

MEDIA CONTACT:

Morgan Brochetti, Marketing and Communications Manager
Habitat for Humanity of Pinellas County
Office: (727) 536-4755, ext. 203
mbrochetti@habitatpinellas.org



MEDIA ADVISORY:

Habitat Pinellas Celebrates Milestone of 500th Home Build

St. Petersburg, FL— On Monday, October 8th, Habitat for Humanity of Pinellas County will celebrate the momentous occasion of its 500th home build groundbreaking for a local, qualified family. With every new construction, Habitat Pinellas creates homeownership opportunities for families with the help of the community volunteers, corporate donors, civic organizations and county officials. The key sponsors of the 500th house, which will be providing a home for the Currie family in St. Petersburg, were primarily community individuals and family foundations as a result of peer-to-peer fundraising throughout Pinellas County. Having built its first home in the Midtown area of St. Petersburg, the 500th home build is an exciting milestone for the Pinellas affiliate.

“This marks a significant moment in our history, as well as another meaningful moment for a local family who will be gaining the opportunity to be homeowners,” said Mike Sutton, CEO of Habitat for Humanity of Pinellas County. “The significant increase in homes built is because of our sponsors, partners and volunteers who make it all possible, and together with them, the 500th house equates to equates 625,000 volunteers’ hours, 100,000 volunteers and \$63,000,000 funds raised since 1985.”

The family who will become owners of the 500th home is head by Laquinda Currie, a single mother raising two young sons while living with Sickle Cell Disease.

WHAT: A special 500th home commemoration for the Currie Family
WHO: US Congressman Charlie Crist, St. Petersburg Mayor Rick Kriseman
WHEN: Monday, October 8th, 2018 at 9:00 AM
WHERE: 1921 Fairfield Ave S St. Petersburg, FL

After years of steady growth, Habitat Pinellas has reach a noteworthy ranking of second largest Habitat affiliate in new home construction out of 1,300 in the United States. This unprecedented rate of development for the organization is expected to continue with the 500th home and 60 new home builds planned for the next fiscal year.

Among recipient families of the new homes, an approximate 20 additional families will benefit through Habitat Pinellas's Neighborhood Revitalization Program. This program is operated by Habitat Pinellas and offers home repair services for Pinellas County homeowners. The program is modeled after other successful neighborhood preservation partnerships and is intended to complement other initiatives that are currently strengthening economic and resource development in the Midtown area.

While helping to make the American Dream come true by creating homeownership opportunities for families, Habitat Pinellas continues to contribute to improvements in the local Pinellas economy.

"Funds that generate construction and trade jobs help low-income families find a home of their own, revitalize neighborhoods, produce tax revenue for the local government and help build safe and secure neighborhoods — making up a truly meaningful investment in Pinellas County's future," Sutton says.

Each home built by Habitat for Humanity of Pinellas County contributes to local employment in skilled trades. The short-term positive economic impact also includes the stabilization of Pinellas County neighborhoods through the building or rehabilitation of homes. Long-term benefits are even greater. In just the last year, Habitat Pinellas homeowners paid \$496,049.08 in city, county, school board and other property taxes. By transitioning to homeowner status, many of these families raise their standard of living and no longer need assistance or other costly services from local or state agencies.

Formed in 1985, Habitat Pinellas has established a tradition of continued growth, evident in the build pace that began with the first 100 homes taking 18 years to build, seven years to reach the 200th home in 2010, four years to complete 300 homes in 2014, two years to reach the 400 home, and one year to reach the current 500th milestone.

To volunteer for the 500th home, please contact jshanks@habitatpinellas.org or sign up at habitatpinellas.org.

About Habitat for Humanity of Pinellas County

Since 1985, **Habitat for Humanity of Pinellas County** has constructed 486 homes for struggling families in Pinellas County, using locally raised funds. Volunteers and the future homeowners construct the homes, which are sold at no profit and financed with a zero-interest loan. Habitat Pinellas homeowner candidates earn 30 to 80 percent of area median income. For Pinellas County, that translates to as little as \$27,000 a year for a family of four. Candidates must also demonstrate need for adequate shelter; ability to pay back a zero-interest loan and willingness to partner with Habitat Pinellas to invest 350 to 450 sweat equity hours. Mortgage monies are used to build even more homes, making each donation to Habitat a perpetual legacy to the

community. Habitat believes that home ownership contributes to family stability, leading, in turn, to community stability. Additionally, Habitat Pinellas raises funds through their ReStore, a home improvement outlet where donated household and building items are sold to the public. **For more information about Habitat for Humanity of Pinellas County, contact 727-536-4755 or visit www.habitatpinellas.org.**

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