Habitat for Humanity of Clallam County partnership with INTERFOR

Collaboration Success Story:

The Habitat for Humanity International Affiliate Collaboration Task Force spoke with Colleen Robinson, Chief Executive Officer of Habitat for Humanity of Clallam County, about the affiliate's ongoing partnership with INTERFOR, a lumber product company, and how she leveraged this partnership to support the Habitat network.

Can you briefly share about the work of Habitat for Humanity of Clallam County and your impact in your community?

Habitat for Humanity of Clallam County is an intermediate-sized affiliate. We're hovering around 75,000 in our service area. We build two to three houses a year. We are finishing up a 14-home community project that began in 2006. And we have bought property and we are starting the infrastructure and development process to build a new 42-home community consisting of fourplex townhome units. We hope to have shovels in the ground in 2025!

Share a little about how the partnership between Habitat for Humanity of Clallam County and INTERFOR began. Tell us about the impact of the partnership between HFH of Clallam County and INTERFOR.

I was hired as community outreach coordinator for Habitat for Humanity of Clallam County back in 2015. One of the first things that I was tasked with by my executive director was to develop corporate partnerships. We don't have large corporations like Microsoft and Boeing here in Clallam County but we do have INTERFOR. So, we made a request to INTERFOR for a house-framing package that would provide the lumber for an entire Habitat home. The plant manager responded the framing package would not be possible, but made a $1,000 cash donation. So, time passed, and I became the executive director. About a year and a half into my tenure I found out through our local Economic Development Council that there

was a new plant manager at INTERFOR. And I thought, well, I'll go back and try again. So, I went back, got an appointment with the plant manager, and told him what we needed. And they said, yeah, we'd be happy to donate the lumber and they gave us the framing lumber for a Habitat home. We recognized INTERFOR's gift in all kinds of ways: yard signs, Facebook appreciation post, our newsletter, and shared at a chamber [of commerce] meeting. So, before we built our next house, we went back to INTERFOR to see if they would be interested in partnering again. And lo and behold, here we are this many years later, and they've provided framing lumber for the last eight houses that we have built.

INTERFOR's partnership has saved us around $15,000-$20,000 per home we have built. We send them a list of the materials we need, and they send them right out; it's amazing. The INTERFOR plant manager, and staff come to all the home dedications for homes they provide lumber. And their first question is always, "When do you need the lumber for the next house?"

Tell us about how you collaborated with HFHI to leverage your partnership with INTERFOR?

Last year I received a letter from the chief financial officer of INTERFOR that said that INTERFOR had encouraged [its] mills across the United States and Canada to find their local Habitat and to partner with them! I was so excited about the success of our partnership with INTERFOR and so I shared it with the chief development officer of HFHI at the time. It was incredible news and I wanted to see if this partnership could help more affiliates. I want to build and repair houses and support families here in Clallam County. But I also want to see the network succeed.

(Habitat for Humanity International partnered with INTERFOR to connect the corporate office with their local mills and communities across the country. Check out this video INTERFOR created about its experience with a local affiliate.)