



Black Hills Area Habitat for Humanity  
610 E. Omaha St.  
Rapid City, SD 57701



Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind.

1 Peter 3:8

every family  
deserves accessibility



every family  
deserves opportunity



Penny & Family



Alberta & Family



Melody



Richard



Sabrina & Family



Misty & Family



Justin, Psiona & Family



Samantha

Look inside for impactful stories of resilience, opportunity, community, volunteerism and much more.



## Creating Opportunities for Their Future

Sometimes getting prepared for a new home takes a while. For the Hall family, Thomas, Misty and three daughters, it's been 17 years. Sometimes life becomes **LIFE**, And the Halls know all about experiencing serious illness, births of three daughters, and in the last fifteen months several family tragedies.



“When the girls were younger, we couldn’t make the meetings,” Misty says, “and a lot of problems kept popping up. Now, we’re involved, and it seems like all that bad stuff happened for good.”

After being denied a traditional home mortgage loan, Thomas and Misty qualified for the Habitat for Humanity program. They have lived in the same trailer court for almost 20 years and watched it get more rundown and less safe with sewage problems, frequent changes of management, and general deterioration. At the same time rent keeps increasing. They believe the Habitat program is well worth the wait and another winter in their trailer home would be much more challenging.

Misty and Thomas enjoyed getting to know other volunteers while each completing their 250 hours of sweat equity. They have dry walled, painted, finished concrete work, built a shed and worked in ReStore. They appreciated the classes that go with getting a home through Habitat, especially the instruction about family budget management and Bridges to Freedom with its emphasis on goal setting and life skills.

All five members of the Hall family look forward to moving into their new Box Elder home. They’re glad to be staying in Box Elder so their two younger daughters can remain in their school district and continue participating in activities, plus enjoy all Box Elder has to offer.

**“This is a great opportunity, especially for our daughters,” Thomas said. “Getting to live in their own house, having that stability and safety. Alisha, Lola, and Krystal do such good work. It’s really inspiring. We appreciate that living in their own house with plenty of room will provide a healthier lifestyle and higher self-esteem.”**

Misty, a receptionist at the Ellsworth AirForce Base Military and Family Readiness Center, has enjoyed selecting paint colors, new countertops, and flooring. Having worked as a long-distance truck driver for many years, Thomas is now a house husband with all the responsibilities that go with managing a home and taking care of three daughters. Alisha, on the Dean’s List at Black Hills State University, received a full scholarship to pursue her interest in photography and creative writing.

The Hall girls summed up what living in their family home will mean to them. Alisha said, "It feels like we’ll have more opportunity. Our trailer is so cramped. It feels like we’re settling, waiting for life to happen.”

The girls are looking forward to having their own rooms and deciding what colors those rooms will be.

## Volunteer Spotlight

Meet Victor! Victor is a dedicated volunteer, as is evident in his 480+ volunteer hours in the last 6 months. His involvement in the Catholics Building on Faith project showcases his passion for community development and service.

As a key leader within the project, Victor's contributions cover more than just labor; his friendly demeanor and willingness to assist others make him a cornerstone of the team. Victor's dedication to the Catholics Building on Faith project extends beyond his physical presence on the construction site. He went the extra mile by making phone calls to his fellow church members, urging them to join the cause through volunteering or donations.

By personally reaching out, Victor not only grows the project's reach but also cultivates a sense of unity and shared purpose among his peers, reinforcing the project's impact both within and beyond its immediate scope. Thanks to his efforts, we have a full crew of construction volunteers on E. Madison and N. Spruce almost daily. His friendly nature not only fosters a supportive environment but also inspires others to give their best ensuring the success and fulfillment of the Catholics Building on Faith mission.



## Executive Director's Corner

**“Thus says the Lord God: On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will cause the cities to be inhabited, and the waste places shall be rebuilt. And the land that was desolate shall be tilled, instead of being the desolation that it was in the sight of all who passed by.”**

**Ezekiel 36:33-34 ESV**

I love that we get to literally live out this Old Testament concept in our world today through Habitat! God is working us into a people that build up and renew rather than divide and tear down. Our team serves as a cleaning crew of North Rapid, Sturgis, Hot Springs, Box Elder, Hermosa, Spearfish, and Pine Ridge. As we build new homes and renovate old worn out homes, we bring life to the structures and more importantly to the people who inhabit them as they share our hope!

