



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Columbia County Habitat Announces New Building Projects and Seeks Applicants for First-time Homeownership Opportunities

MARCH 30, 2023 - HUDSON, NY - Columbia County Habitat for Humanity is proud to announce that its next building project will take place in the Village of Philmont with an expected groundbreaking this Spring. This project will consist of building two houses concurrently on separate but adjoining lots on Eagle Street. These houses will be the 26th and 27th built or rehabilitated over the last 30 years by Columbia County Habitat.

"After a pause in new building due to the pandemic, we are excited to be bringing new homeownership opportunities to Columbia County and the Village of Philmont," says Al Bellenchia, Executive Director and Chief Executive who is marking his second-year anniversary with the organization. "Coming on board during the pandemic and navigating all the restrictions in place was a challenge in itself. Evolving an organization for a successful reboot is familiar territory for me and I am grateful for our committed board members, staff and volunteers who helped focus our vision for the future."

Columbia County Habitat is celebrating its 30th Anniversary in 2023 and has expanded its commitment to partnering with hard-working local families in achieving the dream of first-time homeownership. Habitat for Humanity gives a "hand up" to applicants who qualify for a subsidized home and demonstrate a need for more adequate shelter. Partner families commit to giving 250 to 300 hours of "sweat equity" in the building of their own homes, on other building and repair projects, and in the ReStore.

"We are excited to partner with the Village of Philmont, and see great potential in a place where more than half the residents are renters, many of whom live in substandard housing or are cost-burdened by soaring lease prices," continued Bellenchia. "We can see the potential to offer many other opportunities for infilling in this community...and possibly an opportunity for a small development of Habitat homes."

Philmont Mayor Brian Johnson says, "All of us on the Village Board are excited for Columbia County Habitat to begin work on the two homes on Eagle Street and about future collaborative projects to improve local housing opportunities in the Village of Philmont. We're impressed with Habitat as an organization and their vision for supporting communities like ours, and we look forward to a long and productive relationship."

The Habitat Application Process

The Family Selection process is now open and applications are being accepted for the new Philmont houses as well as other upcoming build projects yet to be announced. Applications can be obtained via mail by calling 518-828-0892 or emailing familyselection@columbiacountyhabitat.org. Applications may also be requested and/or downloaded at columbiacountyhabitat.org/own-a-home.

Potential partner families are selected based on three criteria:

1. The need for housing: existing housing conditions are inadequate, unsafe, expensive or a combination of factors;
2. An ability to obtain a third-party mortgage that will not exceed 30% of an applicant's gross monthly income, and
3. A willingness to partner with Habitat in fulfilling the "sweat equity" and other provisions of the partnership agreement with CCHFH.

Full details are available at columbiacountyhabitat.org/own-a-home.

Community-Supported Construction

Earlier this year, Columbia County Habitat for Humanity published its Vision 2025 - a framework for future development by building community together. Vision 2025 is a strategic development plan designed to serve more Columbia County families in more ways by increasing the frequency of homebuilding, assisting existing homeowners in need with critical safety repairs, and advocating at the local, state and federal level for policies and funding that support increased affordable homeownership options.

Columbia County Habitat is actively seeking partnerships with local municipalities and area businesses who recognize the need for, and the value of, more affordable homeownership options in their communities.

"Basic, sustainable, and affordable homes must be prioritized to rebuild the vitality of Columbia County. Smaller-scale construction projects that support – not overrun – communities can be created to fit within the fabric of what currently exists," says Bellenchia. "In addition to our individual home projects, we are seeking a land parcel to build multiple homes on half-acre lots for more working-class families in Columbia County. Without a significant increase in our affordable housing stock, our children will continue to leave and businesses will struggle to find employees."

Volunteers Needed!

Local businesses and organizations are encouraged to connect and volunteer with Habitat. Columbia County Habitat provides excellent team building opportunities and is scheduling now for Spring and Summer projects. For more information on Habitat for Humanity and its projects and programs in Columbia County, go to www.columbiacountyhabitat.org or call 518-828-0892.

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