

## remembering and honoring our Michelle

There are few Atlanta Habitat homeowners who have gone through our program without working with Michelle Henkel. On May 3, Michelle suddenly passed away. She was a great woman who influenced countless lives. Without her, our experiences as homeowners, supporters and staff will be tough and very different for some time. In the meantime, we continue her work while keeping her unbridled enthusiasm for our mission in our hearts at every turn.

Michelle was always present as a joyful staff member, a faithful donor and skilled supervisor. She embodied the spirit of Atlanta Habitat on every level. We challenge each of you, as we challenge ourselves, to always be connected to something you are passionate about. We are reminded of the many lives we can touch and the dreams that, together, we can help come true. This is the legacy that lives on after each of us.

Many homeowners will remember Michelle as the person who helped them choose their lots at the start of their journey to homeownership and, at the end, closed on their home at the Wall of Dreams. As a donor, she was one of the most connected to the mission and vision of our organization. Among our volunteers, she was a skilled supervisor and leader on build sites, putting in countless hours of work on the homes she helped our homeowners attain. To our staff, she will always be a person who led us back to our homeowners and the true reason why we do what we do.

As we continue this work, Michelle is present in every thread and fiber. For years to come, we will stand beside homebuyers starting their builds, dedicating their homes, closing on their homes and paying off their mortgages in large part because of the steps they took with Michelle to get them to this point.

We honor her and the legacy she left with so many families today and to come. Our thoughts are continuously with Michelle's family and friends and all who knew and loved her.

Next year, we will dedicate a home in Michelle's honor. We hope to have your support in funding and building this new home. Fundraising has begun at [give.atlantahabitat.org/michellehenkelmemorial](https://give.atlantahabitat.org/michellehenkelmemorial).



# president's message



At Atlanta Habitat, we know that we simply cannot do this work without each of you. In this first-ever combination of Happenings (our homeowner newsletter) and Homefront (our supporter newsletter), you will see from every side how much every one of us is working together in this journey of homeownership and beyond.

The mission of Atlanta Habitat for Humanity is to transform communities by acting as a catalyst for neighborhood revitalization

through education, innovative development, partnerships and long-term relationships with families. This involves going “beyond the build” to foster lasting relationships with families and supporters.

Our goal to provide our homeowners not only with the opportunity to build and buy a home, but also with access to opportunities to thrive beyond homeownership, is paramount to our mission. You can see this in action in this newsletter as you meet Lashunda, a homeowner who, after dedicating her home 5 years ago, attended school to receive her master's degree, which resulted in her receiving a **Vision. Goals. Action! (VGA)** scholarship from Atlanta Habitat to study abroad.

Another example is our VGA Boss Talk series, featuring wisdom shared from entrepreneurs to help our homeowners launch or continue their own entrepreneurial endeavors. We are so pleased to bring these vital and valuable programs to our families, helping them build thriving, successful lives.

We hope you enjoy this first-ever combination of Happenings and Homefront and the feel-good stories of both Atlanta Habitat's wins and learning opportunities during the journey of homeownership. We are excited to share a more inclusive outlook on our mission with you.

There is much to look forward to in 2022 and beyond. Together we will make Atlanta a place where all people have access to quality affordable housing in safe, vibrant neighborhoods with opportunities to thrive. **Let's Build Together to provide homes that help Atlanta families thrive!**

Warm regards,

Rosalyn Merrick  
Interim President and CEO



Build. Thrive. Grow.

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**Homefront** is produced for donors, sponsors, volunteers, families 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.





# \$13.5 million gift from MacKenzie Scott!

Atlanta Habitat's Interim President and CEO, Rosalyn Merrick, was astonished to receive a call from the office of MacKenzie Scott in February.

Scott's office called to ask questions about Atlanta Habitat's history, programming and impact with Atlanta families. After the initial surprise of receiving this call, Rosalyn conveyed the incredible history of Atlanta Habitat and our community impact over the last 39 years. She shared the vision of our long-term goals and told stories of the thousands of families we have served – and the 1,400+ families we continue to serve annually through our neighborhood revitalization program.

Rosalyn then learned that Ms. Scott had awarded \$436 million to Habitat for Humanity International, including 84 of its affiliates. Atlanta Habitat would receive \$13.5 million of that grant.

