

SUMMER 2015

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Strengthening Communities – Changing Lives

Gwinnett Habitat for Humanity & Thrivent Financial

What do you say about a company that helps their customers become good stewards of their finances while helping them grow their money and also live generously? Two words that come to mind are: awesome and inspiring.

Well, Thrivent Financial is that company. What most people don't know is that Thrivent Financial was founded more than 100 years ago to help Lutheran immigrants find a path to greater economic independence. Thrivent is a membership organization of Christians that helps families and individuals throughout the United States be wise with their money and live generously.

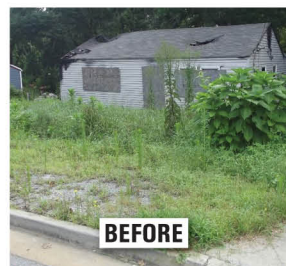
Thrivent believes that all we have is a gift from God and that generosity is an expression of faith. Thrivent supports this message by having contributed \$54.9 million dollars in grant funds in 2014 in the US and overseas.

Right here in Gwinnett County, Thrivent Financial is busy at work helping Gwinnett Habitat for Humanity with “*Strengthening Communities and Changing Lives.*” This theme is at the core of Thrivent Financial's mission and reflects one of their core values of providing opportunities to demonstrate generosity where one lives, works and worships.

Through the strong partnership Thrivent has developed with Gwinnett Habitat for Humanity, it brings its financial, volunteer and advocacy resources to help provide and build affordable housing and construction in Gwinnett County to aid low income families in need of affordable housing. Thrivent Builds with Habitat for Humanity, now in its 10th year nationally, is the name of this impactful partnership.



Morgan Family home dedication. Left to right: Brent Bohanan, Gwinnett Habitat Executive Director, Don Goldsmith, Thrivent Financial Homeowner Shauna Morgan and Haley Morgan.



Gwinnett Habitat Impact at work - *Improving neighborhoods, impacting the lives of low income families.*

Don Goldsmith works for Thrivent Financial and is a new board member on Gwinnett Habitat's Board of Directors. When asked his thoughts about getting families out of poverty through homeownership, Don stated, “*I have personally seen what a difference it makes to own a home versus being a renter. It's a whole different level of care and responsibility you show toward your home, it's a difference in your pride of ownership. I am a strong supporter of Gwinnett Habitat giving a hand up, not a hand out. And I find the way that Habitat goes about addressing the issue of substandard housing and affordable housing both honorable and rewarding.*” ~ *continued* ▶



Greetings from Your Habitat for Humanity ReStore

Summer is here! The time has come for many of us to begin those projects we have been putting off all winter.

You may be planning an upgrade of your kitchen or buying new furniture for your dining or family room.

We would love to have the gently used items you will be replacing. We are just a phone call away. Please give us a call on our “**Donation Hotline**” number **770-962-4200** to schedule your **free pickup**.

Your **ReStore** is also a wonderful place to find some great items and bargains for your projects or renovations. You never know what treasures and unique items you’ll find.

We always want you to know how grateful we are for your continued support. As a donor, shopper or volunteer you are helping Habitat build homes and hope for family’s right here in our community and around the world. We could not continue to change lives without YOU.

We pray Our Lord will bless you abundantly for your kindness and generosity.

With deepest gratitude,

Charlene Rogers
ReStore Manager

www.GwinnettHabitat.org

(continued from page 1) ~ **Strengthening Communities – Changing Lives**

Gwinnett Habitat for Humanity has been creating and building affordable housing throughout Gwinnett County for over 27 years now and has built 126 single family homes to date. It recognizes the importance of having committed corporate involvement from Gwinnett County’s business community and the impact these valuable business partnerships have in helping to improve the lives of low-income families and children. Also, these recipient families devote 250 hours to work alongside corporate sponsors to build their own home...no hand out’s but a real hand of hope up with bricks and mortar.

Gwinnett County is a large county with a sizable population and a broad mix of races, cultures, and of varied socio-economic means. With this urban growth is a need for an overall plan that addresses the issues of low-income housing that the local government cannot by itself handle on its own. With Gwinnett Habitat for Humanity, we have an experienced and caring organization that is pro-actively addressing and providing affordable housing solutions. And it is effectively using a collaborative community approach that involves individuals, donors, churches and corporate sponsors to help fulfill its mission to build homes, communities and hope in Gwinnett County.

As a matter of fact, several homeownership studies have concluded that public efforts to increase access to individual homeownership have been found to have greater impacts among low-income households than among higher-income households. Furthermore, facilitating homeownership among low-income households has been shown to have a greater social return on investment and an overall positive ripple effect in in the city/county/community where these households live. Children also tend to do better in school. (*Journal of Housing Research, Volume 14, Issue 1*).

Corporate responsibility in philanthropic community efforts do work and do make a difference. It is such involvement like the one built between Thrivent Financial and Gwinnett Habitat that leaves a physical impact in the broader economic and housing activity of Gwinnett County. It also leaves an indelible and intangible impact in the lives of hard working low-income families seeking decent, safe and affordable housing, and that also enhances the quality of life for children. It also shows other companies thinking of moving to Gwinnett County that our local businesses believes in its community and in helping others by doing good in its own back yard.

