



NEWSLINK



Bob Montgomery has been a Habitat for Humanity volunteer for over 32 years. He started as a construction volunteer with Habitat in Charlotte and Matthews and worked with Our Towns Habitat in Mecklenburg and Iredell counties. In 2003 he moved to this area and volunteered with Henderson County Habitat. When he and his wife moved into their newly built home in Mill Spring in 2004, he began working with Thermal Belt Habitat, eventually becoming a Board member and then Board President. As Board President he helped facilitate the merger with Henderson County Habitat, which he said, "has been very successful, as it has made a positive difference for the Thermal Belt Habitat area by having the administrative support of Family Services and Mortgage Lending that Thermal Belt HFH needed." The merger with Henderson County Habitat allows us to continue *to do business as* 'Thermal Belt HFH' in Polk County and Landrum." Montgomery now serves as 1st Vice Chair of Henderson County Habitat for Humanity Board of Directors.

Thermal Belt Habitat was one of the earliest national affiliates of Habitat International and the Habitat ReStore in Landrum was among the first ReStores in the country.

The first home built by Habitat for a Polk County family in 1983 started out as a weatherization project, but the house was in such bad shape they built a new home for the family instead. Thermal Belt Habitat has built homes for more than 66 families and made repairs to other homes allowing them to become homes for approved Thermal Belt HFH clients. Montgomery notes that some children who were in elementary school when their families moved into their new Habitat homes have grown up and gone to college and many families have paid off their mortgages.

"Folks who are committed enough to follow the HFH program are set up to succeed. The classes they are required to go through with Family Services (Manage Your Money, Home Buyer Education, Homeownership Counseling and Education, Living in Community and Safety and Living in Harmony) set new benchmarks for them to follow. This, along with living in a safe environment, sets them up for success," Montgomery said. What he enjoys most about being a Habitat volunteer is "the comradery with fellow construction workers and being a part of the solution of helping people achieve a dream."

A Great Loss to the Habitat Family

It is with great sadness that we share with you the passing of Taqunia Collins, lost to us in a car accident on Monday, November 12.

Taqunia started work at Henderson County Habitat as the receptionist in 2013, but moved into Family Services and became its Director as that was really where her heart was. She cared a great deal about our Habitat families and was an extremely valuable member of the Habitat team.

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Good Intentions Gone Awry

President & CEO Ron Laughter

This issue's missive is mainly about good intentions. First, though, it's about snakes.

In the mid-1850s, during the British Raj (rule) in India, the Brits became increasingly concerned about the incredible number of venomous cobras in Delhi, India. They needed to save the Delhians, they decided, from these horrid fanged beasts! So, a foolproof plan was hatched. One that was clear and simple. They offered a bounty for cobras. What could possibly go wrong?

And, of course, it was a wild success. Thousands of venomous snakes were brought in and slaughtered in mere weeks. Thousands more in mere months. But, oddly enough, the cobra population didn't cease. They just kept coming in ever-greater numbers. Week after week, month after month, the dead cobras kept flooding in. And the program was starting to put a strain on the coffers.

Finally, the Brits realized what was happening. Thousands of Indians had started to breed the cobras in their villages for the extra income. They slapped their foreheads. They'd created a market for cobras! Upon this discovery, the appalled Brits scrapped the program, realizing how much money they'd wasted. And, naturally, upon realizing their cobra pits were now worthless, the breeders set their snakes loose. The cobra population quickly became even worse than it was before. This phenomenon is now referred to as the cobra effect – when an attempted solution makes the problem worse. And 99% of the time, it begins with good intentions.

After the real estate “meltdown” of 2008 and the subsequent “Great Recession,” Congress passed the Dodd-Frank Act. The act, consisting of a whopping 2,300 pages and resulting in more than 22,000 pages of regulations, was designed to reign in the abuses of the big bank mortgage lenders. Unfortunately, because Habitat is also considered a mortgage lender under the definitions of Dodd-Frank, we were swept into the same set of requirements. Just another example of good intentions with unintended consequences. No one ever stopped to think that Habitat might be impacted by such a well-intended action on the part of our government.

Six years ago, there were over 1,500 Habitat affiliates in the United States. Today that number has shrunk to slightly more than 1,300. That means that today Habitat cannot make as great an impact on the affordable housing crisis in America as it once did thanks in part to Dodd-Frank. Many smaller affiliates have found the new requirements far too burdensome to deal with and, as a result, decided to either go out of business or seek to merge with another affiliate, as happened here last year when Thermal Belt Habitat became a division of Henderson County Habitat.