MacKenzie Scott helped build the multi-billion-dollar e-commerce giant Amazon with former husband Jeff Bezos. Today, she is distributing her wealth to organizations all over the world. Her gift to Habitat International is her largest publicly known donation.



Ms. Scott's gift to Atlanta Habitat will be used to achieve our longstanding goals of increasing homeownership, focusing on targeted neighborhoods and expanding our home-build portfolio. Rosalyn shared, "While this gift will not solve the housing crisis, it will absolutely help Atlanta Habitat's work as a catalyst in neighborhood revitalization and the creation of affordable housing that is much needed in our city."

13.5

## introducing.... atlanta habitat's new *foundation society*!

Atlanta Habitat is excited to introduce our new Foundation Society. All donors who give monthly recurring donations of \$25 or more can become a Foundation Society member of Atlanta Habitat.

Foundation Society members will receive an Atlanta Habitat Foundation Society t-shirt, recognition as a Foundation Society member in our Annual Report; an invitation to our special Donor Appreciation Event in September and our newsletters.

By investing monthly, you are joining a community dedicated to sustaining Atlanta Habitat's mission of transforming communities since 1983. Simply visit [give.atlantahabitat.org/foundationssociety](https://give.atlantahabitat.org/foundationssociety) to become



a monthly recurring donor and Foundation Society member.

To find out more about becoming a Foundation Society member, contact Peggy Still Johnson at [peggy.stilljohnson@atlantahabitat.org](mailto:peggy.stilljohnson@atlantahabitat.org) or 404.465.1031.

# browns mill village welcomes its first homeowners

Our vision for Browns Mill Village is becoming a reality as our first four families moved into their new craftsman-style homes this spring. Homeowners Kaneesia, Sharlena, Belinda and Shaquitta, along with their families, all reside close to the centrally located 1.5-acre park featuring a walking path, natural landscape, open-air pavilion and more. The challenging work and dedication they put into their journey to homeownership – from attending courses to completing sweat equity hours – is being rewarded by the connection, support and safety offered by this planned



community. Over the coming months, the neighborhood will continue to develop as the two homes currently under construction reach completion, followed by many more on the way. By 2025, our goal is to have 75 homes built in Browns Mill Village. We are grateful to our inaugural residents and sponsors, including Clark Howard, Peachtree Presbyterian, The Home Depot Foundation, 3M, Capstone Restaurant Group, Wells Fargo Foundation, Northside Church, North Point Community Church

and Delta Air Lines, for being on the forefront of this exciting new development model for Atlanta Habitat.

## habitat for humanity international 2022 conference held in atlanta



Atlanta Habitat was thrilled to attend the Habitat for Humanity International 2022 Conference in Atlanta. Affiliates from across the world participated, with over 2,000 people in attendance. Wells Fargo announced its \$7.75 million gift to Habitat for Humanity International, which will support home repairs and new homes builds for more than 350 homes nationwide.

Atlanta Habitat has received \$30,000 of that major gift to apply towards two home builds: one in our Browns Mill Village development and another for a home build in Westside Atlanta. Atlanta Habitat is grateful for the support of Wells Fargo and its initiative to help our families thrive across the city of Atlanta.

## make a difference while you shop

The Atlanta Habitat ReStore is no ordinary thrift store. Our gently used and sometimes brand-new items will not only spruce up your home at a low cost, but your ReStore purchases will also help build an affordable home.

If that is not reason enough to shop with us, our ReStore also decreases our carbon footprint by diverting over 1,000 tons of materials from landfills every year.



As we face rising prices and record inflation, there could not be a better time to take advantage of the ReStore. Our Atlanta and South Fulton ReStores receive items daily that are ready to be part of your next redecorating or DIY renovation project.

Saving money and making a difference - what more could you possibly ask for in a purchase? Shop the ReStore or donate your items for a lucky buyer today. Visit our Atlanta location at 271 Chester Avenue NE, our South Fulton location at 5626 Old National Highway or online at [atlantahabitat.org/shop/](https://atlantahabitat.org/shop/).



# adding value to your home

As you move along your homeownership journey, there are many ways to add value to your home. Increasing the value of your home is not only a way to invest in yourself, but also a way to build assets. Here are 5 ways you can increase the value of your home.

## 1. Open up a fresh can of paint.

Paint freshens up the inside or outside of the home, increasing its appeal and charm. Neutral colors often create a calming background and allow colorful accents to create visual interest in the space, especially with decor that has meaning for you and your family and reflects your unique style.

