



Habitat

Building homes, communities and hope.

Spring 2023



Photo by Gary Marshall, Independent Record

A Timely Development

By **Jacob Kuntz**
Executive Director

After nearly three years of discussions, planning and negotiations, Helena Area Habitat for Humanity is pleased to announce the imminent purchase of 107 acres of land in East Helena. Planning is already underway for a mixed-income neighborhood of over three hundred homes to serve our community's working families. Since we began negotiations on the land the average price of a home in the Helena area has more than doubled, from just under \$250,000 in 2020 to close to \$500,000 today. In early 2021, the Habitat Board

of Directors committed the organization to growing capacity to build at least thirty homes each year to meet the desperate need for affordable homes. Working families in Helena are being left out of the dream of

owning their own homes as rising housing costs and inflation threaten to derail even the remote possibility of achieving the stability which comes with owning a home. This neighborhood is needed now more than ever.

The future neighborhood will be designed as mixed-income. Habitat will develop the land with the intention of selling a segment of the developed lots at market rate. Proceeds of those sales will help offset land costs for the remaining homes. We are also leveraging additional capital, including \$500,000 of ARPA dollars committed to the organization by Lewis and Clark County. Through this model Helena Habitat hopes to develop at least 200 permanently affordable homes. We have also heard from local community partners of the need to include space in the neighborhood for childcare, and businesses necessary to serve a thriving community.

Through this model

Helena Habitat hopes to develop at least 200 permanently affordable homes.

Helena Area Habitat for Humanity takes the vision of our organization, of a community where everyone has a decent place to live, very seriously. Our staff, board, and volunteers are

all committed to working every-day to ensure that every man, woman, and child in the Helena area has a safe, decent, affordable place to call home.

In the next pages you will learn of one simple way you can invest in the future of Helena, by considering re-investing your state tax rebate in affordable home ownership. I would ask



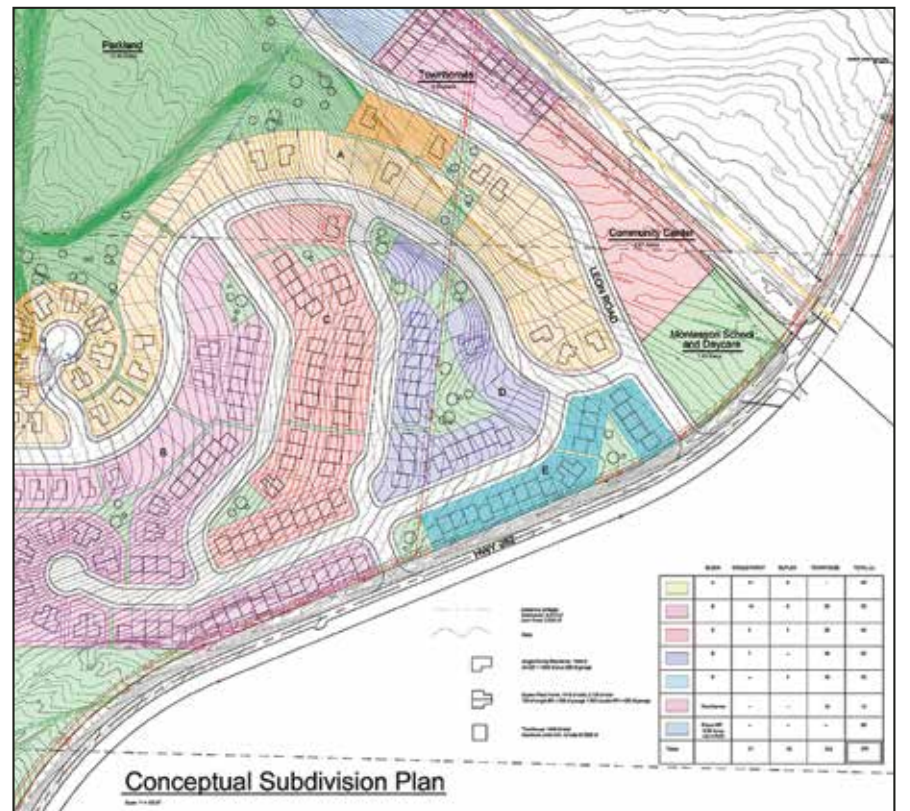
you to thoughtfully consider an investment in Helena Area Habitat for Humanity and the working families of our community; of those we currently serve, and of those to come.



On an adjacent property Prickly Pear Land Trust (PPLT) has worked hard over the past few years on an exciting greenspace reclamation project.



