



Habichat

Building homes, communities and hope.

Fall 2022

Helena Habitat Growing Because of Your Support



NEW ReStore Location: 1320 Market Ave

New ReStore location will open November 15, 2022.

It's an exciting time for Helena Area Habitat for Humanity. Community support and lucky timing allowed Habitat to purchase a new building into which the old ReStore (formerly located on National Blvd.) will move this fall. In addition to keeping tons of materials out of landfills by giving them a second life

through re-sales at the ReStore, the revenue from those sales goes right back into helping create affordable homes in the greater Helena area. Having a space that is two to three times greater than the current store will expand the services the ReStore provides to the Helena community, while increasing a permanent source

of funding for building and repairing homes in the Helena area.

ReStore manager, Ray Bixby, noted that the current store on National was "bursting at the seams" and that they had to turn away some donations because there simply was not enough room to adequately showcase them and sell them. "Our ReStore staff is really looking forward to being able to have more room to

showcase the great materials our community so generously donates to us."

The Helena Habitat Board of Directors was already reviewing the options for the best path forward to a larger space for the ReStore. When the former Sears Appliance store at 1320 Market Street became available,

the solution was clear. Across from Lowe's and next to Sherwin Williams, the building's open floor plan fits the needs of a retail space, plus there is a loading dock, more parking and the building sits in a more central location.

Important Dates:

Friday, October 28:

- Last day of business at the old ReStore (1531 National Ave)

Tuesday, November 15:

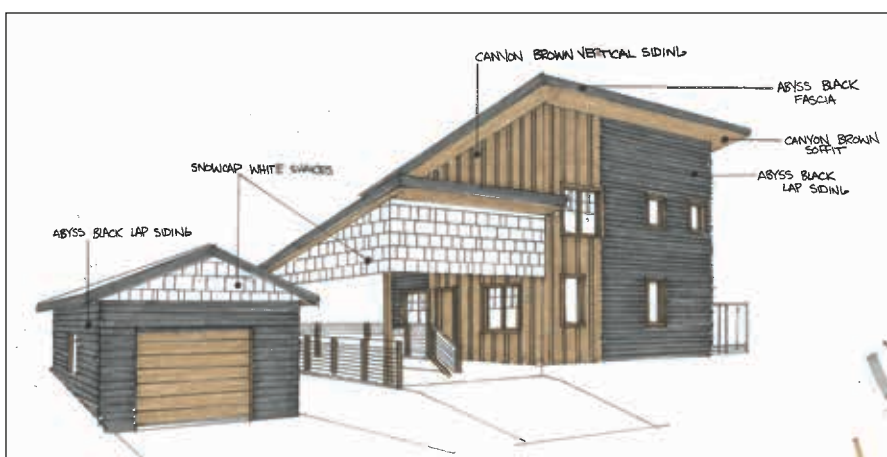
- New ReStore opens to the public (1320 Market Ave)

New ReStore Location:

1320 Market Ave. (across from Lowe's)

New ReStore Hours:

Tuesday-Saturday 10a.m.-5p.m.



Architect's rendering of the ADU house on Choteau Street.

Habitat Homes Featured in 2022 Parade of Homes

The 2022 Parade of Homes event showcased the Helena Habitat Choteau Street project, much to the delight of the people who attended the 3-day long celebration of quality homes in the greater Helena area.

The Habitat project that was on the tour featured two homes located at 1000 Choteau Street in Helena. Two years ago, a generous donor approached Habitat with plans to donate the property. As a volunteer with Helena Habitat, Sue knew the importance of making homes available that were safe and affordable,

and the current housing crisis brought this importance to the forefront.

Located at the corner of Choteau and Lincoln on the west side of Helena, the home originally had two bedrooms and one bath upstairs with an unfinished basement. There was also a free-standing garage in the back of the house. After consulting with CWG Architects, the existing home was restored into a four bedroom, two-bath home. Additionally, the original garage was torn down and a second smaller house was built in its place on

the same lot. The two families will move in later this fall. These homes will be made permanently affordable through a land trust agreement with Trust Montana, ensuring generations of families will benefit from the gift.

Helena Habitat is so grateful to Sue, not only for the donation of the original property, but for the opportunity to maximize the donation so that more people will have safe and affordable places to call "home."

Wells Fargo Grant: On the first day of the Parade, employees from Wells Fargo came from all over western Montana to help finish the house's landscaping. They also made a \$25,000 grant to put solar panels on the roofs of both houses. A reporter from KXLH and The Independent Record stopped by and did interviews, and by the end of the weekend, close to 600 people had come to see the property.

The Choteau project is especially significant to the work of Helena Habitat because it shows the possibilities inherent in current zoning and planning. Both the homes are examples of how Habitat's work isn't limited to just building new homes on purchased land, and that existing homes can be renovated and ADUs can be built on one lot to house an additional family.



Wells Fargo staff present welcome home mat to new Habitat owner Samantha Stringer.

Big thanks to all the donors who made this possible: Sue Jackson, Wells Fargo, The Dennis and Phyllis Washington Foundation, CWG Architects, Power Townsend, Valley Bank and Trust Montana.