## 2. Get organized

Organization is a great way to increase the space in your home and give yourself more functionality in the places you use the most. Think about what you use daily and make those items easily accessible. Declutter by gathering non-essential items and storing them away in multi-functional organizers that complement your furniture and decor.

## 3. Start planting

Look for low-maintenance flowers, shrubs or trees that help enhance the look of your home. Adding a garden can be a beautiful addition to your yard as well as a great mental health outlet for you.

## 4. Upgrade your doors and windows

A great way to spruce up your home's curb appeal and energy efficiency is to upgrade your windows and doors. You can also do paint touch-ups or cleaning that will give them new life.

## 5. Update your mailbox and house numbers

Getting a new mailbox, repainting your current one or polishing those house numbers to a shine are easy ways to attract attention in the neighborhood. These small details keep your house looking great.

grow and thrive



## the home depot foundation supports grow and thrive programs

The Home Depot Foundation gifted Atlanta Habitat with a generous donation of \$700,000 to support our new home builds, critical repairs, light aesthetic repairs and our **Vision. Goals. Action! (VGA)** and **My Money. My Future. (MMMF)** financial literacy education and career opportunity programs.

Atlanta Habitat's educational programs now serve over 200 families annually, thanks to the generous funding support of The Home Depot Foundation, The Atlanta Women's Foundation, Bank of America, Wells Fargo and Regions Bank. VGA continues to partner with organizations like AARP and Women In Technology to offer employment and business career opportunities for Atlanta Habitat homeowners to thrive. For more information about our education programs, contact our Family Services Education Manager, Jacolvy Garcia, at [jacolvy.garcia@atlantahabitat.org](mailto:jacolvy.garcia@atlantahabitat.org) or 404.223.5180 ext. 133.

# an encouraging boss talk



## Vision. Goals.

**Action! (VGA)** helps to change the lives of eligible Atlanta Habitat homeowners and their dependents

through scholarship and grant awards. The most recent VGA Launch! event, Boss Talk, supports emerging entrepreneurs through this leadership speaker series.

Boss Talk, held in May, featured moderator Jamine Moton, founder and CEO of Skylar Security, and three entrepreneurs who spoke to the topic of “Courage Over Comfort.” They spoke candidly about their journeys to being their own bosses, including their challenges and successes.

Kim Hughes Esq., shared this wisdom: “Courage over comfort for an entrepreneur is all about sacrifice. Sacrifice is not glamorous but so true. It’s the sacrifice you make as an entrepreneur to do something nobody else can do but you.”

Montez Diamond, Founder of Conflict Cookie, spoke about the courage it takes when others aren’t understanding or supportive. “I’m the first in my immediate family to become an entrepreneur. When they said to me that I should pursue a 9-to-5 job, I had to turn that frightening experience into something advantageous for me.”

Yolanda White, CEO of Dayo, shared her definition of courage as an entrepreneur. “As an entrepreneur, every single day I’m doing something new and challenging myself to unlock the opportunity I’ve identified for my business. That’s how I define courage as an entrepreneur. It’s all about having the belief and confidence in yourself to pursue a bigger idea or opportunity with passion.”

Since its creation in 2015, VGA has expanded each year—impacting 36 families, awarding more than \$53,000 in grants and scholarships and influencing 274 people who attended related events.

# from homeowner to donor



At Atlanta Habitat, we wholeheartedly believe in going “beyond the build.” Lashunda’s story illustrates the impact of this approach.

When Lashunda started her home build in 2017, she could not have even begun to grasp how much homeownership would change the trajectory of her life. After dedicating her home 5 years ago, she attended school to receive her master’s degree,

which resulted in her receiving a VGA scholarship from Atlanta Habitat to study abroad. Years later, as a financial analyst, she exceeded the hopes we have for every homeowner. We have been able to call her a homeowner, volunteer, scholarship recipient and now, she is a donor!

Lashunda said, “Owning a home is a blessing. But it’s really the education this program gives homeowners that is unmatched. Any way I can help others learn the things I’ve learned, I will.” She has done just that by volunteering on other home builds, being a guest speaker for future scholarship recipients and donating in support of fellow homeowners to further their educational opportunities at Atlanta Habitat.

