



TOGETHER WE BUILD

VOLUNTEER IMPACT REPORT FISCAL YEAR 2025

TOGETHER

Dear Habitat Volunteers,

When I think about you and your work, I am filled with gratitude for the dedication, passion, and time you contribute to our mission. I've gotten to know many of you – on construction sites, at commencements, dedications, roundtables, or meet and greets. I am truly inspired by each of you - you make me want to be a better version of myself every day.

We are living in a time when affordable housing is out of reach for so many families, especially affordable homeownership. Every time you show up, swing a hammer, stock shelves, process paperwork, or represent Habitat, you are helping fight the affordable housing crisis.

This impact report is not just a summary of statistics; it is a testament to your work and commitment to connecting more families with opportunity and hope. You're helping build something that lasts far beyond the walls of a home. Together, we are helping to build stability, hope, opportunity, resilience, community, and so much more.

Whether you have been with us for years or just joined, thank you for your dedication and service, and for being part of a shared vision of building hope and opportunity through maintaining and obtaining affordable homeownership.

With gratitude,
Brandi AL-Issa
President & CEO



TOGETHER WE BUILT

Community

“Volunteering for Habitat for Humanity on new home builds has been so rewarding. I have met a great group of people that really care about others and show it in everything that they do.”

“I have gained new perspectives and a greater appreciation for having a strong sense of community and purpose. By interacting with many different people from diverse backgrounds within Habitat, I have grown and matured as an individual.”

Hope

“The completed repairs were life changing... I have peace of mind knowing that I no longer have to worry about how I am going to pay to have the work done. I can sleep at night.”

- Home Repair Partner Family

“Purchasing and living in my Habitat home has truly changed my outlook on life. It gave me a sense of stability and peace that I didn't have before... It's motivated me to keep growing, to plan for the future, and to believe that better things are possible. I feel more hopeful and proud of how far I've come, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to build a new chapter in a home that's ours.”

- New Home Ownership Partner Family

“It will provide the most valuable thing we can hope for - peace of mind. We can rest and heal. To go from homeless to home owner gives me a feeling I can't describe.”

- New Homeownership Partner Family

Opportunity

116

families served, including 11 veterans

14

new homes built, 1 rehab completed, and 101 homes repaired

73

playhouses built, blessing over 120 children

\$4.7

million in sales grossed by MidOhio ReStores and diverted 2,685 tons from area landfills

50%

surveyed volunteers used a new tool for the first time

60%

surveyed volunteers learned a new skill

TOGETHER WE BUILD COMMUNITY



**Contributed by Rachel Hardin,
Volunteer Services Manager**

Women Build has been part of Habitat-MidOhio since 1992, when a crew of dedicated women volunteers built the third Women Build house in the country. Since then, 17 more Women Build houses have been built here locally. During that time, more than just houses have been built—the Women Build team has also built confidence, connection, construction skills, and, above all, community.

In recent years, that sense of community culminated in a tight-knit group of Women Build “regulars.” Coming from different walks of life — a doctor, a lawyer, a teacher, and a social worker, to name a few—Thursdays at Habitat became the common thread between them.

While all volunteers come to Habitat for different reasons and contribute to various areas of the organization, volunteers often report that there’s just something special about a Women Build project.

Women Build regular Constance Rivera reflects, “I have especially enjoyed working on Women Build houses. Many years ago, back in the 60s, I wanted to take Shop in school, but girls were only allowed to take Home Ec! All the years since, I still wished I could have taken a Shop class. So, I finally got my chance with Women Build!”

She continues, “I got to meet a lot of other women, and I treasure the friendships I have made. I have learned so much, and especially enjoy the framing: watching a house grow from a hole in the ground, to a house! I love seeing a tangible accomplishment at the end of the day.”

Over time, this core crew of Women Build volunteers became friends on and off the build site, planning group outings and chatting about life outside of Habitat. They also deepened their engagement with Habitat, continuing to volunteer in the “off-season.” That included helping at other build sites, doing playhouse kit creation, and becoming Habitat Ambassadors. One of the regulars, Alison Harris, also volunteered to come into the Habitat office once a week to help the Volunteer Services Department with data entry.

Fast forward to the summer of 2024. The Women Build crew had wrapped up another successful Women Build house, and a few of them were volunteering at a Habitat Ambassadors event when they got the news that Alison had been in a car accident. While the car accident was minor, it ended up leading to a diagnosis of brain cancer for Alison. All of a sudden, everything changed.

