



MELISSA SONGCO
CEO, Habitat for Humanity of
Waukesha County

2033: HABITAT FOR HUMANITY'S VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Take a moment and remember your childhood home. Maybe there was a rope off the big tree in your backyard that you swung carefree on throughout the summer. Perhaps the smell of dinner wafted throughout the whole house whenever somebody was cooking. Do you remember the feeling of sitting around the table and playing board games with your family or watching the Packers on Sundays in your living room? Can you remember the feeling you had of coming home after a long day at school or from your first job?

Now imagine that's all gone. Instead, imagine a cramped apartment with leaking windows or the backseat of a car. Imagine eating dinner on the kitchen floor or sleeping side-by-side with your parents on a mattress in the living room. This is the silent suffering that more than 25 percent of households in Waukesha County experience. Many of these families are stably employed, working in essential industries like health care or manufacturing. Despite bringing so much to Waukesha County, many families cannot afford to

live here. If they do, they pay crippling rent costs or live in inadequate or unsafe environments for their families.

Homeownership is a distant dream for them. The number of homes for sale is at a historic low. The rising land, labor, and materials costs make it untenable for developers to build starter homes within the affordable price range of low- to moderate-income families. Additionally, the median home price for a single-family home in Waukesha County is rapidly eclipsing \$400,000, while the median household income cannot afford anything above \$250,000.

Since 1989, Habitat for Humanity of Waukesha County has been the leading provider of affordable homeownership in the county. In 2022, we are continuing that legacy. Over the past 33 years, we've built 45 homes for deserving families throughout the county, building on average one or two homes a year throughout our history. However, recognizing the urgency of the housing crisis, Habitat Waukesha is rapidly scaling up our efforts.

White Rock Revitalization

Beginning with our Prairieville Village project this summer, our goal will be to build more homes per year to serve more families. Prairieville Village will be the site of three duplexes serving six families and marks our largest single project to date. Since 2017, we've built or rehabilitated 13 homes along White Rock Avenue, and Prairieville is a continuation of our effort to revitalize an area amicably known as the "Gateway to Downtown." But Prairieville Village is just the beginning.

Aeroshade Workforce Housing Project

In early 2023, Habitat will begin construction on a 3.77-acre lot in the Broadway Heights neighborhood of Waukesha: the former site of the century-old Aeroshade factory. Aeroshade will be the site of 16 single-family homes and two duplexes, the future new home for 20 families. Our objective is to build six homes a year for three years. The lot has sat vacant since 2017 following the razing of the factory. With the incredible support of Jim Tarantino the founder, and partner of Capri Communities and its sister firm, Tarantino & Company, we will close on the property in August 2022.

We have received generous public funds to help this project move forward. Waukesha County has approved \$400,000 in Community Development Block Grant Funds, the HOME Consortium has approved \$770,000, and the City of Waukesha has approved \$1 million in American Rescue Plan Act funds toward our projected \$8.7 million budget for the Aeroshade project. Thanks to our partnership with the Waukesha County Business Alliance and United Way of Greater Milwaukee and Waukesha

County, we applied for Senator Tammy Baldwin's Programmatic Appropriation Request seeking an additional \$1 million in funding.

We hope this public support will garner further investment from individuals, businesses and foundations from the Waukesha County community. Partners like RiverGlen Christian Church, Eaton, Shorewest Realtors, Wells Fargo, and Trace-A-Matic have been sustaining donors of our mission for years, and we're excited to take our giant leap forward side-by-side. Aeroshade is truly a community project; the homes built there will serve as a living monument to what the Waukesha County Community can accomplish together.

2033

But it doesn't end there. Our eyes are set upon an even grander vision. Imagine 10 years from now. It may be challenging for some. At Habitat Waukesha, the answer is all in the numbers. By 2033, we will be building

20 homes a year and completing 30 repair projects in three communities. That's what 2033 stands for at Habitat.

We cannot and will not do it alone. We are incredibly grateful for the Waukesha County Business Alliance's unwavering support, and we know our partnership will continue to prove vital in reaching our goal of 20-30-3 by 2033.

To the business community of Waukesha County, we invite you to join us. Please donate to our cause, sponsor a home at Aeroshade, volunteer at the build site or the ReStore, and advocate for a world where everyone has a decent place to live. •