Our team is transformed in order to transform, and our personal and organizational renewal extends out to innovate housing solutions for our region. We are not stuck in the past, we are leaning into the future and taking risks in order to serve more people.

Yet comfort zones die slowly in the light of this greater calling. We push back on the tendency to resist change and hold too tightly onto what may have worked over the past 34 years and we rejoice in taking hold of what doesn't spoil or fade. We stand in awe as God works through us until Jesus makes all things new.



## An accessible dream home

After Linda Popkes retired, she and husband, Bob, moved from Aurora, SD and found themselves renting the basement of Bob's brother's home. They appreciated being near family, which led them to the Black Hills area, but they now seek stability in their living arrangement.



The decision to pursue a Habitat for Humanity home stemmed from the crucial factors of affordability and accessibility, namely Bob's electric power wheelchair. Their first experience with Habitat was with their previous home where Habitat made their house accessible for Bob's needs.

Everyone looks forward to the advantages their new or rehabbed home will bring, but the Popkes' are particularly thankful and excited. The dream is that their home will provide accessibility to accommodate the use of Bob's chair.

The absence of a kitchen in their current home is one of the most significant challenges. The Popkes', who cherish cooking together, find themselves washing dishes in the bathroom and feel like they are intruding on Bob's brother's family when using the upstairs kitchen, which isn't tailored to their accessibility needs. The stove's height poses an obstacle for Bob's wheelchair, adding to the difficulties they face daily which includes relying solely on a microwave oven, crock pot and the family kitchen upstairs for meals.

Amidst these challenges, **their journey is not just about receiving aid but also about giving back.** The Habitat sweat equity requirement was not just a means to an end but a rewarding experience filled with camaraderie and purpose. Linda found joy in contributing her skills to painting on the construction site and relies on the crock pot to cook and take hot meals to volunteers building at other Habitat homes. They both have enjoyed meeting all the volunteers, 10-15 women and men who regularly work on Habitat houses.

Bob's contribution to sweat equity is making phone calls to thank donors who have contributed to Habitat's mission. Linda often drops Bob off at Uncle Louie's Diner in Sturgis to make his calls while she takes her crock pot meal to volunteers working in Sturgis, Spearfish, or Rapid City. Once the volunteer construction day is over, Linda and Bob drive to Rapid City for the required Habitat classes that assist future homeowners.

**"Those did make for long days," Linda says, "but we wanted to hit the ground running. We'd get back to Spearfish late, but we're not complaining. Because we're looking to the future and planning for what will keep us in our accessible and affordable home, we know it is all worth it."**

Both Popkes have enjoyed working alongside volunteers, fellow partner families and Habitat staff, the Love Inc. church members, instructors and fellow classmates. "Being new to the Hills, we really appreciate the warm hospitality they all have extended to us." Their journey embodies the spirit of resilience and community that defines Habitat's mission.

## Recycle with Novelis

Novelis, the world's largest aluminum recycler, is supporting Habitat's affiliate efforts to collect aluminum. Novelis is driven by its purpose of shaping a sustainable world together.

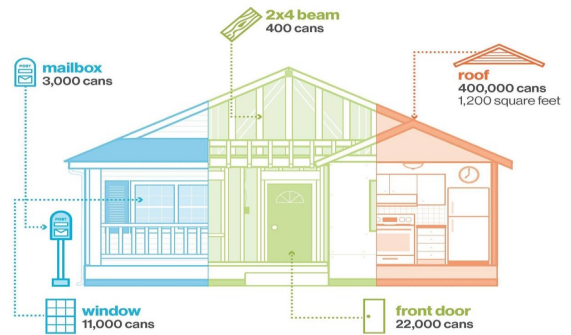
### How can you help?

