanities in good condition when you are replacing them. You won't have to pay for the deconstruction and the materials won't end up in the landfill. They will be sold in the ReStores. Call **828 458-0671** to schedule a deconstruction crew.

And take time to shop in the ReStores. You can find useful items and unexpected treasures. For more information visit: [www.habitat-hvl.org/restore/](http://www.habitat-hvl.org/restore/)

**More than 22 million people** have secured new or improved housing through Habitat for Humanity since the organization was founded in 1976. Driven by the vision that **everyone needs a decent place to live**, Habitat International began in 1976 as a grassroots effort on a community farm in southern Georgia. The organization has grown over the years to become a leading global not-for-profit working in local communities in all 50 states in the U.S. and in more than 70 countries.

**Henderson County Habitat for Humanity**, founded in 1989, is an affiliate of Habitat International. Henderson County Habitat builds homes for qualifying families who pay an affordable mortgage payment at a zero percent interest rate. The mortgage payments help support building more homes. Most people believe Habitat for Humanity International provides funds to local affiliates to build homes. However, **each affiliate is responsible for raising their own funds and running their own housing program.** If you donate to Habitat International and designate your donation for your local affiliate, Habitat International will retain a percentage of each donation. If you do not designate your donation to go to your local affiliate, Habitat International will keep 100% of the donation. **If you wish to support your local Habitat directly, please send your contributions to Henderson County Habitat for Humanity.**

**Henderson County Habitat is grateful for your support. Your contributions make a significant difference in the lives of our local families. With your help, we provide a hand up that is truly life-changing.** Your donations help us buy much-needed building supplies, things like: lumber, nails, doors, windows, paint and flooring. But most important, your support gives local families a safe roof over their head and a solid foundation under their feet...something every family needs to succeed.



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