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Habitat for Humanity of Gaston County Gets Boost from Wells Fargo to Build More Affordable, Sustainable Homes and Communities

Wells Fargo contributes a grant and volunteers to support new home construction for local families

Belmont, N.C. (9/20/2023) - On September 15, Wells Fargo employees were on-site, with hammers and paintbrushes in hand, constructing sheds that accompany each new home in Dixon Village, Habitat for Humanity of Gaston County's new North Belmont community development. Partnering with Habitat Gaston, Wells Fargo is doing the work to address the challenges posed by Gaston County's lack of affordable housing.



Wells Fargo employees (in red) along with a future Habitat homeowner (Omar Montelongo, in gray) erect the first wall of a shed built for scratch that will accompany one of the new homes in Dixon Village.

Habitat for Humanity of Gaston County received a \$50,000 gift to Habitat Gaston's Home Sponsorship Program for the development of an innovative mixed-income neighborhood, Dixon Village. Twenty-eight high-quality, sustainably-built homes are being constructed, 1/3 of which will be Habitat partner families, 1/3 Hometown Heroes (educators, healthcare workers, and first responders), and 1/3 entry-level market-rate buyers. In addition to their generous grant, Wells Fargo employees volunteered to put on hard hats and help build the neighborhood board-by-board at a building event last Friday.

This event is a part of a Wells Fargo initiative called Welcome Home, whereby Wells Fargo employees across the country are working with local charities to make an impact on the

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company foundation's funding priority, housing affordability. Throughout the month of September, Wells Fargo employees will participate in volunteer events like this one in Gastonia.

"Wells Fargo is proud to continue our support of Habitat Gaston and the work they are doing to address affordable housing in our region," said Sally Dickson, District Branch Network Senior Manager for Wells Fargo in Gastonia and a member of the Habitat for Humanity of Gaston County board. "Our employees also embrace every opportunity to support Habitat Gaston through their volunteer work. Wells Fargo has committed significant philanthropic resources to develop solutions that increase the supply of affordable homes and support local families in realizing the dream of homeownership and opportunities for building wealth."

"The ability to buy a home with a mortgage that fits their income is key to a more prosperous and secure future for any family," says Christia Chappell, Director of Operations at Habitat for Humanity of Gaston County and host of the event. "Owning a home is the traditional basis for building generational wealth. They are helping to make a huge change for the better in these families' lives."



A Wells Fargo volunteer nails a window frame to a newly constructed shed.

Since 2010, Wells Fargo and the Wells Fargo Foundation have donated more than \$129 million to Habitat for Humanity International and local affiliates, including grant funding for new home construction and repairs, advocacy, neighborhood revitalization, supporting seniors, and other initiatives including the Jimmy & Rosalynn Carter Work Project, Veterans Build, and Advancing Black Homeownership.

In a short time, experienced handy-people on all sides turned the piles of lumber into two new sheds for the families that will call Dixon Village home. As they wrapped up the day, two of the future homeowners, Omar Montelongo and Brent Oakes, who were working alongside the Wells Fargo volunteers, shared their stories and how they came to Habitat Gaston to build a home of their own.

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Oakes, who is a skilled craftsman and wears his own tool belt, is a staple of volunteer build events. Montelongo told his story with the full family he brought along—his mother and grandparents included—in the audience.

Chappell summed up the event and Wells Fargo’s partnership, “What Wells Fargo has done is invest in the future of our community. The research shows that homeownership improves health, financial security, graduation rates, and much more. It improves generations to come. When you help people achieve these things, you are building a stronger future for your community. That helps everyone.”

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About Habitat for Humanity of Gaston County

Founded in 1988, Habitat for Humanity of Gaston County (Habitat Gaston) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and an affiliate of Habitat for Humanity International, a widely respected global brand. Habitat Gaston works with qualified, deserving families to help them realize the dream of owning their own home. Our organization provides affordable homeownership opportunities for low-to-moderate income families and individuals in Gaston County, building more than 120 homes since 1988. Learn more at habitatgaston.org.