

## giving thanks for home



it's safe again and encourage potential homeowners who haven't been approved yet." The Spring Faith Build church congregations donate money each year to build a home with an Atlanta Habitat family and they supported Nilaja's build.

"Although I wasn't able to thank my sponsors in person, being able to thank them virtually was a wonderful experience. Having a community that will show up for you, work for your dreams, especially during a time like this, is a gift sent from above," Nilaja commented. "Complete strangers are helping me achieve this dream, and I feel

Nilaja and her two daughters are on the very brink of seeing their dream come true. Soon, they'll be moving into their new home, a brick rehab in the Glenrose Heights neighborhood that Atlanta Habitat purchased, completely gutted and restored to new condition. Before then, it was a boarded-up eyesore. Now, it will host a holiday season this family has dreamed of for years.

"Being in my new home just in time for the holidays simply means togetherness for me," Nilaja said. She knows that owning a safe, affordable home means more than a place to raise her family. "It's a home that I own, and I feel so lucky that I can pass this experience and this property on to my girls."

Nilaja's older daughter is a student at Cristo Rey, a college prep school that integrates work-study experience with top companies to prepare students for college and life. Nilaja's mom works for Atlanta Community Food Bank, so the family has a strong focus on helping others. "I want to get out and volunteer on builds when

so much love." Despite not being able to volunteer this year because of the pandemic, and despite money being a little tighter, the Faith Build partners have remained committed to Atlanta Habitat families, as have so many of our donors, sponsors and partners. For this, we are deeply grateful.

Atlanta Habitat homes, which can be the wealth-building foundation for families like Nilaja's, are made possible by you. Developing affordable housing, educating families and revitalizing communities is our daily work, but your ongoing generosity makes it all happen. Your gift makes the magic of homeownership come true.

We know a safe and secure home in a vibrant and supportive neighborhood can build and sustain the well-being of a family and a community for generations. Please donate to Atlanta Habitat's mission of transforming lives and communities through affordable homeownership. Your end-of-year gift is absolutely vital to helping families like Nilaja's achieve the American Dream.

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As we round the final lap of this year, Atlanta Habitat is determined and inspired to keep moving forward, benefiting as many families as we can, with your help. Your steadfast commitment allowed us to quickly pivot and help families whose incomes were lost or reduced due to the pandemic or who were in our pipeline waiting to build their home. Your generosity to our Home Matters mortgage relief campaign allowed families to keep their homes at a time when health, safety and stability mean everything. Because this initiative has proven so helpful to our families, The Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation amplified your generosity with a recent \$200,000 grant toward sustaining our families during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This year has caused us to reflect on our history and the housing practices that have led to great disparities in our communities. For 37 years, Atlanta Habitat has built attractive, affordable homes for Atlanta families because we realize that our city, like so many others across the nation, has systemic barriers that lead to disinvestment and blight in communities inhabited primarily by people of color.

Atlanta Habitat for Humanity continues to build on our legacy of manifesting Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Beloved Community, a place of economic and social inclusiveness, where none are discriminated against and there truly is equal opportunity for all. As the pandemic amplifies the social disparities now more than ever, your support directly changes the lives of our homeowners and the trajectory of neighborhoods.

Each year on Georgia Gives Day, we come together to support work that uplifts our community. We hope you will support our work through a donation on Tuesday, Dec. 1, 2020, when our community joins together to give.

On behalf of our families, thank you. As we look forward to next year, we are optimistic that the future will be brighter, in partnership with you.

A special thank you for your partnership! Please be safe and well.

*Lisa Y. Gordon*

Lisa Y. Gordon, CPA  
President and CEO



Atlanta Habitat joins GA Gives this giving season

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LOVE



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**Homefront** is produced for donors, sponsors, volunteers and friends of Atlanta Habitat for Humanity—one of the largest nonprofit builders of affordable, single-family homes in Atlanta.

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#### OUR MISSION

Atlanta Habitat for Humanity transforms communities by acting as a catalyst for neighborhood revitalization through education, innovative development, partnerships and long-term relationships with families.







## home depot continues to support veterans

Atlanta's military veterans who live in homes that need repairs have an ally in Atlanta Habitat's Repair with Kindness program. Activated by more than \$1 million in grants from the Home Depot Foundation, the initiative funds critical home repairs to make homes safe, dry, accessible and attractive for non-Habitat homeowners, including veterans, seniors and homeowners who live in neighborhoods where we build new homes.

"It was a blessing we heard about the program," said U.S. Army Veteran Wallace Reed. "Atlanta Habitat came in and took care of the roof, sidewalk and a lot of other things that I couldn't afford to fix." Mr. Reed is one of several homeowners who mentioned that the help couldn't have come at a better time.

"There are times, especially since the pandemic hit, when members of our community have to choose between paying for home repairs or food, medicine or other basics," observed Atlanta Habitat CEO Lisa Y. Gordon. "No one should have to make these impossible choices, especially our veterans."