Hearts of Habitat

—Volunteer Recognition Party—



Habitat volunteer corps members were acknowledged for their hard work and dedication at the recent Volunteer Recognition party.

It's always fun when we get to celebrate and acknowledge the dedication and good work of our volunteers! On any given day, you'll find them painting walls, installing cabinets, helping customers at the ReStore, doing Board service, or just helping with the many things that it takes to build safe and affordable homes here in Helena. We can't ever say it enough but **THANK**

YOU to each and every volunteer. And, if you're interested in becoming a volunteer, we can always use an extra set of hands. Just email Alex Garrett at volunteer@HelenaHabitat.org. Also, we offer workday volunteer opportunities for groups, from church groups to local employers who encourage service. We'd love to host you!

Habitat Myths vs. Reality

Despite its instant name recognition and its decades-old positive reputation, a lot of people don't fully understand the Habitat program and how it works. Here are some myth-busters!

MYTH: Habitat homes are free.

REALITY: Habitat owners carry a mortgage, are required to clean up any credit or debt issues and must undergo financial counseling.

MYTH: Habitat homes are a burden to taxpayers and the community.

REALITY: Habitat homes add to the local tax base. Since 1992 Habitat homeowners in Helena have contributed over 1 million dollars to the tax base. In addition, in 2021 Habitat constructed homes with direct costs of over 1.6 million dollars. All materials and subcontractors were sourced locally to ensure these investments stay in the community.

MYTH: You have to have construction experience to volunteer on a build

REALITY: Nope! We offer training before and during every volunteer session, including safety training. There's a task for

everyone – from simple things like painting a wall to more complex things like installing siding. Sessions are fun, and if you bring friends or colleagues, it's even more enjoyable!



Did You Know?

- ▶ that we have over 300 families on our waiting list?
- ▶ that Habitat House owners must be able to carry a mortgage and clean up their finances before qualifying?
- ▶ that 89% of our homeowners are single moms?
- ▶ that we built 10 homes in the last 15 months?
- ▶ that each home we build uses high-quality materials and insulation, keeping owners' utility costs down?

Three Generations of Volunteering with Habitat

Many people in Helena know Jake Heaton, who works at Allegra Printing and Marketing and who provides top of the line customer service. But when Kyle Spencer, Allegra's owner, signed up to bring the Allegra crew to work on a Habitat house in East Helena this summer, Jake said

Jake's mom, Cathy Heaton came to help, but it was not her first time at a Habitat site. In fact, she's part of three generations that have made volunteering with Habitat an expression of faith.

"I was raised by two parents who were very active in Habitat,

“Building houses with my family is one of my favorite childhood memories.”

—Jake Heaton

that his family was going to join him. And as it turns out, helping Habitat is a decades-old family affair.



The Heaton family has been volunteering with Helena Habitat for Humanity for three generations.

through their church” Cathy said recently. *“Over the years, I think they built between fifty and a hundred homes with Habitats all over the country. They worked in 18 different cities in 8 states.”* Both her parents are now ailing with Alzheimer's, so she can't be sure, but she was, as she said, *“raised by Habitat”* and has carried on the family tradition of service with her two children, Rachel and Jake. Since her parents are in assisted living, only generations two and three were out in East Helena in late August.

“I literally grew up helping my grandparents and my parents



Jake and Rachel Heaton with their Grandpa and Grandpa on a build site in 2004.

build houses all over Colorado with Habitat” said Jake. He added, *“It is one of my favorite childhood memories. When we all had the opportunity to help here in Helena, we jumped at the chance to build as a family again.”*

Cathy Heaton recalls Jake starting to help at build sites when he was in 4th grade. *“We mostly built stucco houses in Alamosa, Colorado, where we lived at the time, so it was easier for the kids. My mom was quite the organizer, so she had all the*

volunteers set up and ready to roll. Volunteering for Habitat was ‘a well-oiled machine.’” Cathy's husband Marty, who coached the local football team, brought his players out to help build as well. Jake's parents moved out to Helena once Jake and Rachel settled in the area.

“Habitat for Humanity is such a noble cause,” Cathy noted. *“It is truly a pleasure to be able to help build for families in need of safe and affordable homes.”*



First Task Force meeting in Capitol. Photo Courtesy Helena Independent Record/Thom Bridge

Helena Habitat Executive Director Appointed to Governor's Housing Task Force

In mid-July, Montana Governor Greg Gianforte announced the formation of the Governor's Housing Task Force and appointed Helena Area Habitat for Humanity's Executive Director Jacob Kuntz to serve as one of its members. The Governor charged the task force with providing recommendations to him by year's end. Those recommendations will include the things the legislature can consider, items state agencies can implement administratively, as well as offering best practices local jurisdictions can enact.

In convening the task force, Gov. Gianforte said, *"It is critical that we increase Montanan's*

access to affordable, attainable housing... (the task force will get to the bottom of the problem and provide solutions to get us out of it.)"

