



North St. Louis County

**Habitat
for Humanity®**

Habitat HIGHLIGHTS

MISSION VISION

A world where everyone has a decent place to live.

MISSION STATEMENT

Seeking to put God's love into action, Habitat for Humanity brings people together to build homes, communities and hope.

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'Tis the Season!

Dear «Envelope Salutation»,

All of us at North St. Louis County Habitat for Humanity would like to wish you a Merry Christmas! Not a day goes by at the office, or a board meeting, goes by where we do not talk about how much we appreciate you: our volunteers, donors and supporters. You are the heart that gives our mission energy and strength to help our neighbors in need of affordable homes.

In northern Minnesota we are very in tune with the seasons. We look forward to spring as the winters get long, we definitely go crazy enjoying every hour of sunlight as we get into summer and we all look forward to the possibilities of mild fall days with sunshine and no bugs! Winter, once we have settled into it, has a lot to offer as we enjoy snow activities, holidays and family.

The **Christmas season** is special to us as we celebrate God's love for us which He demonstrated by sending Jesus to us so many years ago. We have all heard the story of no room in the inn and Mary giving birth to the Savior and placing him in a manger! Though Jesus commented in the Gospels that he had no place to lay his head, ministering to those in need was a big part of His ministry as He taught about truth, grace and the Kingdom of Heaven.

The **season for doing good**: displaying God's love to others, helping those in need, serving the "least of these", is one that does not end or change with the rotation of the earth or the celebration of a holiday. As long as there is suffering, hunger, homelessness and evil present in this world doing good for those in need will continue as priorities in our life. I am amazed, as I think back on my years at North St. Louis County Habitat for Humanity, at the hundreds if not thousands of people I have come in contact with that know no end to the season of doing good. You are a part of this group of special, caring people. Thank you for your generous and dedicated service to those in need.



Nathan Thompson, Marnie Maki—family services, Jason Patterson—construction and Susan Garrett—community resources get into the season. Come join us!

Many times, as we approach the colder months, I am asked, "what do you guys do in the winter?" That is a great question. The simple answer is that our **building season** is defined by the calendar year, not by the changing of the weather and the length of sunshine each day. We typically build at least five homes in each calendar year. In 2018, with your help, we were able to help a total of seven families into affordable homes! This kind of effort requires a 12 month season. This January we will be in various stages of construction on five projects! This kind of effort relies on you, our donors, volunteers and supporters. Thank you!

So as you enjoy this Christmas season, a season of love and grace don't tire in doing good. You are making a difference! You are helping families into a new season of their lives, **a season of strength, stability and self-reliance** through the shelter of a simple, decent and affordable homes.

Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year!

Nathan Thompson, Executive Director

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Volunteers: Habitat's Not So Hidden Treasures!

If you know me, you know my favorite part of Habitat is the home dedication event. If you don't see me at a dedication (and a lot of them happen on Sundays), I am either sick or some family event has made it impossible for me to attend! Why are these events so important to me? That is where I get to see the impact of YOUR work and YOUR financial support on our families and our communities. I get to hear the partner family speak about what this home means to them and their family as the community gathers their arms, both literally and figuratively, around their newest neighbors. I get to see some of the wonderful people who helped that family build the house they are about to buy. And the houses you build or renovate with your donations of time, talent and treasure are simple but also simply lovely. Most importantly, without you, they would not exist. We could NOT partner with five or more families a year without our wonderful pool



of donors and volunteers. We value all of our supporters and we thank you for your help in making us one of the strongest and most successful affiliates in the state. Our donors are critical to our success and their support helps make sure we can hit our annual budgetary needs. However, our volunteers are also critical to our success. Without their hands on hammers, paint brushes and saws, all the money in the world wouldn't get our families home. So, every now and then, it is good to look at the monetary value of these donations of time and talent to further underline how critical our volunteers are to our organization. In April, Independent Sector, the national membership organization that sets the value of volunteer

time, announced that the latest value of a volunteer hour is \$24.69 – up 2.2 percent from the previous year. So far in 2018, we have had over 8,000 hours of volunteer help in building alone, which translates into almost \$198,000 worth of donated labor. This figure doesn't include our excellent non-construction volunteers, board and committee members, who also donate their time and talent throughout the year. Adding those wonderful souls' over 2,000 hours to the mix and our volunteers have donated \$246,900 worth of work! That is a pretty



substantial figure that also has, over the years, translated into nearly 100 Iron Range families that are now living in simple and decent homes they can afford. That is almost 100 more families in our communities that have achieved strength, stability and self-reliance through shelter, thereby making our communities stronger as well. TOGETHER, we are working toward our vision of a world where EVERYONE has a decent place to live. We and all of our partner families thank you! And we all wish you all the blessings of the season. MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Susan Garrett
Community Relations Manager



A Thankful Heart for a Home, Christmas and Family

"I'll be home for Christmas" is one of my favorite holiday songs. Even though I'm all grown up and have a family of my own, I love going "home" for Christmas to spend time with family, eat too many of my Auntie Linda's cut-out cookies and watch in wonder as presents are opened. For our partner families whether they will be in their new home this Christmas or next, being home for Christmas takes on a whole new meaning. For some this home may be their first real home bringing much needed stability to their lives, more space for their children and hope for the future. For others, having enough room to host family dinners for extended family is something they hope to do.

Let me introduce to our current partner families, starting with the top left Christmas ornament and going counter-clockwise, Dajuan, Damari and Kristine Edstrom (Biwabik), Aubrey, Austin, Crystal and Aiden Linn (Virginia), Ariella and Amelia Moschler (Virginia), Kayde, James, Michaela, Dimitri, Kyrstyn and Ayda Pierce (Virginia), Tailyn and Tabbitha Erickson (Chisholm), Kelsey, Zoe, Reggie, Isaiah, Emma, Ezra and Aurea Ducote (Hibbing) and Jeff and Linda Patterson with Grandchildren (Hibbing). In 2019 we are also partnering with the following families: Ethan Stone, Brittney Hunter and their girl's Audriana and Helena (Virginia); Naomi and Kyrie Stark (Eveleth) and Amber and Austin Strand (Eveleth). We are so excited to report that this makes 94 families served since 1995!

Amelia and Ariella's home has just been completed and they will spend this Christmas in their new home. When asked how Christmas would be different this year, Amelia said, "The thought of spending Christmas in my very own home is indescribable. My daughter is very excited." They look forward to baking cookies and setting up the tree with lights.

The holiday season also provides time to reflect over the past year and think about what we are thankful for. Tabbitha and Tailyn are thankful for the opportunity to build in Chisholm and host holiday gatherings next year. The Linn family are also thankful for this opportunity and look forward to having their own home where all family members have their own space. The Ducote family is so thankful for all the volunteers that have worked on their home. Kelsey says, "Every time I stop by the house, someone is there working. So many people have volunteered to work on our home."

We asked our families if they could say or wish our volunteers and donors something this Christmas, what would it be. Here are some of their responses:

"I wish everyone a blessed Christmas, one that is more blessed than they have blessed me and many others." - The Stark Family

"I hope this year is filled with joy and thanks for the hard work everyone has been doing." - The Erickson Family

"Merry Christmas and thank you for everything that you do for our families. It doesn't go unnoticed and is greatly appreciated." - The Linn Family

"We would like to wish everyone a very safe and wonderful holiday season. I am so very thankful for everyone who has helped make this happen for my daughter and myself." -The Moschler Family

"My wish is that everyone would have people in their lives that are as kind and loving as our Habitat volunteers!" The Ducote Family

From our families to yours, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Marnie Maki, Family Services Manager