But we have not been daunted by this new challenge. Our newly merged affiliate continues to grow and build even more houses for families in need of safe and affordable housing. But to do this we need your continued support and encouragement. Only together can we continue to help local families build better lives in affordable homes and safe neighborhoods.

What Your Donor Dollars Can Buy

30 lb. box of nails \$40	light fixture \$50	toilet \$100
kitchen sink \$130	window \$150	front door \$200
paint for entire home \$1,400	insulation for one home \$3,600	
construction materials for one home \$80,000		
total cost to build one home \$150,000		

As we approach the end of the year...

We often look back and reflect on what we have accomplished during the year. Perhaps we look at not just ourselves and our families, but also our contributions in helping to make our community a better place in which to live and thrive.

So far this year, the Thermal Belt Division of Habitat completed a home with one family; two more homes are under construction and more homes are planned. Your donations make it possible for local families to live in decent, affordable homes. This is a significant change in the lives of these families, a change that will resonate throughout the years as their children grow up in quality homes and safe environments.

On behalf of the families now living in Habitat homes, we thank you for making a lasting difference in their lives. On behalf of the families who are currently building their homes and those who are in the process of applying to become Habitat homeowners, we are grateful for your continued support. Your compassion for our neighbors in need of a hand up, and your willingness to act on that compassion financially, creates a stronger community for everyone.

May the coming year bring you blessings and joy as you have surely brought blessings and joy to our Habitat families.



With your help, more families can have a warm, safe home for the holidays.

A Charitable Distribution From Your IRA Can Result in Income Tax Savings

If you are over age 70 ½ and required to take a minimum distribution from your IRA, you can make a charitable donation from the IRA directly to Thermal Belt Habitat for Humanity. By making a charitable donation in this way, you satisfy your required minimum distribution without having to recognize the distributed amount as income. This can result in significant income tax savings for you! The donation must come directly from your IRA to Habitat. Please remember that you cannot also claim a charitable tax deduction on a charitable distribution. Consult your financial or tax advisor for the proper way to accomplish this transaction and thank you for your support of Thermal Belt Habitat for Humanity!

Did You Know?

Habitat for Humanity homeowners are selected locally with the criteria centering on their need for decent housing, their ability to repay an affordable mortgage and their willingness to partner with Habitat to build a place they can call home.

Future homeowners are required to perform hundreds of hours of “sweat equity”. Sweat equity can include helping with the build of their own home or a home for another family, clean up of a building site, or working in a Habitat ReStore. They must also take classes which include learning how to manage finances and basic home maintenance, and home repair.

Mission Statement

We build affordable homes on the foundation of Christian love, where families are provided a secure environment and together a community is established.

ReStores Support Habitat for Humanity

The first Habitat ReStore opened 25 years ago in Winnipeg, Canada. Now, proceeds from over 930 of these home improvement stores and donation centers help build homes in local communities. The Habitat ReStore in Landrum helps support Thermal Belt Habitat. Donations of furniture, appliances in good working condition, household goods and used building supplies are always needed. Habitat will pick up your furniture and appliances in good condition. Call 864 457-2666 to arrange for a pick up.

Habitat crews can also deconstruct your kitchen cabinets and bathroom vanities when you are replacing them. You won't have to pay for the deconstruction and the materials won't end up in the landfill. They will be sold in the ReStore to raise money for Habitat's home building program. Call 828 458-0671 to schedule a deconstruction crew.

And remember to take time to shop in the ReStore. You can find furniture, household goods, building supplies, appliances, books, other useful items and unexpected treasures.



Volunteer Robin Holycross deconstructs kitchen cabinets to sell in the ReStore.



Volunteer Bob Montgomery works on a house with a Habitat family.

Thermal Belt Habitat for Humanity is now a division of Henderson County Habitat for Humanity.

Administration and Family Services for both divisions are located in the Hendersonville office. **All donations received from Polk County and Landrum are allocated to the Thermal Belt division.**

You also have the option to create a designated fund for the Thermal Belt division at the Polk County Community Foundation. You will need to open the fund with a minimum of \$2,500. This can be done as an individual donor, or a group of donors can do this together. The Community Foundation will oversee distribution of the funds to the Thermal Belt division.

In addition, The Community Foundation oversees an endowment fund for Thermal Belt Habitat. Contact the Community Foundation of Polk County for more Information at 828 859-5314.

All donations from Polk County and Landrum are allocated to the Thermal Belt Division of Henderson County Habitat for Humanity.