



# THE DOORWAY

*building homes, communities and hope*

**SUMMER 2018**

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## The American Dream



We all have dreams of different sizes. Zulfa's dream, was that of a young Ethiopian girl moving to America to grow up and live a better life. So, she and her younger brother stepped foot in American in 1991.

Immediately she began to create goals and plan her life. She wanted to go to school and earn a degree in college. She wanted a vehicle of her own. And she wanted to get married, have children and "live happily ever after, like in the fairy tales," Zulfa said. It didn't take long for her to find out, nothing is really easy.

She did get married and they had three children, but that ended in divorce. In 2008, Zulfa moved back to Ethiopia with her children, in order to be closer to family. As Zulfa watched her sons grow up in Ethiopia, her original dreams resurfaced and she soon realized her children needed a better education. This left her with two choices. Stay near family with the education they had, or take them back to America and give them the education she originally dreamt for herself. Zulfa made the decision to move back to America, giving up so much to do so.

She has worked hard to give her boys everything she can, but most importantly, a future for all of them. Since returning, she has earned a degree in marketing and currently works for Gwinnett County Schools as a bus driver. She was able to apply for a Gwinnett Habitat home and was chosen to receive one. And she knows the best is yet to come.

"I'm so honored and privileged to work on my own house hand in hand with so many generous and loving people that Allah created in this world. I have no other words to say than may Allah pay them back the good deeds they're doing for people like me by million folds. Sweating to build the house which my family and I am going to live in, is an awesome feeling which is hard to describe with words. I have learned a lot with in this short period of time and met incredible people. My house has sentimental values because it's built by my me, my son, family, friends that I knew and didn't know."

Zulfa is currently helping build her home in Duluth. She is excited about owning her own home and having a stable place to raise her family. 🏠



## Greetings From Your Lawrenceville ReStore

Summer is heating up! The time has come for many of us to begin those projects we have been putting off all year. Gwinnett ReStore offers items and bargains for your projects or renovations, never knowing what treasures or unique items you will find with each visit. But whether you are planning an upgrade to your kitchen, redoing your bathroom or have an outside project planned, your local Habitat for Humanity ReStore is a great place to start any project! We always have a wide selection of building materials including tile, cabinets, sinks and more.

Or, come in and be inspired by our home décor and furniture departments! Whether you are looking to add artwork to your walls or need of a larger table and chair set, you never know what treasures or unique items you will find with each visit!

To donate your gently used items, please give us a call on our donation hotline at 770-962-4200, or schedule your free pickup online at: <http://suburbanatlantarestores.org/donate>.

We want you to know how grateful we are for your continued support. As a donor, shopper and volunteer, you help Habitat for Humanity build homes and hope for families right here in Gwinnett County.

Thank you,

Paul Ingbritsen {ReStore Manager}  
+ The staff & volunteers at Gwinnett ReStore  
2100 Riverside Pkwy, Lawrenceville GA 30043

## A Typical ABWK Client

Occasionally, people ask for descriptions regarding the type and number of clients served by A Brush With Kindness, ABWK. While there is a count for the number of elderly clients served (nearly 80%), and the number of families versus single individuals (75% versus 25%), statistics do not adequately describe a typical ABWK client.

For example, there is not a good statistical category for the client who lost her husband a few months ago to suicide. She had been a stay-at-home mom for their entire married life helping to raise the children. With her youngest now in college, this individual had a house in disarray due to her late husband's tendency to start a project, like painting one room with 5-6 brush strokes on one wall, and then changing to another project like painting one section of trim in another room. Helping this individual requires as much planning for the emotional support as it did in identifying a scope of work. A number or a category cannot explain what needs to be done in helping this individual.

Then there is the client who was forced to give up her job to care for her family. She has an adult son with disabilities that require close supervision and she has little time, energy, or resources for routine home maintenance. In the past few months, she also has started to care for her older brother who suffers from early onset dementia. While ABWK gathers information on clients with someone disabled in the home, a statistical category for disabilities cannot portray the situation. There is nothing typical about our clients with special needs and a number in the category for "disabled" does not help in describing a typical client either.

We recently started a project for a disabled veteran. He and his late wife had been injured in a car accident several years ago leaving them both in wheelchairs. Many years ago, some kind and caring volunteers had built two ramps into his house to allow his access to his driveway and also to his yard. But over the years, the ramps had deteriorated and needed considerable repair. On his limited income, many needed repairs were overlooked and routine home maintenance was postponed until some neighbors became concerned about the quality of his life. Elderly, disabled, and veteran - his situation appears in three categories, but the numbers do not tell his story.

**The only typical thing about an ABWK client is that they need help maintaining the home that they own.**

And then there is the woman who has lived in her home for nearly forty years. She raised her children in the home and even assisted with foster children. While she lives off her social security, her house frequently becomes the home for her children and grandchildren as they experience family issues and job layoffs. The number of people living in her house has changed on more than one occasion and has ranged from two to nine. Despite her own issues with home repair, her house is the only place for her family when they are in need.

