

Milwaukee Habitat for Humanity Backgrounder

Approaching its 1,000th Family Served

- Milwaukee Habitat for Humanity was founded in 1984. In June 2016, the 1,000th family served by this grass-roots organization will move into their house in the Washington Park neighborhood.*
- People in our community and all over the world partner with Habitat for Humanity to build or improve a place they can call home. Habitat homeowners help build their own homes alongside volunteers and pay an affordable mortgage. With our help, Habitat homeowners achieve the strength, stability and independence they need to build a better life for themselves and their families.
- As it approaches its 35th year, Milwaukee Habitat for Humanity has had more than 6,000 volunteers share their time annually on build sites and in Habitat ReStores. As part of its founding principles, Habitat requires future homeowners to provide “sweat equity” in the projects. These individuals invest up to 500 hours building their home and the homes of their neighbors prior to moving in.
- Milwaukee was the 39th affiliates in the nation. Today there are more than 1,500. In 1989, Milwaukee was the site for the Jimmy Carter Works project which built and renovated 14 homes.
- The same year, Sargento Foods became their first corporate house sponsor with Northwestern Mutual joining the following year. Since then, numerous corporations and organizations sponsor homes and building projects including Thrivent which sponsored 10 homes in 1996, Joy Global which has sponsored 15 homes since 2011, and Wells Fargo which, in 2016, donated \$225,000 to assist with Milwaukee Habitat’s neighborhood revitalization efforts in the Washington Park neighborhood.
- In 2007, the Milwaukee-area’s first Habitat ReStore opened. Today there are two locations with plans for a third underway. In 2015, the public purchased more than \$1.5 million in donated product, raising enough proceeds to build six-plus homes here in Milwaukee. Through the resale of donated items, the two stores prevented an estimated three million pounds of usable materials from ending up in local landfills
- In 2007, the Milwaukee affiliate reached its \$1 million tithe milestone, helping bring affordable housing solutions to families around the globe. Just five years later, in 2013, it reached the \$2 million tithe milestone. Today, Milwaukee Habitat partners with Habitat affiliates in Kyrgyzstan and El Salvador.
- In 2012, the affiliate’s 500th home was completed as part of one of the largest Build-A-Thons in the organization’s history, framing 10 houses in five days with the help of AmeriCorps members from around the country.
- Milwaukee Habitat for Humanity has served 1,000 families secure affordable housing through
 - New construction houses

- Full-gut rehabs
- Home repair projects

Additionally, they have helped serve more than 1,400 families in developing countries through Habitat International's global "tithe" giving program.

- In 2013, Milwaukee Habitat launched a multi-year Neighborhood Revitalization strategy in the Washington Park neighborhood, designed to reach hundreds of families through new construction, home rehabs and repairs, and community improvement projects. All projects through 2018 will be in this neighborhood. In the past two years, there has been a 30% decrease in violent crime on the blocks we are building and property values are stabilizing.
- In 2015, Habitat for Humanity International named Milwaukee Habitat for Humanity one of 14 "Affiliates of Distinction," a three-year award recognizing its achievements and innovation in best-practice standards across seven criteria:
 - sustainable and green building
 - overall organizational leadership
 - community development
 - financial sustainability
 - alignment with Habitat for Humanity's strategic plan
 - effective use of technology to better communicate with the public
 - support for Habitat's global mission

*This resident is a single mother of a 4-year old child who has a heart conditions and physical limitations. She works full time and is a full-time nursing student. She currently resides in an apartment where her child's heart condition is at risk due to mold and nearby smokers. Her daughter's ability is likely to decline, so her ADA-compliant Habitat home will provide a long-term solution restroom access challenges she's faced with apartment living. When she moves into her home, she will actually pay 1/3 less than her current rent for the home's mortgage. She will also be proud to plant her gardens on a property where she used her own sweat equity, along with the time of generous volunteers, to become a homeowner. "This home will dramatically change our lives physically, mentally and financially."

Numerous stories available from residents, volunteers, corporate sponsors, keepers of Habitat history, and more.