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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 or call 770-931-8080.



Contact Us:
P.O. Box 870408
Stone Mountain, GA 30087

Office: 770-931-8080
Email: info@HabitatGwinnett.org
Web: www.HabitatGwinnett.org

Please visit us on:

- Facebook: [HabitatGwinnett](https://www.facebook.com/HabitatGwinnett)**
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Executive Director's Corner

Did you know that in 1985 the United Nations declared the first Monday in October as World Habitat Day? Habitat for Humanity participates in this international event because we know that adequate shelter is critical to improve opportunities, health and education. Habitat for Humanity's tried and tested partnership approach helps families acquire decent homes they can afford, as a hand up, not a handout. Since 1976, Habitat has helped more than 6.8 million people improve their living situations in nearly 1,400 communities across the U.S. and in over 70 countries worldwide.

In celebration of World Habitat Day, Gwinnett Habitat partnered with Gwinnett Great Days of Service on October 21st and 22nd, to address specific housing needs in the county with our A Brush with Kindness repair program. A group of volunteers from Sage (HR solutions) and WEG Electric completed a critical service project for a homeowner in our community so that she could continue to live in a safe, decent home for years to come. The homeowner is disabled due to health issues and unable to maintain her home. This led to a visit by the Gwinnett County Quality of Life Unit. Her home received a much needed facelift as the volunteers painted the entire exterior of her home allowing her to stay in her home and helping to raise her spirits. This is a clear demonstration of how Gwinnett Habitat is putting God's love into action every day by working to eliminate housing poverty and improving the lives of low income families and children in Gwinnett County by providing a brighter future.

Would you like an easy way to support our mission? Then support our Silver70 bike ride happening in Janaury. It is easy! Just make a donation per mile of your choice and you will be helping us to reach our goal of \$20,000 and to serve more families right here in Gwinnett County. Thank you for doing your part. God bless you!

Brent S. Bohanan - Executive Director



WINTER 2016

FOUNDED 1988

Executive Director
Brent Bohanan

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THE DOORWAY

building homes, communities and hope

Full Circle: The Habitat for Humanity Journey of Leanne DeFrancisco

Guest Writer: Gwinnett ReStore



Photo: Gena Ford of Gateway Photoartistry

Leanne DeFrancisco learned about Habitat for Humanity from a friend of the family 18 years ago after coming to Atlanta to be closer to family, and leaving a very difficult personal situation in Florida behind.

Determined to make a new life for herself and two daughters, she contacted the Habitat Affiliate in Gwinnett County to learn more about their home ownership program and attended one of their informational meetings and submitted her application to become a Habitat home owner.

Leanne was not accepted on her first attempt. Although she was disappointed, she did not give up and used the denial reasons as a basis to remedy the matters that needed work, then resubmitted her application the following year. Believing in the mission and vision of Habitat for Humanity's homeowner partnership and focused on becoming a part of the program, Leanne never lost hope in the future she knew a home would provide for her and her daughters. She was overjoyed to be accepted on the second attempt.

While spending many hours helping other families construct their homes over the next year, Leanne started to discover the partnership with Habitat for Humanity was becoming foundational in developing life skills and community relationships. She also realized, over time, the equity she could build in her home might provide her the resources she would need to help send her daughters to college.

With the confidence gained from classes the Gwinnett Affiliate held for new homeowners and a vision in mind for her children's future, Leanne decided to return to school while working and serving her sweat-equity hours. She earned credentialing of Graduate Gemologist from the Gemological Institute of America and launched a career in the jewelry industry.

The house, the career, and a bright future were so close. Finally, the following year good news came that construction would actually begin on the house that would become the home she would share and cherish with her daughters.

The relationships Leanne developed with the people who helped build her home were life changing. She had never met so many wonderful and kind people so willing to help and she treasures those relationships to this very day.

One of the financial sponsors for her home was a very successful car dealer in the community. His wife hosted a housewarming party for Leanne. This woman opened her lovely home and invited her friends to help Leanne furnish her home. Spending time with those kind and loving women inspired Leanne in ways she had never expected. Her Habitat for Humanity Family Support couple had a 60th birthday party for the husband where all of the gifts showered Leanne and her children with just about everything needed to set up house from toolkits and cleaning supplies to bedding. The encouragement and help of so many wonderful volunteers and sponsors over the four years it took to complete her home gave Leanne a deep sense of gratitude and pride.

All of these blessings and experiences gave Leanne courage and self-confidence she had never had before and

Continued on pg. 3

Habitat for Humanity® ReStore®

Greetings From Your Habitat For Humanity ReStore

Happy New Year To You All!!

We hope you and your family had a truly wonderful Christmas season. This holiday we thought a lot about you and how kind and generous you have been to us in 2016.

Your donations allowed us to stock our store with great inventory we were able to sell at prices well below retail. The funds we raised when you shopped at the ReStore helped us change lives, build homes and hope in our local community and around the world.

Your work as a volunteer at the Restore allowed us to price and merchandise our inventory. The care and assistance you shared with our customers created an experience that was truly memorable. You gave them a reason to tell their friends and family about our ReStore.