To learn more about becoming a Habitat church or business sponsor, please call the Gwinnett Habitat for Humanity office at 770-931-8080, ext. 15.

What’s it Like Being a Thrivent Volunteer?

“Thrivent has been a blessing for Gwinnett Habitat and for me as a member of Christ the Lord Lutheran Church. The Thrivent/GHFH partnership began around the same time as my family first became members of Christ the Lord. Having been a volunteer with Gwinnett Habitat since 2000, I was anxious to get my new church active (or reactivated) with the affiliate. The partnership has resulted in a better and more stable life for a number of Gwinnett County families and has provided a wonderful outreach opportunity for hundreds of volunteers and all the churches involved.” ~Rick Damato





Shauna and daughter Haley hammer the first nail on their new Norcross home.

Dreams Do Come True Meet the Morgan Family

Shauna Morgan longs to set an example for her daughter, Haley, about being independent and able to provide for herself. What better way to set that example than by becoming a homeowner.

Home ownership has literally been a dream come true for this family. “It was always my dream and goal to own a home and be truly independent. As a homeowner, I have experienced a sense of pride in my property and neighborhood that I could never quite feel as a renter.” Shauna acknowledges that,

as a renter, each time she relocated her family she felt a sense of instability, especially for Haley.

At the time of their acceptance into our program, Haley was attending Peachtree Elementary School’s gifted program. Haley is now in the 6th grade and is on the honor roll at Ivy Preparatory Academy in Norcross. As a private sector reporter with an information technology company, Shauna works hard to ensure she can reach her next goal—establishing a savings account for Haley’s college education.

Shauna expressed her sincere gratitude to the sponsors, volunteers and friends that were involved in the homebuilding process. *“I wanted stability for my family and now we feel grounded and settled, which is completely priceless. I can’t say “Thank You” enough to all of the people that played a part in getting us to where we are today. Gwinnett Habitat for Humanity has helped me to make it all come to fruition. Yes, dreams do come true.”* ~Shauna

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’d 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 \$25,000 (20% of appraised home value)
- ✓ could be donated (donor will receive a letter of donation for tax purposes)
- ✓ are salvaged due to storm damage/fire, foreclosed or are HUD properties

We are looking for HOUSES to rehab or demo that:

- ✓ cost under \$60,000
- ✓ 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.

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



Thank you for Investing in Gwinnett Habitat!

To our donors, volunteers and corporate sponsors: thank you for making the work of Gwinnett Habitat possible every day. We are so grateful for your partnership with this ministry. Your financial support is critical to our success and research shows that for every dollar spent on prevention, a minimum of \$7 is saved on intervention.

Your generous donations make an incredible difference by helping:

- Give low-income, hard-working families a real chance to own a decent place to live with dignity
- Create healthier environments for low-income children to grow and thrive in
- Alleviate homelessness and poverty in our community
- Provide community and neighborhood revitalization and preservation in areas that were once bleak and dilapidated eyesores

Thank you for making these efforts possible!

Did You Know?

A full-time job (or two) might not be enough for a family to afford a decent place to live.

Virtually nowhere in the U.S. can a full-time minimum-wage employee afford a one-bedroom apartment. According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, even two such jobs won’t rent a two-bedroom apartment in 29 states and the District of Columbia. (In California, three won’t. In Hawaii, four.)

~ From Seven Things You Should Know About Poverty And Housing

www.GwinnettHabitat.org



Executive Director's Corner

One of the exciting parts of providing new housing for deserving families is watching the progress of the home construction. We currently have two homes that are dried-in and beginning the installation of siding and drywall. I invite you to visit our website to view pictures of our progress. As I survey our progress, I can envision the family enjoying their future home with family dinners, celebrating holidays and living life together in a safe and affordable place to call home. That is why Habitat exists

and why your friendship and support is so important.

Over 125 low-income families in Gwinnett County have experienced the benefits of homeownership because of our community support from people like you. Our Build Sponsors, like Thrivent Financial (highlighted on page 1-2), are crucial to the success of our mission. As such, I would like to thank all of our business sponsors, church supporters and community donors for their support that helps us bring affordable housing to those who need it most. If you know a local business or faith community that would like to partner with us, please have them contact our office. I would love to speak with them about this wonderful opportunity.

Thank you for all you do to support our mission. Because of you, the Abubaker and Jones families will move into their new homes this summer and begin a new chapter in their lives that is filled with opportunities and hope. God bless you and THANK YOU for your continued support.

Brent S. Bohanan ~ Executive Director



Contact Us:

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Stone Mountain, GA 30087

Office: 770-931-8080

Email: info@HabitatGwinnett.org

Please visit us at:

www.GwinnettHabitat.org

Facebook.com/GwinnettHabitat

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.GwinnettHabitat.org or call 770-931-8080.

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