Announcement of Retirement – Sue Ann Leighty, Executive Director

Habitat for Humanity of Salem County, NJ

Public Announcement: October 1, 2026
Retirement Effective: December 31, 2026

Issued by the Board of Directors of Habitat for Humanity of Salem County

The Board of Directors of Habitat for Humanity of Salem County announces the retirement of **Sue Ann Leighty**, who will conclude her nearly 17-year tenure as Executive Director on December 31, 2026.

Sue Ann began her service with Habitat for Humanity of Salem County on November 1, 2010. During her tenure, her leadership, creativity, and commitment to the Habitat mission have helped shape the affiliate's programs, partnerships, and impact throughout Salem County.

When Sue Ann began her tenure, one of her first priorities was strengthening the affiliate and establishing a foundation for the future. As she reflected in her own words, *"When I began, one of the first priorities was bringing the affiliate back into good standing and creating a stronger foundation for the future."* Under her leadership, Habitat completed **20 of the 52 homes built in Salem County**, expanded its reach into new communities, and developed lasting relationships with churches, civic organizations, businesses, volunteers, and community partners.

Sue Ann's contributions extend well beyond new home construction. She recognized that many Salem County residents needed assistance to remain safely in the homes they already had. That understanding helped lead to the creation and expansion of programs that have become an important part of Habitat's mission.

The Recyclable Ramp Program, inspired by a donated VA ramp, has grown to more than **70 ramps in use throughout Salem County**, helping seniors and individuals with disabilities remain safely and independently in their homes.

The Veterans Repair Corps brought critical home repairs to qualified veterans, strengthening Habitat's connection with those who served and bringing new staff and volunteers into the affiliate's mission.

Senior and Critical Home Repair Programs expanded Habitat's reach to dozens of families who needed health, safety, accessibility, and other critical improvements rather than a new home.

The 2020 Blitz Build was one of Sue Ann's most memorable experiences during her tenure. The project was nearly a year in the planning and was conducted in partnership with a church from Severna Park, Maryland, and its Woodworks program. Over ten days, nearly 200 youth and adult

volunteers came to Salem County to construct wall panels and major components for three Habitat homes—an extraordinary effort that brought remarkable energy and community spirit to the affiliate. Volunteers were housed in a gym supported by St. Gabriel's in Carneys Point and First Assembly of God, while another team prepared meals, snacks, and hospitality for the entire group. The church parking lot echoed with the sound of hammers throughout the week, and each evening ended with fellowship, culminating in a closing service and student talent show. As Sue Ann stated, it was *"exhausting, a little crazy and absolutely wonderful."*

Throughout her career with Habitat, Sue Ann's leadership has been rooted in people. Volunteers, families, churches, students, staff, businesses, and community partners were drawn to her passion for the mission and her belief in the power of community involvement. In her own words, *"Habitat has never simply been a staff doing a job. At its best, it has been people who believed strongly enough in the mission that they brought their families, friends, churches, Rotary clubs, businesses and communities along with them."*

Sue Ann's retirement marks the closure of a remarkable chapter in the history of Habitat for Humanity of Salem County. Her dedication and belief in the mission have helped establish programs and partnerships that will continue to benefit Salem County residents for years to come. Her legacy will not be measured solely by the number of homes built or programs created. It will also be reflected in the families who were able to remain safely in their homes, the volunteers who discovered the power of service, the partnerships that were formed, and the many people throughout Salem County who came together to advance the Habitat mission.

Looking Ahead

While we celebrate Sue Ann's remarkable tenure, the Board of Directors is equally focused on the future of Habitat for Humanity of Salem County.

The affiliate enters its next chapter with a strong foundation, a clear focus on its core mission, and opportunities ahead to expand its impact and the programs that directly serve families throughout Salem County.

With the continued support of dedicated volunteers, donors, community organizations, municipal partners, businesses, and Habitat supporters throughout Salem County, **the Board is confident that the affiliate has meaningful opportunities ahead and looks forward to building on the foundation established during Sue Ann's tenure.**

The Board of Directors and the entire Habitat for Humanity of Salem County community are deeply grateful to Sue Ann for nearly 17 years of dedicated service, leadership, and commitment.

We congratulate Sue Ann on her retirement and wish her every happiness and fulfillment in the years ahead. We thank her for the many ways she has strengthened Habitat for Humanity of Salem County and for the lasting mark she has made on the communities and families we serve.