During her journey of terminal cancer, Alison didn’t have traditional family nearby, but she did have her Women Build family — a community of women who supported Alison right up to her last day. The Women Build crew drove Alison to medical appointments, drove her to Habitat events, and ensured she stayed connected with Habitat. Forever a dedicated Habitat Ambassador, Alison wore her Habitat t-shirts to meals at her assisted living facility in hopes of sparking conversation and placed Habitat brochures at the information desk. Even during her last days, she proudly displayed her Habitat hardhat on her bedside table as a reminder of what she and her Women Build crew had built together.

Upon her passing, Alison made a powerful investment in Habitat-MidOhio. Seeded with \$50,000 of Alison’s own funds, in the fall of 2025, Habitat-MidOhio created a new tribute fund in Alison’s honor with a forward-looking goal: to help ensure Women Build remains strong, accessible, and impactful well into the future. This fund offers supporters a meaningful way to invest in the longevity and growth of the Women Build program.

As we look ahead, we invite our Habitat community to reflect on the legacy being built—not only through homes, but through sustained support that makes this work possible.

Thank you to Alison and her community of Women Build regulars for your service to Habitat and for demonstrating what community building looks like, on and off construction sites!

TOGETHER WE BUILD SUSTAINABILITY



Contributed by Ciara Taylor,
Volunteer Services Coordinator

Some volunteers give a Saturday. Others give years. Julie Hart was an early supporter of Habitat for Humanity's mission, and after retiring, she knew she wanted to support her community in a more hands-on way. Julie has been volunteering at least once a week at our Westerville Road ReStore for almost 5 years. She does a lot of important work on the store floor - ensuring the aisles are organized, labeled, free of trash, and clean - work that busy ReStore associates may fall behind on. Julie not only enjoys the autonomy she has as a ReStore volunteer, but also the sense of community that comes with it. Julie reflects on her volunteer experience, stating, "It's a wonderful opportunity to be in this diverse community and try to, in small ways, make Columbus a better place".

Coming from a background in higher education with a focus on Sociology, Peace, and Justice, Julie enjoys learning about the various ways Habitat-MidOhio continues to support homeownership dreams and affordable housing in the communities we serve. She often spreads the word about Habitat and our volunteer opportunities in her personal life, serving as a Habitat Ambassador in her own way. Thank you, Julie, for your countless hours and continued dedication to furthering Habitat's mission. You embody what it means to build possibility together.

Every cabinet donated, every appliance rehomed, and every purchase at the ReStore does more than support affordable housing, it also fuels possibility. Through the power of reusing, we give quality building supplies a second life - diverting materials from local landfills and generating the critical revenue that connects families to opportunities for maintaining and obtaining affordable homeownership.

And at the center of that possibility are the people who help make it happen.

Every year, thousands of volunteers walk through our ReStore doors and leave their mark. A single shift may begin with assembling new furniture destined for the sales floor and end with sorting through donations coming from the community. Volunteers come from all walks of life - individuals, families, corporate groups, and longtime friends of Habitat - united by a shared commitment to do something meaningful. Their efforts keep our ReStores running efficiently, our shelves stocked, and our mission moving forward. Behind every number is a volunteer who helped make it possible.

DECONSTRUCTION

Our Deconstruction program is a unique and mutually beneficial experience for our affiliate and our customers. These projects allow us to salvage reusable items from residential and commercial properties - keeping them out of area landfills. With the help of our volunteers, we are able to keep our prices much lower than other corporations and take salvaged materials back to our ReStores to help us fund our mission to inspire hope, build homes, empower families, and develop communities.

Looking to remodel? Consider contacting us for your demolition and donation needs!





FROM SURVIVAL TO STABILITY A FAMILY BUILDS MORE THAN A HOME

Contributed by [Jeremy Ball](#),
Chief Advancement & People Officer

The smell of dinner drifts through the house, something warm simmering on the stove, a low flame flickering beneath the pot. It's just before evening, that in-between hour: children moving in and out of rooms, voices rising and falling, the steady rhythm of a family settling in for the night.

Najib leans forward as he talks, his energy unmistakable. He smiles often—wide, genuine—and carries a joy that never quite leaves, even when he speaks about harder chapters. When he talks about Fatuma, it's with quiet respect. “She takes care of everything,” he says with love.

Fatuma sits nearby, more reserved but not silent. She listens closely, adding details softly. But when she talks about her children—their safety, the space they now have—her face opens into a warm smile that immediately puts you at ease.

Around them, the house tells its own story. This is what home sounds like.

At 5:30 each morning, Fatuma wakes her children. “Guys, wake up. Get ready for school—the bus is not going to miss you.”

