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Contact:

Habitat for Humanity of Durham, NC
Jim Belanger, Interim CEO
Office: 919-682-0516 x105
jbelanger@durhamhabitat.org

Habitat for Humanity of Orange County, NC
Jennifer Player, President and CEO
Cell: 919-339-9444
jplayer@orangehabitat.org

Triangle area affiliates receive \$9.5M in transformational gifts from MacKenzie Scott

Local Habitat affiliates will use gift to address affordable housing shortage in Durham and Orange Counties

CHAPEL HILL and DURHAM, NC (March 22, 2022) — Durham Habitat, Orange Habitat and Habitat for Humanity International, along with 82 other U.S. Habitat affiliate organizations, recently received \$436 million in unrestricted giving from American author and philanthropist MacKenzie Scott. Collectively, the two Triangle affiliates received \$9.5 million dollars in funding, providing a remarkable investment that will serve to accelerate their locally-based affordable homeownership programs.

This transformational donation will substantially help further Habitat's vision of a world where everyone has equitable access to a safe, decent and affordable place to call home. Affiliate leadership and boards of directors are assessing how to best steward this generous gift. The money will advance the strategic priorities of each organization including advancing racial equity through homeownership. Of the funds, Durham Habitat received \$4.5 million and Orange Habitat received \$5 million in unrestricted funds.

The funding will provide critical resources for long-term future expansion in an environment where land costs are on the rise, affordable housing is in short supply, and demand for Habitat's services have never been higher. For Durham Habitat, this gift comes in the midst of an ambitious building project in East Durham, a partnership with the City of Durham and the Durham Housing Authority, as well as ongoing urgent home repair projects throughout Durham.

"This gift is a huge vote of confidence in Durham's mission from a remarkable philanthropist," said Durham Habitat's Interim CEO Jim Belanger. "We will work to honor the confidence that she has pledged in us on behalf of future generations of Durham Habitat homeowners and their families."

With the median home price in Chapel Hill exceeding \$525,000, the opportunity to purchase a home in Orange County is farther and farther out of reach for local families. In order to serve more families, Orange Habitat is increasing new home production from 12 to 20 homes per year over the next two years. This growth in capacity will enable the affiliate to build more communities like Weavers Grove, Habitat's new 32-acre mixed income community in Chapel Hill.

“The pandemic has exacerbated the housing crisis in Orange County. This incredible donation will allow Orange Habitat to sustainably scale our impact and look ahead to future building opportunities. It is my hope that this gift will be a major accelerator, allowing us to serve even more families and ensure our organization’s future for years to come with more innovative communities like Crescent Magnolia and Weavers Grove,” said Jennifer Player, Orange Habitat President and CEO.

Habitat International will use its \$25 million portion of the donation to prioritize advocacy and programmatic efforts designed to dismantle systemic racism in housing. Specifically, the donation will allow Habitat to advocate for policy proposals and legislation that enable millions of people to access affordable housing through its [Cost of Home](#) advocacy campaign; increase Black homeownership in the U.S. by targeting current systemic barriers through a new initiative that will launch this summer; and leverage innovative capital investments that service communities of color.

“Habitat works to break down barriers and bring people together — to tear down obstacles and build a world where everyone, no matter who we are or where we come from, has a decent place to live,” said Habitat for Humanity International CEO Jonathan Reckford. “This incredible gift helps make that work possible.”

Of the 82 other affiliates across the county receiving funding, seven are in North Carolina. For a full list of all Habitat organizations who received the gift, sorted by region and state, visit <https://www.habitat.org/mackenzie-scott-gift-affiliates>.

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About Habitat for Humanity of Durham

Founded in 1985, Habitat for Humanity of Durham has built, sold, and financed more than 450 homes in partnership with low-income Durham neighbors, providing stability and brighter futures for more than 1,000 Durham youth. Durham Habitat has repaired nearly 500 existing affordable homes so that Durham homeowners, many elderly, can age in place with dignity. Durham Habitat currently builds, sells, and finances 20+ homes a year, and repairs 90+ (non-Habitat) homes a year for owner-occupied, low-income neighbors. Habitat is a tangible platform that engages 7,000+ volunteers and partners each year, and provides hands-on exposure to affordable housing. For more information, please visit www.durhamhabitat.org.

About Habitat for Humanity of Orange County

Habitat for Humanity of Orange County has helped over 300 local families achieve and maintain homeownership and over 200 families repair existing homes in Orange County. Habitat homes are built through the use of volunteer labor and donations of money and materials. Qualified homebuyers complete 275 hours of sweat equity and purchase the home from Habitat through an affordable mortgage priced at less than 30% of family income. For more information, please visit www.orangehabitat.org.

About Habitat for Humanity International

Driven by the vision that everyone needs a decent place to live, Habitat for Humanity found its earliest inspirations as a grassroots movement on an interracial community farm in south Georgia. Since its founding in 1976, the Christian housing organization has grown to become a leading global nonprofit working in local communities across all 50 states in the U.S. and in more than 70 countries. Families and individuals in need of a hand up partner with Habitat for Humanity to build or improve a place they can call home. Habitat homeowners help build their own homes alongside volunteers and pay an affordable mortgage. Through financial support, volunteering or adding a voice to support affordable housing, everyone can help families achieve the strength, stability and self-reliance they need to build better lives for themselves. Through shelter, we empower. To learn more, visit habitat.org.