Home Depot is Atlanta Habitat's largest sponsor. Over the past three years, grants from The Home Depot have sponsored 80 RWK home projects, of which 41 are owned by U.S. military veterans.

## browns mill village progress

Like many of Atlanta Habitat's ambitious projects slated for 2020, construction on the Browns Mill Village development was slowed by the pandemic.

This year, crews worked on mostly the unseen infrastructure and background tasks; placing utility lines, prepping the lots and pulling city permits to build. The

innovative development which features 75 Atlanta Habitat homes, and around 60 market-rate affordable multi-story duplexes by our build partner and a host of amenities. We look forward to having our first homes built by our lead partner Delta in 2021.

Visit [www.atlantahabitat.org](http://www.atlantahabitat.org) for updates.



## home matters

So many Atlanta Habitat families are struggling. This pandemic has hit families like a tornado, deadly, with no warning. Job loss, the stress of being a frontline worker or needing to homeschool have left many homeowners reeling. And there's no end in sight.

"When we all got sent home because of COVID, I didn't know what to do. I've never been unemployed since I started working at 18." Jameka still draws into herself a bit when she talks about the pandemic shutdowns. She knew it was about safety, but how was the mortgage going to get paid? After 20 years with Macy's and doing nails on the side, Jameka knew she had to make a way. "I called Melissa in Family Services. I'm always so grateful for Atlanta Habitat. They're always there for us. I found out I could get mortgage relief and started crying; I was so happy and thankful."

Home Matters, the mortgage relief initiative funded by generous individuals, foundations, and corporate partners has been a blessing, homeowners say. So far, Home Matters has granted one to three months of mortgage payments to 170 families\*, many of whom faced choosing between food, medicine and their homes. Others might have been offered the opportunity to return to work but stayed home with young children because schools and daycare centers were closed. Sometimes, there were no good options. But thanks to those who gave, there was an opportunity.

"Thankfully, things are much better for me now." Jameka started another side business creating and delivering balloon bouquets and returned to work once the store reopened. She says the mortgage help gave her enough breathing room to plan and prioritize without worrying about falling too far behind.

Much love to everyone who gave to help families make it through this rough time. If you can, please consider a sustaining monthly gift to Home Matters. Because. It does.

\*as of November 5, 2020



## giving; a legacy

Atlanta Habitat enthusiasts have creatively supported the organization this year, despite not being able to have the full build experience, because they understand that having an affordable home to ride out the pandemic safely and securely means everything to families. These two donors gave in a deeply meaningful way;

**Dr. Sarah Lopez:** Last November, after my 74th birthday, I realized this upcoming birthday would be one of the big ones. In thinking about how I wanted to celebrate, I began to get excited about the possibility of gathering family and friends to celebrate my 75th birthday by working together on building an Atlanta Habitat for Humanity house for a family. I have been a longtime supporter of Habitat for Humanity and could think of no better way to celebrate. Although COVID-19 punctured my desired celebration, and family and friends could no longer travel to help build the home, I knew postponing the build would mean a family wouldn't have their dream of owning a home come true. Atlanta

Habitat has been incredible with moving forward and they have given me one of the best birthday gifts ever. Although I haven't had the opportunity to meet the homeowners, I am still so excited to see the house being built. I look forward to celebrating the day Mr. Mathis and Ms. Warren move into their new home.

**Leslie Hurst:** When my husband passed away in September 2019, I was thinking about a way to honor his memory. There were certainly a number of worthwhile charities to choose from, but building an Atlanta Habitat house got me the most excited. And my family was excited too. What I wasn't prepared for was the response that it generated in our extended family and friends. Not only did they buy-in literally with their generous donations, but they were really looking forward to volunteering to build the house. While the COVID-19 pandemic prevented us from being on site, we are all so appreciative that Atlanta Habitat found a way to complete the build. And as much as this home is a dream come true for Jailonda and her family, it is a dream come true for all of us too!



## still, we build

It's thanks to our amazing house leaders, warehouse crew and other employees who support them on build sites that Atlanta Habitat will have built 30 homes by the end of the year, when in

a normal year we build 50. But this was nowhere near a normal year. We ceased all construction for two months to comply with pandemic safety protocols. "For the first time in our history, we've built homes without volunteers; and I can tell you for certain that they are missed," said Jim Blackstone, Atlanta Habitat's construction director. "Kudos to the entire construction and warehouse teams for getting these homes built for our families."

The 11 house leaders work in teams to build each of the homes. Construction contractors fill in where needed. "I really miss all the skilled supervisors and volunteers," commented Rachel Barber, a house leader with Atlanta Habitat for seven years. "And, I miss working with the homebuyers, teaching them construction skills and watching their confidence grow. But 'Safety First' is real on the construction site. I'm optimistic. We will build with them again."





photo taken pre-COVID

## in-kind donors: atlanta's unsung heroes

One of the things we hear most from Atlanta Habitat homebuyers is how important it is that their children have a lawn on which to play. And they all do, thanks to **North Georgia Turf**. What started as a donation to Clark Howard's yearly house builds has now grown into a donation of sod for all of our homes.

