



"Smart" Homes

KRISTIN O'MALLEY, PRESIDENT & CEO



[Habitat for Humanity of Cape Cod](#) has a small staff and a mighty big goal: to build affordable homes on Cape Cod. They've done remarkably well. Over the past 30 years, they've built 127 homes throughout the Cape. By the end of this year, 430 people will live in a Habitat Home: 160 adults and 270 children. Thirty-four more homes are under construction or on the drawing board. Wow.

In the last column, [The Heart of the Matter](#), we shared [Karolyn's Story](#). Before getting the opportunity to help build her Habitat Home in 2001, Karolyn was part of our community's working poor, a large group of people who are paying more than 40% of their income on housing and child care. They are predominately young families and single-parent households. They work in stores and offices throughout the Cape and in the hospitality, healthcare, service, and tourism industries. They are a vital part of our community and our workforce, yet despite the security and stability of their income, they are often shut out of the local housing market entirely—rental or home ownership. To put things in perspective, a monthly rental on Cape Cod is typically \$1500-\$1800. The average monthly mortgage on a 3-bedroom Habitat Home is around \$700-\$750. Double wow.

What makes Habitat Homes affordable? Simply: donors fund them and volunteers build them. But, there's another super-smart component in the mix: the Habitat [ReStores](#).

The first ReStore opened in South Yarmouth on Whites Path about six years ago. It sells new and gently-used, donated furniture, appliances, building supplies, and home accessories at reasonable prices. Since then, it has generated \$3.5 million in sales and more than \$1.2 million in net profit. One-hundred-percent of that profit helps build new homes.

Earlier this year, we awarded Habitat an \$11,000 Strategic Focus Grant to support start-up costs for a second ReStore in Falmouth. Habitat also received \$2,500 from [The Falmouth Fund](#) of The Cape Cod Foundation, and when we shared the news with our donor-advised funders, the Lawrence Lynch Corp. Foundation for Charitable Giving Fund donated an additional \$1,000.



The funding for this initiative was easy for us to greenlight: it checked all the boxes on our value and vision list:

1. Supporting affordable housing is one of our top priorities.

2. The ReStore is a capacity-building project. We are strategically directing our discretionary funds to capacity-building projects because they have an immediate and long-term impact in the community. The ReStore will help Habitat reach the next level of financial maturity and stability. Habitat leaders project that the new Falmouth ReStore, which opened in early May, will be self-sufficient in 90 days and eventually generate about \$200,000 in

additional revenue annually, as does the South Yarmouth location. That revenue helps build homes.

3. We also actively support Youth Development. I can't think of a better way to support young people than to give them a safe, secure, affordable home.
4. We believe in replicating successful projects and programs.
5. Leveraging resources increases impact. Two other funds in our network donated to the ReStore initiative, powering up this project even more.
6. The ReStore initiative aligns with Habitat's mission. They're an affordable place for locals to shop; sales help build affordable homes. Makes sense.
7. The new ReStore created four jobs. We support projects that develop the Workforce.
8. There's a big, built-in recycling bonus here. Since inception, the Yarmouth ReStore has recycled 2,000 tons of goods, keeping them out of the landfill.

Habitat has built 127 homes on Cape Cod. Not just with nails and lumber. With smart-thinking. This year, they chose to replicate a great business model to strategically build their capacity. Down the road, they will identify other avenues for growth. As funders, we definitely need to ensure and track impact and outcomes, but we also need to trust that successful nonprofit organizations know how to scale their organizations. So, whether a nonprofit requests funding for additional staff, training, office equipment (or a second ReStore), we don't place restrictions on our support that may hinder their progress. Our job is to give them the resources and opportunity to do what they do best. It all comes down to partnership, and that partnership needs to be built on trust.

To learn more about Habitat for Humanity of Cape Cod, please [click here](#).

To learn more about the Foundation, please give me a call. We are diligently and deliberately working toward a common vision for large-scale change across the region. There are several capacity-building initiatives already in-place, and we will be rolling out new initiatives within the next few months. There's power in numbers. By working together, we can leverage resources that will help drive social change.

Kristin O'Malley
President and CEO

BE PART OF THE VISION

We are looking for Visionaries who want to empower us to drive social change intelligently, responsibly, and effectively throughout the Cape. You don't have to be billionaire, a millionaire or even a thousandaire! You don't have to donate a certain amount or make a multi-year commitment. You just need to be committed to change.

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