The transformation of this hillside will take many years, but someday soon this will be the site of a brand-new neighborhood, and a wonderful addition to our community.



The 107-acre parcel lies south of Highway 12 and just east of Mountain View Meadows. The map above is a preliminary drawing of the proposed Helena Habitat subdivision.

Re-invest in Helena

Consider re-investing your state tax rebate in affordable home ownership at:

HelenaHabitat.org/Donate

**Helena Area
Habitat for Humanity**

Helena Habitat for Humanity Celebrates the Completion of Four Homes with Families and Volunteers



The April 27th dedication was attended by close to 70 people.



Habitat Board Chair Greg Wirth congratulates new homeowners.

Four New Homes Break Ground in Helena—Meet the Owner/Builders



Owner/Builders: Nadine Viores and children Barbara Ann Anne and Rosalynn (Not Pictured: Husband Robert Viores)
Occupation: Certified Nursing Assistants



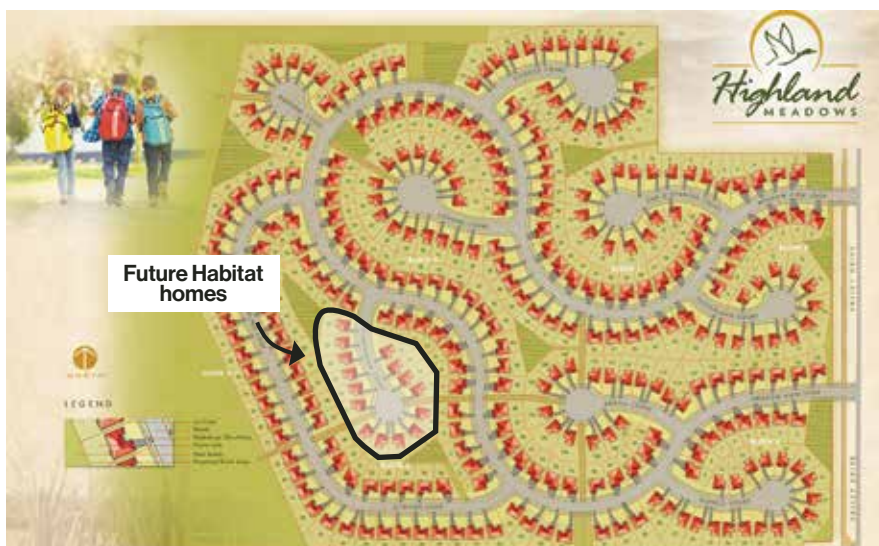
Owner/Builder: Hannah Ehret and Sitcka
Occupation: Pepsi Co.



Owner/Builders: Mariah Doom and boyfriend Aaron
Occupation: Small Business Owner



Owner/Builders: Brian and Mary Lou Kirkland
Occupation: Retired



Helena Habitat Purchases 12 Building Lots in Highland Meadows

Habitat completed the purchase of twelve building lots in Highland Meadows, an East Helena subdivision located between Prickly Pear Elementary and East Helena High School. Construction will commence in August of this year.

Eight Homes Under Construction in Red Lodge



Building continues in Red Lodge through a Habitat partnership with the Red Lodge Area Community Foundation and Trust Montana. Challenging spring weather has not dampened the spirits of the committed build group.

Homeownership Program By the numbers



16

Current Homes Under Construction



6

Additional Homes Breaking Ground This Year



1

Repair in Progress



30/50

New Homes/Repairs Each Year By 2030

Community Supports ReStore Grand Opening



ReStore Manager Raymond Bixby and Executive Director Jacob Kuntz celebrate the ribbon cutting for the new ReStore. Photo by Gary Marshall, *Independent Record*

The ReStore recently celebrated its new and expanded location at 1320 Market Street (across from Lowe's) with a grand opening celebration and ribbon cutting ceremony. The celebration marked the official opening of the new 13,000+ square foot building, which is over twice the size of the old ReStore location. When fully realized, the new ReStore will have over 17,000 square feet of retail space, improved material donation and processing facilities, and a dedicated volunteer and training space. Habitat believes the new location will generate

over \$250,000 in funding every year to repair and build housing in the Helena community. The new location is already showing record sales figures.

The grand opening was attended by several local dignitaries, including Helena Mayor Wilmot Collins, City Commissioner Andy Shirtliff, and County Commissioner Andy Hunthausen. The event culminated with the presentation of the President's Volunteer Service Award to four long-standing ReStore volunteers. Over 500 people attended the day's festivities.



DONATIONS WELCOME

Empty out your garage or basement and donate to the ReStore

Donations accepted:
Tue.–Sat. 10 a.m.–4:30 p.m.



