



Dear Prospective Volunteer:

Thank you for your interest in joining us as a work-site volunteer with the Greater Erie Area Habitat for Humanity! Volunteering can be a very rewarding experience. You can help to make the dream of homeownership come true for a family. At our worksites we promote team building, safety, education and awareness. The enclosed **Myths & Truths**, **Work Site Guidelines** and **Safety Rules** and the **FAQ sheets** will provide you with information about Habitat for Humanity.

Here are the first steps to becoming a Habitat for Humanity construction volunteer:

- Please complete the attached Volunteer Waiver and return it to the **Habitat Office at 4922 Pittsburgh Avenue, Erie, PA 16509**. Once we receive your waiver, you may call the office to schedule a work day(s) and shift(s) at **(814) 454-7025, x107**.
- We ask that you read over the attached **Work Site Guidelines and Safety Rules**. This will provide you with information about what you can expect on the work site.
- Typical construction site hours are **Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings from 7:45 am until 12:00 noon** (and when available, two shifts on Saturdays, from **7:45 am until 12:00 noon and 12:15 pm until 4:30 pm**.) Volunteers should report to the worksite **15 minutes before your scheduled time to complete paperwork and for the devotion**.

We work on multiple worksites at a time, so the night before your scheduled workday, please call **(814) 454-7025** and when prompted, press **#3** for the worksite location you are to report to.

When you arrive on the work site, please check in with the construction manager or the construction worksite supervisor, sign in, and after the devotion you will be provided with the instructions for the day. Projects will always vary, depending on the stage of construction. No experience is required and all the tools are provided.

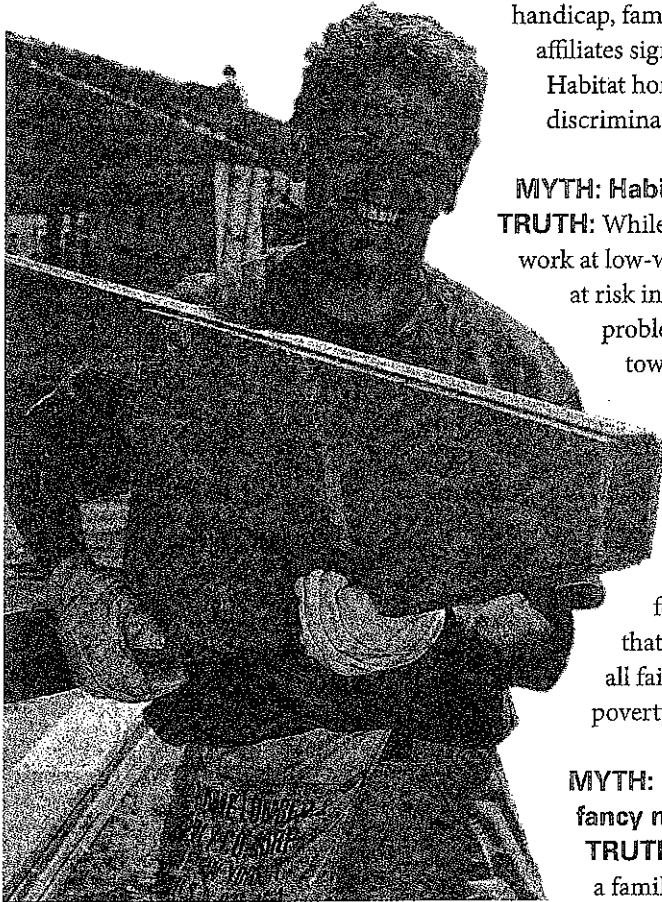
Thanks again for your interest. We look forward to hearing from you and to placing you on the work schedule. If you have any other questions or concerns, please give us a call.

