

A photograph of a smiling woman with dark curly hair tied back, wearing a black jacket and a grey scarf. She is standing behind two young girls. The girl on the left is wearing a blue and green plaid shirt and is playfully pulling at her eyes. The girl on the right is wearing a blue t-shirt with a yellow graphic and a blue beanie. They are all smiling and looking towards the camera. The background shows a window with a view of bare trees outside.

a year of progress



Habitat
for Humanity®
Chicago

Annual Report
Fiscal Year 2019



A Ripple Effect...

To the Habitat Community,

Before joining Habitat Chicago's Affordable Homeownership Program, my daughter, Ayianna, and I moved six times for various financial and social reasons beyond our control. Ayianna had to constantly readjust to different schools and neighborhoods, and I knew I had to find a way to give her stability.

When I heard about the Habitat program, I immediately knew it was the perfect fit for us. I applied to have a stable place for Ayianna and me to live, as well as future generations of our family. When I finally become a homeowner, I believe we will gain a new sense of accomplishment, pride, and confidence. I've been in the program for a while now, and after completing all of my volunteer and homeowner education hours, I feel prepared to take on the responsibility of owning a home and becoming an active member of my new community.

Honestly, I didn't know much about West Pullman before joining Habitat, but I've been intentional in learning about our new community and promoting its positive attributes. The area has faced hard times – there's no denying that – but it has all the right building blocks. It has the right people with the right mentality to succeed as a community, and I'm ready to play a role in its future successes. I believe my new Habitat neighbors and I will create a ripple effect to help West Pullman continue to grow again. In fact, after years working in the restaurant industry, I'm hoping to open my own restaurant in the neighborhood one day.

To everyone reading this annual report, especially Norcon and partners who have sponsored my home and sent out volunteers to help complete it, I want to say thank you for believing in me and helping to make positive progress in my new neighborhood of West Pullman.

Sincerely,

Tabitha, Habitat Chicago homebuyer

Dear Friends,

Earlier this year we surveyed our supporters, asking them to reflect on the word home and share the first thought that came to mind. The responses were heartfelt and inspirational. We don't think it would surprise you to learn that safety, security, love, comfort, and family were themes that resonated among the hundreds of answers we received.

Unfortunately for many Chicagoans, the definition of home is muddled with the stress and anxiety caused by unaffordable, unsafe, declining living conditions – conditions that weigh heavily on families and hamper their abilities to make forward-looking choices. At Habitat Chicago, we are working to address the needs of this great city. Too many of our neighbors are financially burdened with the cost of living here. Families, just like yours and ours, are living in homes that are unaffordable, overcrowded, unhealthy, or unsafe.

We are excited and hopeful about the impact Habitat Chicago is having, particularly in the two South Side neighborhoods we serve – West Pullman and Greater Grand Crossing. While it's important that individuals and families have a safe, affordable place to call home, we believe it's equally important to support entire communities; a healthy place to call home is much more than the structure of a house. Therefore, our approach is robust and comprehensive.

Our current strategic plan positions our work around building stronger neighborhoods, a stronger city, and a stronger society. In 2019, we enhanced our core programs and are excited to launch new programs that will strengthen families throughout the city and equip residents with resources to

... Of Progress

positively impact their neighborhoods. We are working in two areas of the city that – while rich with history and community – have seen disinvestment and are overwhelmed with vacant and deteriorating properties. Additionally, we are creating opportunities for neighbors to come together to bring their dreams of community improvement projects to life. We are readying future homebuyers with the knowledge they need to successfully purchase a home. We are equipping homeowners and renters with the tools they need to care for their living spaces and ensure they are operating safely and efficiently. Through targeted investments that enhance existing assets and take on critical challenges, Habitat Chicago is making progress to improve the stability of our neighborhoods.

We are committed to seeing more Chicagoans thrive in homes that are affordable and safe and in neighborhoods that are healthy and strong. The **progress** we have made is possible with ongoing support from you – our volunteers, funders, and partners – people who know that, no matter how you define the word home, when it is decent and affordable, safe and secure, situated in a thriving community, home can be a launching point for independence and a brighter future.

Many thanks,

Jennifer L. Parks
Executive Director,
Habitat Chicago

Sean McGuire
President,
Habitat Chicago
Board of Directors



home ownership

“I want to raise my son, Noah, in a home that we can call our own. I want to create a stable environment for him that I never had as a child. Not only will we feel secure, but the burden of instability will finally be lifted. I know there will be a lot to learn along the way, but I’m excited to dive into important things like property taxes, home repairs, and how to best invest in Noah’s future.”

– Britany, Habitat Chicago homebuyer

The advantages of quality, stable, and affordable homeownership are powerful: it improves educational, health, and economic outcomes, among many others, for both families and communities. Thus, we are committed to providing the opportunity to as many Chicagoans as possible to become successful first-time homeowners and to access these long-lasting, life-changing benefits.

This year brought great progress within our homeownership programs:

- We had the largest cohort of homebuyers in Habitat Chicago’s Affordable Homeownership Program history, in which groups of future neighbors take a series of 12 homeowner education courses, volunteer 250+ hours each on the build site to help construct their new homes, and purchase their homes with an affordable mortgage.

