



Habitat for Humanity of Waukesha County Announces Expansion into Jefferson County

Waukesha, WI

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Habitat for Humanity of Waukesha County (Habitat Waukesha) proudly announces the expansion of its service area into Jefferson County. Over the last year, Habitat Waukesha has been working towards its future vision of 2033, aiming to build 20 homes and complete 30 repairs in three communities annually by 2033. As part of its expansion plan, Habitat Waukesha is actively exploring potential build sites in Jefferson County to commence the first project; however, a specific date has yet to be determined.

Habitat Waukesha invites local and regional media outlets to attend the ThriveED Annual Meeting on October 19th, 2023, from 7:30 – 9:30 AM at Madison Area Technical College – Watertown for the official announcement.

Currently, Habitat Waukesha has 11 homes under various stages of construction, and its Home Preservation program, launched in September 2021, has already completed 15 repairs. The organization has made strategic enhancements to bolster its capacity to build and repair more homes each year, including expanding its ongoing subdivision project, Domenica Park, and adding expert construction, finance, and development staff.

"While we remain committed to serving Waukesha County, we are thrilled to explore opportunities beyond our current service area," said Melissa Songco, CEO of Habitat Waukesha. "Through extensive research and careful planning, we have identified Jefferson County as a community needing affordable housing solutions that Habitat Waukesha can provide."

Jefferson County is experiencing rapid population growth, resulting in a 3,500 market-rate housing units shortage. As businesses expand into Jefferson County, the demand for affordable housing to support the existing and growing workforce has become critical. The county has made commendable strides in attracting new

housing developers and implementing affordable housing incentives to address this challenge.

"We are thrilled to welcome Habitat for Humanity into Jefferson County," said Jefferson County Administrator Ben Wehmeier. "Their dedication to affordable housing solutions perfectly aligns with our county's commitment to building strong communities and addressing our housing shortage."

A shortage of available housing can negatively affect businesses, with employers having a harder time filling vacant positions if potential employees cannot secure housing.

"When the local workforce can't find housing they can afford, the entire community suffers," adds Deb Reinbold, president of Thrive Economic Development. "With its proven track record of success and commitment to affordable housing, Habitat for Humanity will bring valuable resources and expertise to Jefferson County."

Initial discussions with community stakeholders in Jefferson County have been overwhelmingly positive, with local foundations, municipalities, individuals, and the HOME Consortium expressing willingness to provide financial assistance for the expansion.

Given this opportunity, Habitat Waukesha aims to raise \$2 million in seed funds to support the affiliate's expansion. These funds will contribute to acquiring essential resources, including trucks, equipment, staffing, development funds, and more.

At this pivotal juncture of growth, Habitat Waukesha invites the community, businesses, and philanthropic organizations to come together to embrace the shared mission of creating safe, stable, and affordable housing solutions for both Waukesha and Jefferson Counties. Together, we can make a profound and lasting impact on the lives of families and individuals in need, building not just houses but hopeful futures.

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About Habitat for Humanity of Waukesha County

Since 1989, Habitat for Humanity of Waukesha County has been the leading provider of affordable homeownership opportunities in Waukesha County and builds affordable homes for families who cannot purchase a home through traditional methods. Homeowners earn an affordable mortgage and obtain self-sufficiency while learning valuable skills. They contribute 200 hours of sweat equity (per adult) to constructing their homes, which serves as their down payment. Habitat Waukesha is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, Equal Housing Lender. More information is available at habitatwaukesha.org.

About Habitat for Humanity International

Habitat for Humanity International was founded in 1976. There are more than 1,500 local Habitat affiliates in all 50 states in the U.S. and more than 70 countries. Since 1976, Habitat has helped more than 6.8 million people find strength, stability, and independence through safe, decent, and affordable shelter. Today, Habitat for Humanity is a world leader in addressing the issues of poverty housing.