In Partnership,



## Myths and Truths

*Habitat for Humanity International is a nonprofit Christian housing ministry. HFHI seeks to eliminate poverty housing and homelessness from the world and to make decent shelter a matter of conscience and action.*



**MYTH: Habitat for Humanity gives houses to poor people.**

**TRUTH:** Houses are not given to anyone. Habitat for Humanity builds houses with people in need and then sells the houses to homeowner partners through no-profit loans. Because houses are built principally by volunteers, mortgage payments can be kept reasonable to those unable to obtain conventional financing. Habitat homeowners typically have incomes that are 30 percent to 50 percent of the median income in the area. They are required to invest hundreds of hours in "sweat equity"—that is, time spent building their own home or other Habitat houses.

**MYTH: Habitat builds houses only for minorities.**

**TRUTH:** Habitat doesn't build houses *for* anyone. We build houses *with* people in need, without regard to race. Three criteria drive the family-selection process: need; ability to repay the no-profit mortgage during a 15- to 30-year period; and willingness to partner with Habitat. The U.S. Fair Housing Act of 1968 prohibits discrimination in the sale of housing on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, handicap, familial status or national origin. The covenant that all local Habitat affiliates sign with Habitat for Humanity International also specifies that Habitat homeowner families are selected "according to criteria that do not discriminate on the basis of race, creed or ethnic background."

**MYTH: Habitat homeowners are on welfare.**

**TRUTH:** While some Habitat homeowners do receive public assistance, most work at low-wage jobs. Habitat works in good faith with people who often are at risk in society, knowing that owning a home is not the answer to every problem, but that it can be an important step—often the first step—toward helping people break out of the cycle of poverty.

**MYTH: You have to be a Christian to become a Habitat homeowner.**

**TRUTH:** Habitat for Humanity was founded as and unashamedly remains a Christian ministry. However, homeowners are chosen without regard to race, creed or nationality—following the requirements of the law as well as Habitat's belief that God's love extends to all. Habitat also welcomes volunteers from all faiths—or no faith—who actively embrace the goal of eliminating poverty housing from the world.

**MYTH: Habitat houses allow people to move from poverty to fancy new houses.**

**TRUTH:** Any newly built house is going to be a dramatic change for a family that has been living in a shack, hut or rundown apartment.

But Habitat houses are not extravagant by any standard. Habitat's philosophy is to build simple, decent houses. Under house design criteria approved by Habitat for Humanity International's board of directors, living space in a three-bedroom house, for example, is not to exceed 1,050 square feet. The average cost in the United States of a three-bedroom Habitat house is approximately \$59,000.

**MYTH: Habitat houses lower neighborhood property values.**

**TRUTH:** Many studies of low-cost housing show that affordable housing has no adverse effect on other neighborhood property values. Habitat firmly believes its approach to affordable housing improves neighborhoods and communities by strengthening community spirit and increasing the tax base while building better citizens through the cooperative efforts involved in Habitat construction.

**MYTH: Habitat homeowners sell their houses and make a large profit because of the original low cost.**

**TRUTH:** Special second mortgages that are "paid off" by living in the house, as well as first buyback option clauses that many Habitat affiliates put into their agreement with homeowners, help alleviate concerns that some people may have regarding the resale of houses.

**MYTH: Habitat for Humanity is a Southern poverty program.**

**TRUTH:** Habitat for Humanity International started in the Southern United States and remains based in Americus, Ga. It is a global partnership, however, drawing families in need together with volunteers and resources to build simple, decent houses all over the world. Habitat has worked in more than 3,000 communities in some 100 countries.

**MYTH: Habitat for Humanity is an arm of the government.**

**TRUTH:** Habitat for Humanity International is an independent, nonprofit Christian housing ministry. It is not an arm of the government, nor an arm of any particular church denomination. Habitat does accept government funds for the acquisition of land or houses in need of rehabilitation. Habitat also accepts government funds or services for "setting the stage" for house building—e.g., streets, utilities and administrative services.

**MYTH: Habitat for Humanity was started by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter.**

**TRUTH:** Habitat for Humanity International was started in Americus, Ga., in 1976 by Millard Fuller, along with his wife, Linda. Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter and his wife, Rosalynn, are longtime Habitat supporters and volunteers who help bring national and international attention to the organization's house-building work. They lead the annual Jimmy Carter Work Project to help build houses and raise awareness of the need for affordable housing. Since the first work project in 1984, more than 2,000 houses have been built in conjunction with JCWP events.

