



### *Larry Hutchison - Hilliard Adopt A House (HAAH) House Lead*

Upon talking to Larry, it immediately becomes apparent that he has an admirable sense of giving and initiative when it comes to helping those in need.

Larry grew up a minister's son, and at the age of 18, Larry traveled as a missionary to Costa Rica to volunteer as a medical technician, administering small pox and measles vaccinations. After the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, Larry traveled to the country 6 times to rebuild and reestablish churches, which are known to be community centers in Haiti.

In 2005, Larry learned from his friends, who were members of the Hilliard Adopt A House (HAAH) group, that Habitat MidOhio was in need of volunteers. Larry, knowing that as an AEP electrical engineer and carpentry-enthusiast, he had skills he could contribute, stepped up to help.

Five years later, when HAAH was looking for a House Lead, Larry, having retired that year, took his volunteering even further and became a House Lead for HAAH.

These days, Larry continues volunteering with Habitat as a HAAH House Lead, and recently became part of an electrical volunteer group, a group that has done electrical work in four of Habitat's houses.

Larry has now worked on 17 Habitat homes and seven houses as a House Lead. He has also done two deconstructions, a repair, and worked on the safety committee as well. Being a House Lead, as Larry explained, requires commitment. Larry spends half as many hours off-site as he does on-site, planning upcoming build sessions, matching up the skills of his volunteers with the work that needs done, and keeping local churches in the know about the work Habitat MidOhio is doing.

Larry is driven by the goal of helping people in need fulfill their American Dream. What stands out most to Larry throughout the time he has spent as a volunteer and House Lead at Habitat are the people around him. Larry shared that, “To a degree, as a Christian you are doing God’s work, you are meeting similar people, good people who come and work. You get to meet other volunteers, get to know them well. You’re working with some really good people.”

Even from the 20 minutes I spent on the build-site, it was easy to see that Larry’s volunteers, who joked with Larry throughout the interview, enjoy working with him.

Larry’s work has helped numerous individuals and families on an international level. When asked about the impact his work has had on him, Larry said that besides gaining lots of tools, he has become a better person and has gained a better understanding of Habitat as an organization.

While many here at Habitat MidOhio have known Larry for years, they might be surprised to know that Larry’s travels have also taken him on an exciting adventure to Nassau, Bahamas, a place he went with one mission in mind: to scuba dive with the sharks!

In his spare time, Larry stays busy woodworking and spending time with his six grandchildren.



*Margie Smith - Family Advocate, Partnership Program Group Leader, Teacher*

Despite the many times Margie expressed her surprise at her nomination for Volunteer Spotlight and humbly insisted “I don’t do much”, she does do quite a lot, for many people, multiple organizations, and for quite some time.

Margie started with Habitat MidOhio in the department that most of our volunteers are familiar with – construction. For four years, she helped with Habitat home-builds, which included helping with everything from windows, siding, and shingles, to installing doorknobs. Margie has been volunteering with Habitat MidOhio for 15 years. Through the builds, she saw how easy it was to

establish a warm friendship with the Habitat partner families. So when an opening for a Family Advocate came, Margie knew she wanted to volunteer.

Margie's role as a Family Advocate involves meeting with the family at a location such as the library and talking with them about things on their mind concerning home-ownership, like how to get along with neighbors, as well as goal-setting. Margie acts as a liaison between the family and Habitat. She reaches out to anyone at Habitat who may be able to help the family in some capacity. Her goal for the families she works with is for them to know they are cared about. She also strives to give families the resources and information they need to not feel dependent after her role as their advocate is over, and to instead help them gain independence. What Margie enjoys most about being a Family Advocate is seeing families grow, from the beginning stages of uncertainty, to the joys of home-ownership.

The Habitat Partnership Program was created in part due to many Habitat families living in the same neighborhoods. Their proximity to one another is ideal for coming together as a group on a regular basis and providing support for one another. As a Partnership Program group leader, Margie helps families establish close connections as well as a sense of community with one another and with Habitat. Margie wants the families she works with to know they are a positive part of their community. Margie often writes acrostic poems honoring the families, and presents the acrostic poem as a gift at the family's home dedication.

In addition to the volunteering Margie does for Habitat, she volunteers for Special Olympics as an assistant basketball coach, and for the Ohio School for the Deaf. Alongside the volunteering she does, Margie teaches future educators at Ohio Wesleyan University, teaching Corrective Reading and Phonics and Vocabulary Methods in the Education Department. Margie is a former elementary school teacher, having taught third grade for the majority of her teaching career, in the Worthington City School District. In fact, one of Margie's third grade students went on to become one of her college students at Ohio Wesleyan, and an Ohio Wesleyan student of hers went on to teach in Margie's former classroom.

When asked about a particular memory that stands out to her, Margie spoke about Habitat homeowner, Margaret Nunely, who to this day Margie keeps in close touch with. Twelve years ago, when Margie was teaching elementary students, she heard about Margaret's story and found it to be so touching that Margie wondered if there was anything she and her students could do for Margaret. She mentioned Margaret to her students and their families, who immediately jumped on the chance to help. Together they donated everything from towels to small appliances for Margaret's new home. Margie said that her students came to the Home Dedication Ceremony for Margaret and were able to sense how wonderful it is for someone to achieve the dream of home-ownership.

When asked how she has grown as a volunteer, Margie says she has become more perceptive of families' needs than she was at the beginning. Margie says her work with Habitat has made her feel humbled, that "helping a family get a home is just an absolute joy to do. To be the smallest part of someone getting a home, helping in the smallest way, is very rewarding."

Margie said that closest to her heart is her family: her husband Jim, her children Matt, Mike, Andy, Jamie, and her grandson, Mason. Outside of Habitat, Margie is an avid Cleveland Indians fan, and enjoys spending time with her grandson, whom she writes books for on each of his birthdays, containing a lesson related to his age, the most recent book being “Teenage Trouble”. Margie said her family is her heart and what matters most to her.

Margie also wanted to share that she “has learned from and is thankful to many caring Habitat officials: Dawn, Lisa, Michelle, Deb, E.J. Thomas, the builders, the kind volunteers, and the endearing families that she has worked with through the years.”