- We completed our original redevelopment agreement with the City of Chicago to construct 16 affordable, single-family homes on formerly vacant land in West Pullman.
- We broke ground on a new eight-home construction site in West Pullman, kicking it off with a community barbecue.
- We finalized the plan to pilot a new program, a public Homebuyer University, in our next fiscal year. This eight-class, open-to-all, education series will cover the ins and outs of purchasing a home and prepare individuals to pursue homeownership on their own.

A special thanks to these partners who catalyzed this progress with their generosity: Norcon, Inc., Thrivent Financial, BMO Harris Bank, and the participating companies in The House that Tech Built and Real Estate Build initiatives.



Homeownership

Progress in Numbers:

11

families enrolled in our Affordable Homeownership Program

995

volunteer and homeowner education hours invested by these families

4

new, affordable, energy-efficient homes completed and 8 under construction

9.73%

increase in property value on Habitat Chicago homes in West Pullman



neighborhood grants initiative

“The Neighborhood Grants Initiative over the last six months has brought our community closer and more involved than the last few years. The funding has really helped us do things we normally would have had to fundraise for. It gave us a starting point and motivation to fundraise further and keep activities going.”

– Sam, Neighborhood Grants Initiative Participant

We want the residents of our focus neighborhoods, West Pullman and Greater Grand Crossing, to be proud of the resilient communities in which they live and have opportunities to make them even better. Through our Neighborhood Grants Initiative, which has evolved from our learnings and conversations from previous beautification initiatives, we offer small grants to community residents to drive forward projects that will enhance the physical, social, or economic landscape of their communities.

How does it work? A local project leader dreams up the idea, attends a project management workshop, recruits at least five neighbors to participate, leads and executes the project, and we fund it.

Here's a sample of projects we were grateful to fund during our initial Fiscal Year 2019 project period:

- **Traffic circle clean-up and landscaping:** Neighbors came together to beautify three traffic circles in their neighborhood.
- **A basketball tournament:** Neighbors repainted a local basketball court and organized a community basketball tournament, during which there was an opportunity for community members to get to know the members of their local police force.
- **Home porch repairs:** Neighbors repaired their porches together to enhance the appearance of their block.



Neighborhood Grants Initiative

Progress in Numbers:

12

projects funded through the Neighborhood Grants Initiative

616

West Pullman and Greater Grand Crossing community members engaged in projects





energy efficiency workshops

“The energy efficiency workshops have grown from year to year because those in attendance have helped to spread the word to other friends and neighbors. The attendees were excited to receive their weatherization kits and install the contents at home. We got many reports of how much the kits helped make their homes more comfortable for them, which is exactly what we set out to do.” – Eya Louis, Workshop Partner, Sustainable Options for Urban Living

When it comes to adding value to a home, especially an aging home, both small and large efforts can have a big impact. In the winter, we partnered with West Pullman-based nonprofit, Sustainable Options for Urban Living, to offer Energy Efficiency Workshops and distributed free weatherization kits in West Pullman and Greater Grand Crossing.

These workshops emphasized the benefits of being up to speed on energy efficiency and home weatherization to make homes more comfortable and avoid costly repairs in the future. Attendees learned a wide range of ways to make their home systems more efficient, including how to control airflow in the home, ways to conserve water, and options for funding and installing residential solar power units.

Thanks to the generosity of our friends at Constellation, an Exelon company, we were able to distribute 200 weatherization kits at these workshops to help attendees bring their workshop learnings to life in their homes.



Energy Efficiency

Progress in Numbers:

142

participants across West Pullman and Greater Grand Crossing

200

free weatherization kits distributed

12

local community organizations partnered with to distribute kits

ReStore Chicago

“It has been a privilege to be a part of the store from the beginning and to see us navigate growth and challenges along the way. The opportunity for the ReStore to grow is there in such a big market like Chicago. I am excited to continue to be a part of that process and thankful to all of the shoppers, donors, and volunteers who have made it possible.” – Chris Kennedy, Procurement Manager, ReStore Chicago



ReStore Chicago

Progress in Numbers:

937

tons of useful home goods diverted from landfills

4,394

generous donations from Chicagoans

22,331

hours invested by ReStore volunteers

\$494,972

in sales to be re-invested in our neighborhood programs

For the last five years, we’ve operated ReStore Chicago in partnership with Habitat for Humanity of Northern Fox Valley. ReStore Chicago is a home improvement resale store that supports Habitat’s mission and reduces Chicago’s waste in landfills.

At ReStore, people purchase new or gently used, donated items at an affordable price, and proceeds are re-invested in the Habitat mission to help more Chicagoans improve their home and community conditions.





volunteers

“In my time as a volunteer, I have had a chance to build a new appreciation of how homeownership can change the lives of Chicago families. My favorite build days are the ones where future homeowners work beside us to help build homes for themselves or their neighbors. As they describe the huge impact that their new home will have on their entire family, I am reminded how critical the Habitat Chicago mission is to our city. Congratulations to the Habitat Chicago community on another amazing year of building a world where everyone has a decent place to live!” – Dan Stolze, Volunteer Construction Crew Leader and Office Volunteer

Volunteers are undoubtedly the backbone of Habitat Chicago, and we are thankful to the thousands of Chicagoans who have invested their time and talents to improve the lives of those around them. Whether it be on our construction site or behind-the-scenes, our volunteers were the heart of our programmatic progress this last year.