**MYTH: Habitat for Humanity operates through chapters in states and countries throughout the world.**

**TRUTH:** Habitat does not operate through centrally controlled chapters but through locally run affiliates. Affiliates are grassroots organizations of local people coming together to address local housing needs. Each affiliate is an independent nonprofit organization that operates with specific service areas under a covenant relationship with Habitat for Humanity International.

**MYTH: Habitat for Humanity builds only in cities — or builds only in rural areas.**

**TRUTH:** Habitat—through local affiliates—is at work in cities, suburbs and rural areas in highly developed countries and in developing countries. Because poverty housing is so widespread, Habitat's work goes on 365 days a year in locations throughout the United States and around the world.

**MYTH: Poverty housing is such a large problem that it can never be solved.**

**TRUTH:** Poverty housing is a huge issue. But Habitat believes that by continuing to build houses with people in need, by working with other committed groups, and by putting the issue of poverty housing on the hearts and minds of compassionate people everywhere, the problem can be solved. Habitat's 21st Century Housing Challenge calls communities together to eliminate substandard housing in their area. Communities are accepting that challenge to build with a definite plan and at a rate that makes it possible to eliminate substandard housing. In 2000, New Horizons Habitat for Humanity in Americus, Ga., and other local groups realized the goal of making affordable housing available for every family in Sumter County, Ga., Habitat's home county.





Greater Erie Area

**Habitat for Humanity**<sup>®</sup>

*"Community Building Community."*

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What is Habitat for Humanity?**

Seeking to put God's love into action, Habitat for Humanity brings people together to build homes, communities and hope.

### **What is the Greater Erie Area Habitat for Humanity Mission?**

As an affiliate of Habitat for Humanity International, the Greater Erie Area Habitat for Humanity is changing lives and communities and building hope through decent simple homeownership in partnership with volunteers and community support.

### **How are Habitat partner families selected?**

Habitat for Humanity partners with families. Partner families are selected based upon the following criteria:

- Ability to pay a mortgage/ meet income guidelines
- Willingness to partner with Habitat for Humanity housing program
- Housing need/ substandard current living condition(s)

Once the family is selected they must complete at least 300 sweat equity hours. After the family meets all their requirements and their house is complete, Habitat sells the homes to the partner family at zero interest and zero profit, using Biblical financing.

### **What is "sweat equity"?**

Homeowners invest hundreds of hours of their own labor—"sweat equity"—into building their Habitat home and the homes of others. Sweat equity helps reduce the cost of the home, increases the personal stake of the family members in their home, and fosters the development of partnerships with other people in the community.

### **How much does a Habitat house cost?**

Housing costs vary throughout the country, and the world, for that matter. For the Greater Erie Area Habitat for Humanity, the cost of building a home averages between \$70,000 and \$75,000. Habitat homes are affordable for low-income families because there is no profit included in the sale price and no interest charged on the mortgage.

### **Can volunteers help anytime?**

Yes! We are always looking for volunteers. We build all year round. Our typical schedule is Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, from 8 am -- noon and when available, Saturday from 8 am -- noon and 12:30 - 4:30 pm.

### **Do volunteers have to be scheduled?**

Yes! All volunteers must be scheduled before they can come to volunteer on a worksite. If volunteers just show up at the site, they will be sent home.

### **Do volunteers need to have special skills to work at a construction site?**

No! People of all skill levels are welcome to help on site. We have site supervisors, who will provide you with the tasks and instructions for your work day.

### **Do volunteers need to bring their own tools?**

Tools are provided by the Greater Erie Area Habitat for Humanity; however, if volunteers are more comfortable using their own tools they may bring their own. Habitat for Humanity recommends that volunteers make sure their personal tools are labeled.