We begin 2017 with more excitement and enthusiasm than ever before. Our goal is to increase donations, shoppers and volunteers to levels we have never experienced. With these resources will raise more funds to serve more families building strength, stability and self-reliance.

We thank you, in advance, for the support we know you will provide for us and those we serve.

Warmest Regards,

Paul Ingbritsen
Lawrenceville ReStore Manager

Lula Jobir: Our Newest Home



“Lula and her son share the bedroom, and her mother sleeps in the living room.”

Lula currently lives with her 65-year old mother, Worknesh and 10-year old son, Mussab in her sister's apartment. Lula and her son share the bedroom, and her mother sleeps in the living room. Income constraints prevent them from being able to afford a larger apartment. Lula came to United States 16 years ago as an Ethiopian immigrant seeking asylum from the country's harsh politics, and gained her U.S. Citizenship in 2011. Lula is a single parent who works as Certified Animal Care Tech with the Yerkes Primate Center at Emory University. Prior to this job, she worked as a retail associate with J.C. Penney.

Although she has been an American Citizen for over 5 years, Lula faced adversities being a single mother in a new country. Her living conditions are not ideal; Lula, her son and her mother all share a 2-bedroom apartment with Lula's sister, in an unsafe neighborhood. Every month residents get notification from the apartment leasing office about crimes that occurred in the neighborhood during the month.

Lula is working hard to establish a decent, affordable home for her family – especially so her son and mother can live under more suitable arrangements. Having a home would be a benefit for the family especially with a young teenage son. Her son Mussab is 11 years old he enjoys playing basketball and soccer. He is really excited about having 1 thing her never had - his own room.

This is Lula's second attempt to own a Habitat house. For many years she was in a relatively lower paying, part-time job in retail, and in 2011 she did not qualify for the program. Lula didn't give up. In 2014 with a better paying job, she came back for a second chance and this time was chosen to get a Habitat home.

Lula proclaimed: "I am really truly blessed and humbled to be accepted by Habitat for Humanity. I felt Habitat has been a father figure who guided me gently through this housing process. I can't thank enough all the Habitat donors, crews, and volunteers that are making this possible." Lula is very excited and joyful to see her home transformed, and she also can't wait to see the look on her mother's face when she sees the house for the first time; her son is already imagining how to decorate his room.

Full Circle, continued from pg. 1

although they faced challenges in their journey, they never lost their faith in God and His goodness. Their hearts were so often filled with thanksgiving for the kindness and love they received from so many people.

In the years to come, there were many unforgettable milestones for this family as they lived in their home. One such story Leanne shared with tears in her eyes, of the first Christmas she could afford to buy presents to put under the tree for the kids because of the ability to work and live in a solid, affordable home with a good community. Leanne made a vow that when the time came she would pass forward the kindness and generosity she and her family had received.

Time has passed quickly it seems for this wonderful family. In the years to come, knowing that the house was a stabilizing and affordable footing for her family, Leanne raised her daughters and learned to make sound business decisions. Her daughters are grown up and beginning their journey into adulthood and Leanne paid off her 20 year mortgage in just 10 years. What a remarkable accomplishment that is.

Leanne's 18 year journey has come full circle. She is now, in fact, paying it forward by serving on the Board of Directors of the same Gwinnett Affiliate who helped build her home. Her personal knowledge and experience bring valuable insights to the Board in their decision making process.

She is passionately committed to providing other families the "hand up" and opportunities that can change their lives forever, empowering them to build strength, stability and self-reliance as she was taught by Habitat for Humanity: through hard work, service and volunteerism.

Leanne's story is an enduring testament to the generations of families that have been uplifted and supported in amazing ways by the grace of God and help of so many volunteers, sponsors and donors. These inspiring people have carried the mission of Habitat for Humanity in the hearts and on their shoulders over the last 40 years in our local communities and around the world.

We are so grateful Leanne shared her story with us all.

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 \$25,000 (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 \$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.

Gwinnett Habitat for Humanity®



Our new signature event, Silver 70, will take place on January 7, 2017. We thought a bike ride would be most appropriate to raise needed funds to help ensure that everyone has a decent place to call home. Since bike riding gear is considered casual dress and all our volunteers come in shorts or jeans and t-shirts to wield hammers and paint brushes, fill dumpsters, and use power tools, a casual event seemed just right.

Alice started riding her bike last year after a more than 30 year hiatus. Patty convinced her to get off the couch and get in shape. "You know, Alice, lots of people set a goal to ride the number of years they are old," said Patty. Well, not to be outdone by other folks goals and wanting to come up with a way to make more people aware of the need of affordable housing in Gwinnett County, Alice decided to ask people to support a 70 mile bike ride. No, she is not 70 yet but according to Alice, "70 sounded like a good number".

This year 4 donors will be riding the Silver Comet trail 70 miles. Perry Peiffer and Chuck Burseson will join Alice and Patty to raise operating funds that ensure affordable housing is available for our partner families.

Any donation to the Silver 70 will help ensure a stable home for more of our partner families.

Check out this link:
<https://give.habitatgwinnett.org/GwinnettHabitatforHumanity/Silver70>

Or use the enclosed envelope to help our partner families build strength, stability and self-reliance through shelter.