Hip replacement, kidney transplant, knee replacement, heart attack, cancer, diabetes, glaucoma, asthma, these are only a few of the health issues mentioned by ABWK clients. These clients are also single, divorced, widowed, married, retired, unemployed, disabled, working. The only typical thing about an ABWK client is that they need help maintaining the home that they own. 🏠

## Jan Hadden leaves legacy on Family Selection Committee



Members of the Gwinnett Habitat staff and Homeowner Selection Committee said a bittersweet goodbye last month to one of our long-term volunteers, Jan Hadden. For 14 years Jan has been involved in the homeowner selection process and had served as Committee Chair until 2016.

In a final note of appreciation, Hadden shared, "Saying goodbye to Gwinnett Habitat is very bittersweet for me. It means leaving what has been the best volunteer work I have ever done, but it also means a new home on Lake Hartwell and the peace and quiet of lake living!"

She continued, "The Family Selection Committee has been my "spot" for 14 years. Helping to find families we can give "a hand up" is a special challenge for the committee. So many of them have incredible stories. It is important to find the right balance with need, ability to pay and willingness to partner. The committee members work very hard to make it happen. The respect I have for these people, who have also done this for years, is immense. If you are looking for your volunteer "spot", I am certain you will love it as much as I have. I am hoping to become involved in Hart County Habitat as soon as I get settled. Thanks to everyone past and present at Gwinnett Habitat. I will miss you. Thanks for the ride!"

We will surely miss Jan and we wish her the best. May God Bless. 🏠

## Help Us Find Adequate Land and Properties!

As Gwinnett County continues to grow, acquiring land for Gwinnett Habitat's home projects is becoming more challenging. If you are aware of raw land for sale, or houses for sale that are in need of repair, renovation or demolition, we would love to hear from you!

### We are looking for RAW LAND that:

- Is a buildable lot for a 1,200-1,500 square foot house
- Cost under \$40,000 (20% appraised home value)
- Could be donated (donor will receive a letter of donation for tax purposes)

### We are looking for HOUSES to rehab or demo that:

- Cost under \$80,000
- Are salvaged due to storm damage/fire, foreclosed or are HUD properties
- Could be donated (donor will receive a letter of donation for tax purposes)

If you know or are aware of such properties or would like to speak to us about the sale or donation of your property, please contact our Executive Director, Brent Bohanan, at (770) 826-4638 or [bbohanan@habitatgwinnett.org](mailto:bbohanan@habitatgwinnett.org).

*Thank you for your support and for helping us to create affordable housing in Gwinnett County.*





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## Donate, Volunteer, Advocate

Become a HopeBuilder and help us meet the needs in Gwinnett County.

- Make a donation to Gwinnett Habitat
- Volunteer on one of our build sites
- Be an advocate: Share the Habitat story with others and help raise awareness

For more information, visit  
[www.habitatgwinnett.org](http://www.habitatgwinnett.org)  
or call 770-931-8080.



Gwinnett  
**Habitat**  
for Humanity®

### Contact Us:

P.O. Box 870408  
Stone Mountain, GA 30087

Office: 770-931-8080

Email: [info@HabitatGwinnett.org](mailto:info@HabitatGwinnett.org)

Web: [www.HabitatGwinnett.org](http://www.HabitatGwinnett.org)

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## Executive Director's Corner

The weather was great, the food was tasty, the attendance was awesome and the event was an outstanding way to mark our 30th anniversary. On April 19th, over 200 people attended our 30th Anniversary Celebration at our current construction worksite in Duluth. Some of the highlights included a Gwinnett County proclamation declaring April 19th as Gwinnett Habitat for Humanity Day, comments by two Mayors and our founder Jan Kennedy, special awards presented to sponsors of 6 or more homes, and touching stories shared by three of our homeowners: Van, NyShawn and Leanne.

One special gift shared with all our guests was our 30th Anniversary Memory Book. I am so excited about this memory book because for the first time ever, the entire history of Gwinnett Habitat for Humanity is at our fingertips. It is full of memories, milestones, pictures, stories and more, clearly illustrating our impact on our community over the last 30 years. If you did not attend our event, we would love for you to stop by our office and pick up a copy. This book is not only a great keepsake, it is truly priceless.

We also shared the official launch of our *Better Homes, Brighter Futures* campaign. The best way to honor our past accomplishments is to plan for the future. Therefore, recognizing the critical need for affordable housing and home repairs, we are committed to doubling the number of families helped in the next three years. This will require the creation of a land bank, increased office space and staff, the addition of a neighborhood revitalization program, and the establishment of an endowment. More information to follow soon.

I want to thank our Host Committee, Planning Committee, Board, staff and all the volunteers that help to make our 30th Anniversary Celebration Event a big success! I hope you are proud of our last 30 years and look forward to our next 30 years! God bless. 🏠

**Brent S. Bohanan** - Executive Director