(over)

**What can I do other than help build a house?**

There are a number of other ways volunteers can help the Greater Erie Area Habitat for Humanity, besides building. Volunteers can bring their expertise or talents to one of the Greater Erie Area Habitat for Humanity committees, help in our ReStore, or volunteer at a special event. You may also make a financial contribution toward building materials.

**What is a Restore?**

Restores are nonprofit home improvement stores and donation centers that sell new and gently used furniture, appliances, home accessories, building materials and more to the public at a fraction of the retail price.

**Does Habitat need donations?**

Habitat for Humanity Restores can help you declutter your home, workspace or business. We put the proceeds from selling your donations to good use by building homes and hope in your community and around the world. Though each Habitat Restore is unique, most accept donations of household goods, furniture, appliances and building materials.



## ▼ WORK SITE GUIDELINES AND SAFETY RULES ▼

- **All work hours, whether individual or group, must be scheduled through the Greater Erie Area Habitat for Humanity Office, at 814-454-7025 x 107.**
- **Work site hours are 7:45 a.m. to 12:00 noon on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday and, WHEN AVAILABLE, two shifts on Saturday, 7:45 a.m. to 12:00 noon and 12:15 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. (Hours are subject to change during special house builds).**

**Please Note: Due to the current Covid-19 pandemic, all volunteers are required to:**

- **Wear a mask while on the worksite (this includes the Re-Store, office, etc.).**
- **Practice social distancing.**
- **Refrain from sharing tools.**
- **Re-schedule volunteer hours if not feeling well. PLEASE DO NOT REPORT TO THE WORKSITE IF YOU ARE SICK. You will have to leave.**

### WORK SITE LOCATION

- **To confirm the work site location, please call the Habitat Office at 814-454-7025. Press #3 when prompted.**
  - **Individuals, please call the day before your scheduled work day.**
  - **Work Groups, please call two days before scheduled work day.**
- **Call after hours & listen to the message. It is updated with the current work site location.**
- **All volunteers are responsible for their own transportation to & from various work sites. Volunteers are expected to have reliable transportation in case the work day ends early.**

### WHAT TO WEAR

**Appropriate dress is required:**

- **Sturdy, flat soled shoes or boots are REQUIRED. No open toed shoes or heels.**
- **Long work pants or jeans are REQUIRED. No shorts, yoga pants or sweatpants.**
- **During the summer, please use common sense when working in the sun. You may want to bring sunscreen and/or a hat.**

### WHAT YOU SHOULD BRING

- **It is recommended that you bring work gloves & safety glasses if you have them**
- **You may bring a hammer, tape measure and tools if desired.**
- **We ask that any tools which you bring to the work site have your name on them & make sure you take them home.**

**CONTINUED ON THE OTHER SIDE**

## WHAT YOU SHOULD EXPECT

- The work site opens at 7:45 a.m. At that time, you will sign-in, have the devotion, and get the work assignments.
- The Construction Manager and/or the Worksite Supervisor will assign the daily tasks. Work begins promptly at 8 a.m.
- Experience and/or construction skills are not required. The construction supervisors and regular volunteers will provide instruction and direction to complete required tasks.
- Greater Erie Area Habitat for Habitat for Humanity will provide a coffee break on the work site at 10 a.m. for the volunteers. You may also bring your own snacks for breaks or a lunch if you are working a full day.
- Drinking water and a port-a-potty are on the work site at all times.
- Appropriate language is required. Foul language is not tolerated.
- No alcoholic beverages are allowed.
- No portable music devices are allowed.
- Cell phone use limited to breaks or in an emergency. If an emergency call needs to be made, you need to step away from the active construction site.
- Please note, volunteers will be required to wear hard hats and safety glasses (which are provided).