The day has already begun. Najib left before 4:00 a.m., heading to a 12-hour shift as a quality control manager at a food production facility on Columbus's west side. By the time the first child stirs, he is hours into his workday.

Seven children between the ages of 5 and 17 years move through the morning rhythm—backpacks packed, breakfast shared. By 6:11 a.m., some are on the bus, others driven to their bus stop a mile away.

It is busy. Loud. Full of life. And it is everything they once hoped for.

By 9:15 each night, the home shifts. Homework is finished. Laughter softens. The house settles into quiet prayer. Floors and dishes are cleaned—each child with a role.

And for the first time in years, Najib and Fatuma sit together in peace.

“Now,” Najib says, “we relax.” That peace did not come easily.

Long before Ohio—before Habitat, before stability—there was movement. Forced, uncertain, dangerous.

Najib and Fatuma fled Somalia as children during civil war. Each spent nearly 14 years in separate refugee camps in Kenya. They did not know then that they would one day be family. Life in the camps was defined by limitation. “It’s not life,” Fatuma says. Education required money they didn’t have. Safety was never guaranteed. “If you go out,” she says, “you don’t know what’s going to happen.”

As a young boy, Najib remembers walking for days to reach safety. “Seven days and nights,” he says. “We walked.”

Years later, each was selected through a lottery to come to the United States—separately, on their own paths. When Fatuma saw her family’s number posted one day, she cried. “It was an answer to our prayers.”

They reunited in Columbus in 2011. The relationship came later. Then the family. A big one.

Before Habitat, they lived in a rented duplex. It worked—but barely. “There was no space,” Najib says. “The kids said, ‘We need a bigger house.’” Seven children shared tight rooms. There was little room to play.



Outside, safety was uncertain. At night, the children sometimes heard gunshots. “They would say, ‘Did you hear that?’” Najib recalls. “They were scared.”

Inside, the challenges were familiar. No hot water for nearly a month. Broken air conditioning. Repairs delayed. “You call,” Fatuma says, “but nothing changes.” They boiled water on the stove just to bathe their children. That was life—until a friend told them about Habitat for Humanity.

They applied in 2024. For a year and a half, they gathered documents and waited. “More papers,” Najib says. “Always more papers.” Then—approval.

“I called the kids,” he says. “I said, ‘I have good news.’”

“Everybody screaming,” he adds, smiling. “They say, ‘When are we moving?’” But first, they had to build the home.

They worked side by side with volunteers—painting, cutting, learning. “I didn’t know any of this before,” Najib says. “Now I learn.” Fatuma spent long days in the ReStore, sanding and repairing. “I learn how to do things myself,” she says.

They didn’t just build a house. They built confidence. And relationships.

Najib still talks about Mr. Bill, a volunteer with American Electric Power (AEP)—the home’s sponsor. “He told me, ‘Don’t rush. This will take time.’” Najib had hoped for a few months. “It will be the end of the year,” Bill said. He was right.

Kirk, also from AEP, and Ron, a Habitat team member, left lasting impressions too. “These people,” Najib says, “they stay with you.”

When asked to reflect on the journey, Najib pauses. “It’s a long story,” he says. Then, quietly: “I don’t want to go back.” Not because he’s forgotten—but because of what has been built. A family. A future. A home.

“They are not paid,” Najib says of the volunteers. “They come every day to help us.” One day, he hopes to return the favor. “I want to help another family,” he says. “Like they helped us.” Indeed, Najib and Fatuma have already helped another family—they gave a cash donation in support of Habitat-MidOhio’s Giving Tuesday campaign.

For volunteers, a day on a build site may feel small. For families like Najib and Fatuma’s, it is life-changing. It is the difference between fear and safety. Between instability and peace. Between surviving—and truly living.

**“I know my kids are safe.
Now, we relax.”**

After months of work, the house was ready. “Very happy,” Fatuma says. “Very, very happy.” They moved in January 2026. Cold outside. Inside—something new. Ownership.

Today, the difference is everywhere. The house is alive—laughter down hallways, children playing, meals coming together in the kitchen. The smell of dinner often fills the air before the day is done. Between it all are moments of stillness—quiet prayers that ground the day.

Outside, the children run freely in a fenced yard. “They can play,” Fatuma says softly. “They are safe.” Najib nods. “There’s space now.” There is also peace of mind. “If something breaks, I fix it,” he says. “This is my house.”