We are so privileged to know that giving back is not only the core of what we do but is also at the core of our homeowners as well. Lashunda is truly an example of paying it forward and understanding the importance of impacting others while continuously reaching for your goals.





# investing in the community:

## shawn goes beyond the build

One of Atlanta Habitat for Humanity's homeowners, Shawn, has grown as an advocate for engagement in her community. Now settled in a Habitat II home, we have watched her bloom since she moved in. Shawn has become a leader in her neighborhood and has helped elevate her community in many ways.

For her model work ethic and commitment to her neighborhood, Shawn recently received a community service award through the Southside Concerned Citizens of Atlanta Community Association (SSCC). Along with being recognized for her community service, she was sworn in as the new Community Development Chairperson for the SSCC.

Shawn says, "I was shocked and grateful at the same time. I am beyond blessed and thankful that I was able to get this home and do exactly what Atlanta Habitat stands for: Build, Thrive and Grow."



Atlanta Habitat empowers its homebuyers to be civically engaged by offering classes where homebuyers can learn new skill sets that bring value to their lives and their communities. Shawn built on her skills to uplift her community, serving as a role model and an amazing leader. By building a community and offering programs dedicated to helping homeowners grow before, during and after the homeownership process, Atlanta Habitat helps communities and connects them with resources that help them Build, Thrive, and Grow.

# W O R D

## women growing in representation on job sites



Carson, Atlanta Habitat House Leader

Since the pandemic, the construction industry has changed drastically. Between delays in supply deliveries, high demand for newly constructed homes and a shortage of skilled laborers, the challenges are daunting. However, we have something to be happy about – increased representation of women on our build sites.

Atlanta Habitat does not just provide all-women volunteer builds, but we also have women builders on staff. "It was so cool not just to have all women volunteer on our home, but to have women lead it who actually know how to build an entire house. Even on TV, we've never seen women in construction before," said Desirea and Angela at their recent home dedication.

While only 9% of U.S. construction workers are women\*, that percentage is growing here at Atlanta Habitat. Our current staff of house leaders is 36% women and will continue to grow as we commit to making gender equity a priority in our organization. With plenty of job opportunities, a lower pay gap between men and women, and an increasingly welcoming culture, more women are entering construction. At Atlanta Habitat, we now have four women house leaders following the trend of growing representation in construction. As the job outlook in construction trends upward, we are happy to celebrate the inclusivity we hope will continue in the industry and which we look forward to continuing on our staff.

*\*National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC), 2021*

# showing some habilove



Volunteering on an Atlanta Habitat build is not just about learning how to build a home. It is about making genuine connections with others. Our builds provide the opportunity to build a home while building a relationship – whether with the homeowner, coworkers, friends or strangers.

This could not be any truer for two of our active volunteers, Mark and Mary. Not only did they meet on an Atlanta Habitat build, but through volunteering as skilled supervisors, they also eventually became acquaintances, friends, and more recently, husband and wife.

Mary recounted her story. “I met my now-husband, Mark, while volunteering with Atlanta Habitat for Humanity. At first, we were acquaintances and skilled supervisors who would chit-chat.”

We cannot help but think of the many beautiful friendships and relationships that will continue to form from swinging a hammer. What better way to meet people who believe in serving others than to volunteer with Atlanta Habitat!

## fulfilling a generational dream

“My mom and grandma always wanted homeownership for me. Even though they were not able to do it themselves, I made sure I could carry on their legacy and set an example for my daughter and future grandchildren,” Tammy said emotionally on an early Thursday morning as volunteers prepared to work beside her to build her new home. Tammy is a modern-day superhero with a 20-year passion for teaching special needs children. After doing so much good in the world, it is finally her time to receive it.

For many of our Atlanta Habitat homebuyers, a new home is all about leaving a legacy to their family. Sometimes that legacy is the home itself or the seed of desiring homeownership in the future. It is no secret that there is a sense of pride when building something for future generations, something to pass along that has a lasting impact. With each nail, each drop of paint and each touch Tammy places on her new home, she impacts the way future generations think of themselves. The effects are long-lasting – an increase in their net worth, raised expectations for quality schools, great neighborhoods in which to grow families and more.

Tammy looked with pride and spoke with gratitude standing in her soon-to-be yard. “I am planting a tree in honor of my mother and grandmother so what they instilled in me can always be part of this home. Not only will the tree grow, but so will wealth and security for my family now and for years to come.”