Bring your aluminum cans or scrap aluminum to either ReStore locations (in Spearfish and Rapid City) through October 31. When you drop off, take a picture and tag us on Facebook. During last year's Novelis period, Black Hills Area Habitat for Humanity collected 4,635 lbs. of aluminum earning us the 3<sup>rd</sup> place prize of a \$2,000 grant! In addition to receiving the grant, cans collected locally are recycled and funds raised benefit local Habitat partner families. If your local businesses, school, or community group wants to help raise awareness about the importance of Habitat and recycling in our community reach, contact Julissa at [julissa@blackhillshabitat.org](mailto:julissa@blackhillshabitat.org) to learn about partnering.



**Every can counts.**

Help build a Habitat house in your community today.

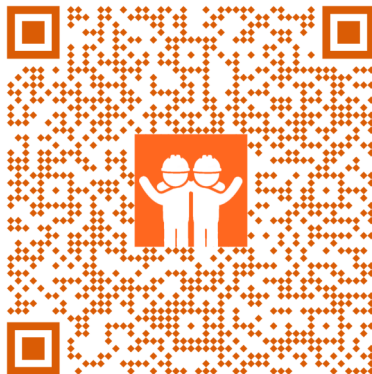


Aluminum recycling program sponsored by Novelis

## Join the Club!

Joining the Builders Club is the easiest way to make a big difference in the lives of future Habitat homeowners. Every gift brings us one step closer to breaking the cycle of poverty and building long-term financial security. Imagine what your monthly \$25 gift could build. Scan the QR code below to get started.

For existing Builders Club members, now is the time to increase your membership. Consider increasing your monthly gift by \$7, \$13, or \$20!



## Upcoming Events

- ◆ **Tees for Keys Golf Tournament**  
June 10, check-in at 8 am  
The Golf Club at Red Rock  
[www.blackhillshabitat.org/tees-for-keys](http://www.blackhillshabitat.org/tees-for-keys)
- ◆ **Homeownership Informational Meeting**  
September 21, 10 am  
610 E. Omaha St (Habitat office)  
[www.blackhillshabitat.org/homeownership](http://www.blackhillshabitat.org/homeownership)
- ◆ **World Habitat Day**  
October 7  
Watch our website for information—  
[www.blackhillshabitat.org](http://www.blackhillshabitat.org)
- ◆ **Hearts for Habitat Fundraising Dinner & Auction**  
October 8, 5 pm Social | 6 pm program  
Holiday Inn—Rapid City Downtown  
[www.blackhillshabitat.org/h4h](http://www.blackhillshabitat.org/h4h)

## Events and Visitors

On September 25, we had the honor to host the 28<sup>th</sup> Bomb Wing Commander as well as the 28<sup>th</sup> Operations Group Senior Enlisted Leader from **Ellsworth Air Force Base**. During this time, Executive Director Scott Engmann, provided Colonel Derek Oakley and Chief Master Sergeant Jody Nededog with a tour of the Black Hills Area Habitat for Humanity's office and Rapid City Restore. We are grateful for their interest and engagement in learning about Habitat for Humanity and thank all military personnel for their service!



West River **Catholics Building on Faith** has a goal to raise \$450,000 from 2023-2025 with the purpose of constructing four new townhomes at E. Madison St. in Rapid City. With the help of 15 area catholic churches, they have given over \$150,000 and volunteered 2,450 hours. To stay up to date on the progress, go to [www.blackhillshabitat.org/building-on-faith](http://www.blackhillshabitat.org/building-on-faith).

- Fr. Brian Christensen "It's a miracle!"



Reaching New Heights Together at **Habitat on the Hill** in Washington, DC in February 2024!

**Did you know that 1 in 11 Households in South Dakota spend more than half of their income on housing?**

Lower income households are especially likely to have unaffordable housing costs, requiring more than 30% of their income. Scott Engmann, Black Hills Area Habitat Executive Director, joined other national thought leaders in a panel discussion regarding the complexities and potential solutions for affordable housing in South Dakota and across the United States. Over 450 attendees made this the largest Habitat on the Hill advocacy event ever! Scott was joined by Habitat partner family Richard and BHAHFH Chief of Staff, Barbara O'Malley.

We always welcome friends to see current projects. To receive a tour, contact [rsvp@blackhillshabitat.org](mailto:rsvp@blackhillshabitat.org)