Jacob Kuntz said, *"We are honored that Gov. Gianforte selected Helena Habitat to have a seat at the table to come up with solid recommendations on how to solve the housing crisis here in Helena and Montana."*

The task force is currently finalizing recommendations for the 2023 Montana Legislative session.

Look for more news about the Task Force's work in the coming months.



Become a Housing Hero by Donating Monthly!

Stretch your support even further by becoming a Habitat **Housing Hero!** It's easy—just fill out the section of the enclosed envelope or go online and indicate how much you'd like to give each month. We'll do the rest! Monthly giving is a great way to affordably increase your support to a cause you hold dear. For example, \$20 a month = \$240 each year!! Every dollar makes a difference in helping build safe and affordable homes for folks in our neighborhood who need a hand up—not a handout.

HelenaHabitat.org/ways-to-give
or call Liz at (406) 204-7310

SPOTLIGHT ON: Generous Business Partners

Ace Roofing and GAF Raise the Roof on Four Habitat Homes



Most people shrink at the idea of building a house from the ground up. From pouring the foundation to raising the walls, installing plumbing and painting, it's a lot of work before you can put the key into the front door and turn the lock of your new abode.

But as the saying goes, "many hands make light work." There are perhaps few other tasks where that old saying would be other than building a house. In addition to our wonderful volunteers' donated time, Helena Area Habitat for Humanity is grateful

for the many local businesses in Helena that are glad to lend a hand – or materials – or both --to getting Habitat houses built.

A recent example is the donation of time, labor, and materials from Ace Roofing and GAF Shingles. GAF generously donated enough shingles to cover the roofs of four houses, and Ace Roofing sent a crew of workers to install the shingles and finish off each roof.

Mark Leland, Construction Director at Helena Habitat, said, *"We are very thankful for the generous donations from Ace and GAF. A good roof is critical to the overall safety and longevity of a home, and GAF makes the best shingles in the industry. Ace came to us and offered to help, set up a meeting with GAF, and now these four homes have solid, finished roofs."*



Legacy Giving

As you plan for your future and the security of your loved ones, Habitat for Humanity can provide various legacy giving options to help you make a meaningful gift to support affordable homes in Helena. The most effective legacy gifts are made in coordination with an estate plan, so please contact your financial planner or accountant to review your options. **Or call our Development Director, Liz Harrison, at (406) 204-7310.**

Meet Jenni Carr, a Future Habitat Homeowner

My parents purchased our first home when I was 7 years old. I remember the overwhelming relief and comfort of knowing that after moving upwards of 15 times in my young life, it was finally over, and I had a place to call home. Personal homeownership has been my dream since then.

I didn't know the path to getting there would be so challenging. I spent the better part of my adulthood trying to figure out

debt and the sky-rocketing cost of homes, I was afraid that my dream of homeownership would be out of reach.

I had heard of Helena Habitat for Humanity, and I first inquired about the possibility of getting into the program in the Fall of 2019, just after giving birth to my second child.

The Habitat staff sat down with me, reviewed my finances and credit score, and were honest with me. They told me the

steps to getting accepted were going to be just as challenging as the home building process, but

they encouraged me and let me know that they were in my corner. They set me up with a financial counselor to help me get a handle on my debt issues and to teach me about good financial habits.

I began working for Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, worked hard to re-build my credit and focused on my family, work, and budgeting. In December of 2020,

my credit finally hit the 600s and I began to check in with Habitat more frequently. They let me know to keep working hard and checking in and the next selection would be in about a year. A year?! That felt like so far away... but before I knew it, it was here. It felt like my last chance. I was getting impatient and with Montana's housing crisis and my increasing rent,

I felt I was going to have to leave the state. As a single mother of two young children, even with a good job I was getting priced out of the market.

In February of 2022, I got the call that I had dreamed of, and I learned I would be a Habitat homeowner! My dream was coming to fruition. I couldn't believe it! I called everyone I knew and cleared my calendar for the next year. I had grown so much in the



The Carr family on the site of their new Habitat home.

last 2.5 years since I initiated the process, but I knew the hardest part was yet to come—the building of my and my three neighbors' houses. I expected it to be physically grueling, but the mental workout has been just as hard! But the time has flown by, and before I know it, I'll be settling into the life I've dreamed of in my new home thanks to Habitat. I couldn't be more grateful for this experience!

“ I got the call that I had dreamed of, and I learned I would be a Habitat homeowner!”

—Jenni Carr

who I wanted to be and what I wanted to do. I've moved 30+ times in my life, going with the flow, moving towards new opportunities, and growing as a person. When I had my first child in 2017, I knew it was time to settle into the life I always dreamed of, but I just didn't know how to get there. My credit was shot after years of medical bills without the help of health insurance. Between my

Note: Jenni and her children expect to move into their home next spring.

Helena Area Habitat for Humanity

Building homes, communities and hope.

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Cover photo: Helena Habitat Homeowner Tanya Hays



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The Newsletter of Helena Area Habitat for Humanity

Celebrating 30 Years

Building Together, Building Strong

Fall 2022