On-site, our volunteers lent their muscle to advance construction on 12 affordable homes this past fiscal year. They came as individuals, as teams, as part of special events, and as crew leaders, working year-round to build the foundations of healthy futures.

Off-site, whether as a weekly office volunteer, a year-long service member, a Habitat Host, or a member of our multiple operating committees, hundreds of Chicagoans brought their unique skillsets to inform important decisions and drive vital initiatives to sustain our growth.

Altogether, Fiscal Year 2019 saw strong increases in our number of volunteers, number of volunteer hours served, and number of volunteer programs available from the previous year, facilitating a stronger mission changing more lives.



Volunteers

Progress in Numbers:

3,652

volunteers served 22,968 total hours on our construction site and in our office

10

year-long volunteers from AmeriCorps completed 14,880 total hours of service work, our largest cohort to date

375

Women Build volunteers raised \$243,310 and worked on four homes alongside five female Habitat Chicago homebuyers and one homeowner, our largest Women Build to date



international mission

“To me, being a Habitat Global Village trip leader means: leading a group of new and old volunteers that will forever be a part of the Habitat Family, becoming lifelong friends with the homebuyers, and learning something new about a foreign place through food, culture, and experiences. Every trip is unique, yet volunteers are consistently provided opportunities to grow as global citizens and make a difference in the places they travel.”

– Vicky Meggos, Honduras Global Village Trip Leader

While we work locally and autonomously in Chicago, we share the vision of a world where everyone has a decent place to live with local Habitat affiliates working across the globe.

Since 2012, we have been sister affiliates with Habitat Malawi. Through this partnership, we dedicate a percentage of our income to support their critical work of providing decent housing to Malawian families and orphans, providing clean water and sanitation services, and offering disaster relief and rehabilitation services.

This year, we also proudly gathered a group of volunteers to support the work of Habitat Honduras through the Global Village program. The group of 16 volunteers, including three Habitat Chicago staff members, not only helped build and fund an affordable Habitat home in a village outside of Santa Rosa de Copán, but also immersed themselves in the host country and created international relationships that will last a lifetime.



International Mission

Progress in Numbers:

\$120,000

tithed to Habitat Malawi to fund 26 housing projects

\$26,106

raised for Habitat for Humanity Honduras by 16 Chicagoans

Financials

We couldn't do our work without you, our extraordinary supporters.

Visit <https://www.habitatchicago.org/about/annual-reports> for our full donor list.

Income

Contributions	\$2,175,569
ReStore	\$223,467
Program Revenue	\$234,576

Total Income	\$2,633,612
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Expenses

Programs	\$2,056,790
Management	\$200,891
Fundraising	\$313,452

Total Expenses	\$2,571,133
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looking forward

“Habitat Chicago’s Associate Board has been an opportunity for me to contribute to the organization’s growth through engaging Chicago’s young professionals in a new way and raising awareness of the importance of affordable housing and healthy neighborhoods. From networking events to fundraising to volunteer build days, the Associate Board has been able to give back to our community in more ways than we imagined – and we are just getting started. I am excited to see the organization continue to increase the difference it makes for the lives of my fellow Chicagoans and am proud to be playing a role with the Associate Board.”

– Lauren Willett, President, Habitat Chicago Associate Board

As we reflect on the progress made this last fiscal year, we also look forward to the growth of this next year – all made possible by you, our community of committed Chicagoans. We have big plans in store to help our neighbors when it comes to housing and quality of life, and want to provide a highlight reel of what your support is enabling us to do in fiscal year 2020:

- **New home construction.** In West Pullman, we will finish seven homes and begin construction on six additional homes. In Greater Grand Crossing, we will start construction on our first two homes in the neighborhood.
- **Homebuyer University.** We will graduate two classes of students and take the learnings from our pilot series to expand our program, modifying our curriculum and increasing our class size and frequency of course offerings.
- **Neighborhood Grants Initiative.** We will put over \$30,000 of funding directly into the hands of West Pullman and Greater Grand Crossing residents to bring to life their ideas of how to make their neighborhoods look and feel better.
- **Energy Efficiency.** We will expand our energy efficiency workshops into year-round home-care workshops to help Chicagoans add value to their homes, feel more comfortable in their homes, save money and time by avoiding unnecessary repairs, and better our environment through home efficiency.
- **Volunteers.** We plan to expand our volunteer programs to match our growth in programming and new home construction.
- **International work.** We will continue to grow our financial support of Habitat for Humanity Malawi to help further their critical housing and health services.
- **ReStore Chicago.** We will fully assume ownership and operations of ReStore Chicago, after five tremendous years of partnership with Habitat for Humanity of Northern Fox Valley.

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