

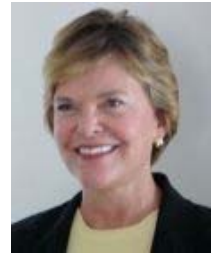


# 2008 Annual Report

*Habitat for Humanity South Sarasota County, Inc. works in partnership with God's people in need to build affordable, safe, decent housing.*

## Dear Habitat Family,

The past year has had peaks and valleys mirroring life in general. The economic conditions of our community and area have made fund raising a challenge. We have faced adversity in the form of controversy over location of our Garden Park neighborhood; through education, many of those who did not support us initially do now. We gained much community support through this controversy and found that the media truly is our partner.



Over all, we have been blessed with support from many who realize the importance of carrying out the Habitat mission. This support of so many...volunteers, donors, service groups, churches, government, businesses, and foundations...allows us to proceed in building more houses and in turn building lives.

Following is an overview of South Sarasota Habitat. The founding volunteers have created a solid organization and set the course for all of us.

### WHO WE ARE

Habitat for Humanity South Sarasota County is dedicated to building hope for all families through affordable home ownership. Our volunteers, donors and staff work tirelessly to carry out the mission of working in partnership with God's people in need to build affordable, safe, and decent housing. Homeownership empowers families with stability and a sense of community. The cycle of poverty housing is broken and fewer financial burdens are encountered by the family since monthly housing expenses are stabilized. Children stay in the same school and do better in school; their chances of graduating from high school are 30 percent higher than their cohorts and they are more likely to go to college. Homeownership promotes stable families and communities.

44 homes have been constructed and purchased in South Sarasota County by 44 Habitat families; by early spring of 2009, four more families will be homeowners. By the end of the fiscal year (June), we anticipate that four to six more will become residents of our Garden Park neighborhood. Habitat purchases land and builds homes for qualified families to buy with a no interest loan.

The Habitat program is not a "give away" program but a hand up; it requires commitment, saving a required amount of money, education, the ability to pay a mortgage, hands-on construction, sweat equity, and a willingness to partner with us. Habitat operates under the Fair Housing Act and does not discriminate. People of all faiths, ethnic backgrounds, color, and gender

represent our homeowners. Funding for Habitat comes primarily from individual donors and bequests. Churches, service clubs, foundations, community organizations, and businesses are integral in supporting the mission as well. Some government funding is available to utilize. The recycling of aluminum also provides an income stream as well as our ReStore Home Improvement Center; the ReStore especially has increased visibility and awareness in the community.

### THIS IS WHAT WE LOOK LIKE

**Founded:** 1992; **Homes built to date:** 44; **Number of volunteers annually:** more than 400; **Number of volunteer groups:** more than 30; **Number of volunteer hours:** 13441 (1<sup>st</sup> 9 months of '08); **Approximate cost of constructing a single family house:** \$95,000; **Amount of monthly house payment** for Habitat family (includes escrow) \$400 to \$650 per month; **South Sarasota Habitat foreclosure rate:** 0 percent; **Percentage of original home owners** in Habitat South County Homes: 81%.

### WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

More families are in need of more houses and South Sarasota will continue to work to build in partnership with them. Our Board is committed to carrying out our mission and the strategic goals to build 10, 15, and on to 20 plus houses a year. This coming year will be an exciting and fulfilling one because we will surpass the 10 house per year goal and be well on the way to building 15. Just think about the impact on 15 families and on our community!

We need your support more than ever for this journey. Please continue to help us by your prayers, your donations and your talents. Many thanks to the Board for the privilege to serve and many thanks to the Habitat Staff for their devotion to the mission.