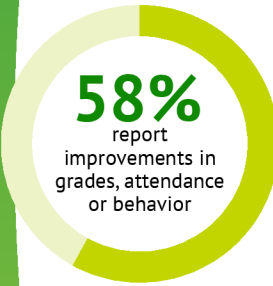
No waiting. No pleading. No uncertainty. Just ownership. Just stability. Just home.



COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

“At Bread Financial, paying it forward is part of who we are, and our partnership with Habitat for Humanity allows us to bring that value to life. Through funding efforts and hands-on volunteer activities like Playhouse and home builds, our associates experience the deep impact of Habitat’s mission firsthand, creating financial independence, lasting change, and helping communities thrive.”

In a survey of Habitat Homebuyers who have lived in their homes between a few months to more than 30 years, respondents reported:



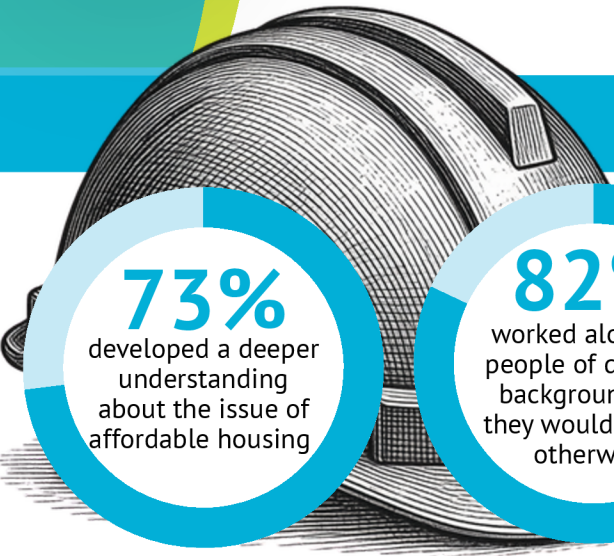
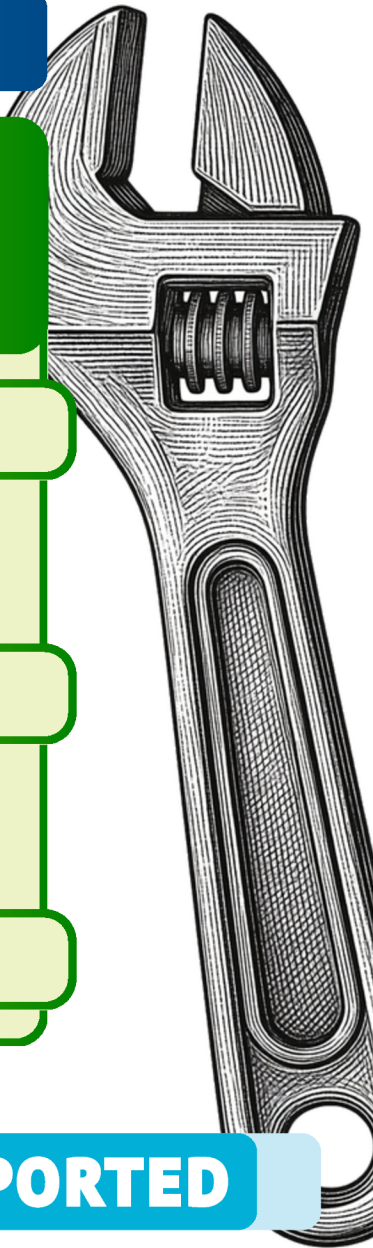
3,966 Volunteers

49,791
volunteer hours

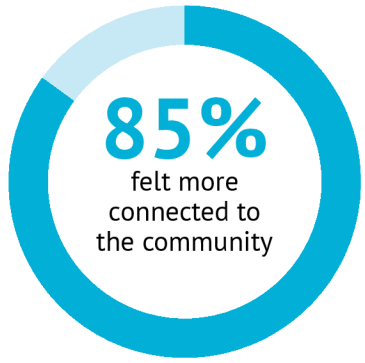
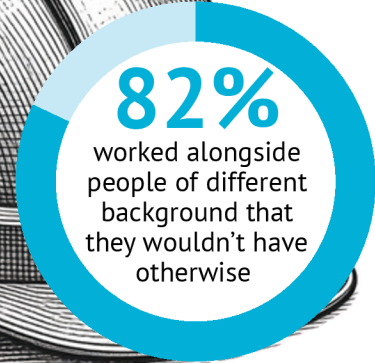
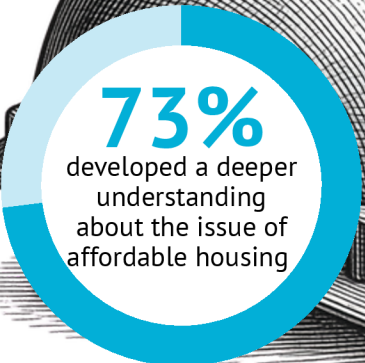
-  **3,900+ ReStore volunteer hours**, equivalent to 2 full-time employees
-  **32,000+ construction volunteer hours**, equivalent to 15 full-time employees
-  **6,800+ playhouse volunteer hours**, equivalent to 3 full-time employees
-  **Over 6,100+ other volunteer hours**, equivalent to 3 full-time employees