Mayor Wilmot Collins presented a President's Volunteer Service Award to Jim Melstad and Jennifer Bagley for outstanding volunteerism at the ReStore.

Red Lodge: Fires, Floods and Five Feet Of Snow

As you may remember, Habitat staff and volunteers have been working in Red Lodge building homes for families in need.

Despite a variety of challenging weather events, Habitat has completed six homes and we are currently building eight more.

One person who deserves special recognition is Habitat staff member, Rex Peterson. Under his leadership families and volunteers have continued to build despite all the challenges.



Rex Peterson in Red Lodge.

The dedication of local volunteers and staff from the Red Lodge Area Community Foundation has been truly inspiring.



The 2021 Robertson Draw fire caused widespread local evacuations.



Much of downtown Red Lodge was devastated by the historic flooding in June of 2022.



2023 saw record levels of snowfall in Red Lodge, with nearly four feet recorded over a two-day period at the end of March.



Come volunteer with us!

Visit HelenaHabitat.org/Volunteer



Re-investing in Helena's families will build a stronger community for all.

It's Like Winning the Lottery (sort of)

Re-invest in Helena

Montanans got surprising news last month, when Gov. Gianforte signed into law two bills which will provide rebates to eligible taxpayers. Excess funds from the state budget will be distributed in the form of an income tax rebate and a property tax rebate. Combined, these two may well

total upwards of \$3,000 of unexpected cash. Many folks in our state will need this money. But for those more fortunate, why not consider Re-investing in Helena by supporting affordable home ownership? By making a tax-deductible donation to Helena Area Habitat for Humanity of some or all of your rebate dollars, you are re-investing in the prosperity of our community by making affordable homes available to hundreds

of families. Re-investing makes a quantifiable difference in the future of our community. At the time of this writing, our Representatives are battling it out on the floor of the Capitol. Senate Minority Leader Pat Flowers has called for "immediate relief for working Montanans." We do need immediate relief, and Helena Habitat for Humanity is hard at work building affordable homes. We are increasing the supply of new homes here in Helena, all toward our goal of building at least 30 homes each year by 2030. With 16 homes currently under construction and another six breaking ground

this summer, Helena Habitat is the only entity that is not waiting around on politicians and instead picking up our hammers and getting to work. If you are able, please consider Re-investing in Helena and making a gift to support affordable home ownership in Helena today at HelenaHabitat.org/Donate.

REBATE INFORMATION:

- Individual income tax rebates will automatically be sent to those who qualify starting in July.
- You can file a claim for a property tax rebate through the TransAction Portal at mt.gov beginning August 15.

Helena Area Habitat for Humanity

Building homes, communities and hope.

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STAFF

- Raymond Bixby, *ReStore Manager*
- Cassie Elliott, *Program Manager*
- Liz Harrison, *Director of Development*
- Ben Hein, *Controller*
- Linda Higham, *ReStore Associate*
- Russ Hill, *Director of Operations*
- Jeremy Ingram, *Volunteer Coordinator*
- Jacob Kuntz, *Executive Director*
- Chris Leipzig, *Construction Supervisor/Helena*
- Mark Leland, *Construction Director*
- Craig McElvain, *Construction Superintendent/Helena*
- Mindie Moncur, *Administrative Associate*
- Rex Peterson, *Construction Superintendent/Red Lodge*
- Jen Romanchuk, *ReStore Manager*
- Samantha Santos, *Program Coordinator*
- Dennis Underwood, *ReStore Associate*

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Executive Committee

- Greg Wirth, *Board Chair, Stahly Engineering and Associates*
- Erik Schweitzer, *Vice-Chair, Keller Williams*
- Sarah Mazanec, *Secretary, Drake Law Firm*
- Kacie Tollefson, *Treasurer, Montana Community Foundation*

Directors

- Hon. Christopher Abbott, *MT Judicial Branch*
- Tracy Egeline, *Eclipse Architecture*
- Lee Flasnack, *The Sexton Group*
- Susan Good Geise, *Former Lewis & Clark County Commissioner*
- Heather Lay, *KW Capital Realty*
- Mark Runkle, *Mountain View Meadows*
- Paul Tschida, *Emeritus Board Member, Department of Environmental Quality*
- Gail Whitney, *Valley Bank of Helena*

HelenaHabitat.org



Cover photo by Kevin League

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Habitat

The Newsletter of Helena Area Habitat for Humanity

Helena Area
Chamber of Commerce

2023 **NONPROFIT**
of the **YEAR**

Re-invest in Helena

SPRING 2023