Sincerely,

*Judith Wilcox*

Judith H. Wilcox  
Executive Director

# HABITAT DONORS REPORT

## October 1, 2007—September 30, 2008

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## We gratefully acknowledge and thank the following donors for their support of Habitat's Mission

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## HIGHLIGHTS OF HABITAT COMMITTEES FOR 2008

### GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

This Committee assists the Board in recruiting new directors, recommends officers and committee chairpersons, and works with the Executive Director to improve governance policies, planning and organization effectiveness. In 2008, a Director Information handbook was prepared, work was begun on a series of Bylaw changes to enhance Board effectiveness and continuity, committees were charged to develop an operating charter, and a process initiated to establish written goals by which to measure performance.

### FAMILY SELECTION COMMITTEE

This Committee makes recommendations to the Board for the approval of families they have determined, using a thorough process of screening and interviewing, to be qualified as Habitat Partner Families. Ten families were recommended in 2008. The Committee established policies on homebuyer workshops and credit counseling for applicant families, revised guidelines on personal references needed by applicants, and established ways to explore credit-worthiness through non-traditional means for applicants with no credit history.

### FAMILY SUPPORT COMMITTEE

Each family accepted into the Habitat program is assigned a "Sponsor" from this Committee. The sponsor acts as an advocate, liaison, partner, and friend, answering questions, resolving problems and giving moral support to that particular family. The sponsors continue this relationship even after the families become homeowners. Including all Habitat families, there are currently 41 sponsors. The Committee developed a new charter and a training packet for new committee members. Sponsors, working with New Hope Christian Church, provided free \$25 gift cards to Payless Shoe Source to 57 children from Habitat families.

### DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Habitat's first special fund raising event, *Sweet Home Habitat*, was held in April at the Venice Community Center. 305 tickets at \$50 each were sold, netting \$26,000 after costs. Credit card donations are now possible at the Office and over the phone. New donation envelopes will reflect that choice as well. Planned giving services will be highlighted this year. The total amount of grants approved for 2008 amounted to \$295,435. Grants pending currently amount to \$1,101,800.

### CONSTRUCTION REPORT

During 2008 seven homes were constructed and dedicated: one in North Port, one in Nokomis (the first panelized construction home), and five in Laurel. One of the houses in Laurel was built in partnership with Thrivent

Financial for Lutherans, who provided 65% of the construction costs. There are currently four houses under construction: two in North Port and two in South Venice.

### VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

From January 1, 2007 – September 20, 2007, 12,440.3 volunteer hours were recorded. For the same period in 2008, volunteer hours were 13,441.7 hours – an increase of 1000 hours. A record number of volunteers helped with the construction of the four houses built in a row on Collins Road in Laurel. Groups from local corporate, civic and religious organizations were helpful, particularly on Sod Day when 170+ volunteers came to lay sod for all four houses. In an effort to broaden the volunteer base, speaking engagements and presence at local fairs and festivals are actively being sought. **The monetary equivalent of a volunteer's time is \$17.38/hr. Our top 20 "wage earners" (you know who you are) have volunteered to the tune of \$98,568.74.**

### RESTORE COMMITTEE

Celebrating its first anniversary in January, the ReStore Home Center continues to be a success story. With the downturn in the economy, donations have slowed but Brian Dickerson, Director, has countered by adding everyday items to the inventory, creating an additional base of new customers.

### FAITH LIAISON COMMITTEE

The first "Church" house was built in 2007 through Habitat's partnership with a number of Venice churches. In 2008, with the expansion of the group to include other religious organizations, a second "Faith" house is currently under construction.

### ALUMINUM CAN PROGRAM

Over 8000 pounds of aluminum cans were collected during 2008 which brought in over \$4,400 for Habitat. Some grants have been received based on the number of cans collected over a given period of time. Routes to retrieve cans are one way partner families can fulfill part of the sweat equity requirements needed to obtain a house.

### COMMUNICATION COMMITTEE

Four editions of THE RAFTERS newsletter were published with the last edition being mailed to 5,300 volunteers, friends, and supporters. A change of printers has facilitated the printing process. E-mail Blasts from the Volunteer Coordinator and the updating of the website have greatly enhanced the communication system. Press releases for Habitat news/events were initiated through the Committee and Habitat Office.