Atlanta Habitat's behind-the-scenes heroes, our in-kind donors, boost every facet of the organization. For instance, **Valspar** provides an array of exterior paint colors along with a warm, modern white interior paint for all of our homes, and **Mohawk Flooring** provides a range of carpets and flooring to each new homeowner. **J.M. Huber Corporation's** recent in-kind gift of a year's supply of **AdvanTech** subflooring impressed our entire construction crew, all of whom commented on the high quality. "In construction, the subfloor is always covered by flooring, but the level of quality of a subfloor will stand for the life of the home, good or bad," Atlanta Habitat's Construction Manager, Jacob Rufenacht, explained. "I've noticed a huge improvement on the strength of the **AdvanTech** subfloor, which makes everything on top of it better."

On the administrative side, **Deloitte** provides Atlanta Habitat with professional consulting services that have helped the organization to turbocharge growth and ignite impact. The ReStore is just one of the beneficiaries of Deloitte's generous professional support. "Deloitte helped the ReStore launch our online store, just in time to allow the store to continue operations as the pandemic struck," said Cathy Walls, Atlanta Habitat ReStore manager. "Thanks to them, our business was able to survive and to continue to support Atlanta Habitat's mission and operations through a very tough time."

Over the past three years, generous in-kind donors have supported Atlanta Habitat to the tune of more than \$1 million. Every bit of it is much needed and appreciated.



## virtual volunteers; an uplifting experience

When the pandemic hit and we were all on lockdown, one of the more painful decisions Atlanta Habitat made was to cease all on-site volunteer activities. But that didn't stop our committed crew! It's been tough this year, but here's a shoutout to each of the nearly 2,100 volunteers who provided 20,290 hours of service so far this year, valued at \$515,970.

In addition to working on our build sites earlier in the year, volunteers completed one or more of our new remote volunteer projects. Some of these projects include writing welcome letters to new homeowners who are not able to experience our traditional house dedications, and building birdhouses and toolboxes to be given to homebuyers on move-in day.

"When I first started doing Habitat builds in 2010, it was such an uplifting experience, and I got addicted to it," recalled skilled supervisor Jorge de la Cova. "I racked up a lot of hours volunteering, and when I found out they were going to stop letting volunteers onto build sites, it was really difficult for me. When Habitat came up with ways to volunteer virtually, I immediately signed up. I wanted to do more. I wanted to help, and I ended up bringing together my two passions: Habitat and teaching. Being able to still help means the world to me."

Each year, more than 13,000 volunteers provide thousands of hours of expertise, saving the organization more than \$3 million. In addition to building and painting homes, volunteers help select homeowners, teach classes, work with administrative and operations staff, support the ReStore staff, and take on a range of other critical tasks across the organization.



## south fulton ReStore progress

Construction of Atlanta Habitat's new South Fulton Service Center and ReStore on Old National Highway is underway and scheduled to open in the second quarter of 2021. This new Atlanta Habitat hub had been slated to open this year, but the coronavirus pandemic caused construction delays to the facility.

There are an estimated 80,000 service workers with jobs at the airport, aerotropolis businesses and the surrounding industrial area in South Fulton. Over the last five years, nearly 30 percent of attendees at Atlanta Habitat's first-time homebuyer information sessions rented homes in these surrounding neighborhoods. "South Fulton is an untapped market for quality, affordable homes for this working population," says Dan Maddox, Atlanta Habitat's Chief Operations Officer. "We want the service center to be the hub for South Fulton community engagement and homeownership opportunities."

Currently, there are 30 Habitat homeowners in South Fulton as a result of Atlanta Habitat merging with the South Fulton Habitat affiliate in 2011. Since then, Atlanta Habitat's Neighborhood Housing & Policy team has built strong relationships with the community, civic, as well as government leaders in preparation for our expansion.

The Sponsorship and Volunteer teams are seeking new house sponsors and volunteers to join us in serving their neighbors in South Fulton starting in 2021. To learn more about partnering with us in South Fulton, contact **Jon Jones, Sponsorship director, (404) 465-1055** or [jon.jones@atlantahabitat.org](mailto:jon.jones@atlantahabitat.org).

# thanks!

This was a tough year. Thanks to our sponsors and volunteers who continued to support Atlanta Habitat Families.



## shop ReStore online

By shopping at [shopatlantarestore.org](https://shopatlantarestore.org), you support Atlanta Habitat while also fulfilling your redecorating dreams. Our online store features brand-new, still-boxed items often available in-store and online, and at always amazing prices. We are constantly updating our online inventory, so make sure to visit often! Thrifting has never been this convenient and safe.

One hundred percent of every purchase supports our mission of affordable homeownership and revitalizing neighborhoods. We appreciate your support, and we know you'll appreciate your amazing finds.

For more information about Atlanta Habitat, visit [atlantahabitat.org](https://atlantahabitat.org) or follow us on