8,874
volunteer experiences

- 1,427** Playhouse Volunteers
- 5,607** Construction Volunteers
- 1,119** ReStore Volunteers
- 94** Rock the Block Volunteers
- 456.5** Office Volunteer Hours



VOLUNTEERS REPORTED



TOGETHER WE BUILD THE FUTURE



Contributed by Lindsey Weaver,
Chief of Staff

Hugh Leslie didn't plan to become a leader. He just wanted to keep showing up.

After volunteering through the Northwest Adopt-a-House group, Hugh found himself drawn back - not just to the work, but to the learning. Guided by experienced leads, he discovered a hands-on world where every task built something within him as much as on the site. When the build season ended, the sense of purpose didn't. The Cornerstone Crew Leads Program gave him a way to keep building, keep learning, and keep making a difference year-round.

"It's a good way to continue working throughout the year while expanding your knowledge of different methods of building," Hugh says. For him, becoming a Cornerstone Leader means joining a community with years of collective experience to draw from. It is a real-life learning lab where knowledge is passed between hands, season after season, build after build.

That spirit of shared growth is exactly what Habitat for Humanity-MidOhio's Cornerstone Construction Leader Program was built on. Volunteers train in one or more of 19 areas of specialty, from framing to finishing, and are equipped to guide crews of two to four volunteers on active build sites. We are striving to create a stronger, more unified process that grows more powerful with every person who steps into a leadership role.

"We'll be able to serve more families," says Alex Goetz, the program's staff lead. For Alex, Cornerstone is more than an operational upgrade - it's a vision for what's possible when people build together. With trained Cornerstone Leaders on site, we can scale the number of builds, expand volunteer opportunities, and welcome larger groups to the work. This will be especially important as Habitat-MidOhio expands into multifamily homeownership this summer with the Devon Triangle project, building a duplex and four triplexes for a total of 14 units. On a single triplex, the program could put upwards of 30 volunteers to work across all three units at one time.

For Hugh, it comes back to something simple and lasting - "A positive contribution and an easy way to stay involved." When we build together, we don't just raise walls; together, we build the future, one crew, one home, one leader at a time."

You could be part of what comes next. Sign up to volunteer with Habitat for Humanity-MidOhio and discover what we can build together at [habitatmidohio.org](https://www.habitatmidohio.org).



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Did you know?

During the 2025-2026 school year, Habitat-MidOhio built our first-ever Workforce Development House, in partnership with Ft. Hayes Career Center and the City of Columbus! Over the course of the build, students volunteered 470 hours on site and gained valuable experience in the home building process. Under the leadership of Habitat staff and our faithful regulars, students were able to assist with nearly every phase of construction, from laying out the block foundation to installing the last pieces of trim. In addition to getting hands-on training for their future careers, the students were also able to play a role in creating affordable housing for a local family.





THANK YOU!



Habitat for Humanity-MidOhio
6665 Busch Blvd.
Columbus, OH 43229

TOGETHER WE BUILD LASTING IMPACT

At Habitat for Humanity MidOhio, Together We Build isn't just a phrase—it's how we live our mission every day. Our volunteers make this work possible. Whether you're on a build site, supporting the ReStore, or representing Habitat in the community, you are helping families build strength, stability, and opportunity through safe, affordable homeownership.

For many volunteers, seeing this impact sparks a deeper desire to help. Philanthropic giving is one powerful way to sustain and grow the mission you already serve—ensuring more families can access affordable housing today and for generations to come.

As Major Gifts Officer, I have the privilege of partnering with volunteers who feel called to invest in Habitat beyond service. I'd love to learn what inspires you and explore how your generosity can help advance our shared mission.

If you're interested in starting a conversation, please reach out to me at sgilbert@habitatmidohio.org or **614-364-7031**.

Thank you for the heart and commitment you bring to this work. Together, we build more than homes—we build hope and a stronger Central Ohio community.

Shawn Gilbert,
Major Gift Officer