## AGE REQUIREMENTS

- No one under the age of 16 may do any work at a *construction site* on behalf of Greater Erie Area Habitat for Humanity.
- For youths aged 16 & 17, a Waiver signed by BOTH the youth and a parent is REQUIRED and the following limitations apply:
  - No use of any power tools or machines with blades
  - No wrecking, demolition or excavation operations
  - No roofing; Can go no higher than 6ft. on a ladder
- At least one adult is required to accompany every five youth ages 16 & 17 (that is 1 adult to 1-5 youths, 2 adults to 6 – 10 youths, etc.)
- In order to comply with our stated policy and Habitat for Humanity International, we have had to make a rule that any person under the age of 16 who arrives at the construction site will be sent home. (This directive is based upon Federal Child Labor Laws and upon guidelines promulgated by Habitat for Humanity International. This directive was passed by Greater Erie Area Habitat for Humanity on February 10, 1996 and updated on October 13, 1997.)

Greater Erie Area Habitat for Humanity appreciates your cooperation in complying with these rules in order to create a safe and productive work site environment.

GREATER ERIE AREA HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

INDIVIDUAL WAIVER

VOLUNTEER FORM & RELEASE AND WAIVER OF LIABILITY

- 1. Please read this form and complete each section thoroughly. PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY
2. Please read the Release and Waiver of Liability (on back of page). The Waiver must be completed before doing any work on behalf of Greater Erie Area Habitat for Humanity.

VOLUNTEER INFORMATION

Date \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Current Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (Cell) \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

I attend worship services at (Optional) \_\_\_\_\_ Employer \_\_\_\_\_

[ ] YES! I would like to be added to Greater Erie Area Habitat for Humanity's mailing and email lists.

[ ] YES! I would like to be invited to Greater Erie Area Habitat for Humanity's House Dedications.

[ ] YES! I would like to receive Greater Erie Area Habitat for Humanity's text updates.

EMERGENCY CONTACT

In case of emergency, please contact: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (W) \_\_\_\_\_ (Cell) \_\_\_\_\_

Extreme Fear of Heights [ ] Yes [ ] No Date of Last Tetanus Shot \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have seizures? [ ] Yes [ ] No Medications being taken? \_\_\_\_\_

Any Allergies? [ ] Yes [ ] No If yes, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

List any special needs/accommodations: \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer Availability

My best day(s) of availability to volunteer on the GEAHFH Construction Worksite are: (check all that apply)

Tuesday (7:45 am to 12:00 pm) \_\_\_\_\_

(Saturday hours, WHEN AVAILABLE, are):

Wednesday (7:45 am to 12:00 pm) \_\_\_\_\_

Saturday (7:45 am to 12:00 pm) \_\_\_\_\_

Thursday (7:45 am to 12:00 pm) \_\_\_\_\_

Saturday (12:15 pm to 4:30 pm) \_\_\_\_\_

I would be interested in volunteering in the GEAHFH Re-Store. (Hours available as need determines).

My best day(s) of availability are: (check all that apply)

Tuesday \_\_\_\_\_ Wednesday \_\_\_\_\_ Thursday \_\_\_\_\_ Friday \_\_\_\_\_ (between 9:00 am and 3:00 pm) ✓

Saturday (8:00 am to 12:00 pm) \_\_\_\_\_ and/or 12:00 pm to 4:00pm) \_\_\_\_\_

I would be interested in volunteering for the preparation of and/or at the following GEAHFH Special Events. (If you are interested, we will contact you with the details as time for the event approaches).

Celebrity Bartending (usually held in April) \_\_\_\_\_

Highmark Walk (usually held in June) \_\_\_\_\_

GEAHFH Annual Golf Tournament (usually held in June) \_\_\_\_\_

Monopoly Night (usually held in October) \_\_\_\_\_

Christmas Gift Wrapping (held in December, at the Millcreek Mall) \_\_\_\_\_



**GREATER ERIE AREA HABITAT FOR HUMANITY**

**RELEASE AND WAIVER OF LIABILITY**

**(PLEASE READ CAREFULLY! THIS IS A LEGAL DOCUMENT THAT AFFECTS YOUR LEGAL RIGHTS!)**

This Release and Waiver of Liability (the "Release") executed on this \_\_\_\_\_ day of 20\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_ (the "Volunteer") in favor of Habitat for Humanity, International, Inc., a non-profit corporation and the Greater Erie Area Habitat for Humanity, a Pennsylvania non-profit corporation, their directors, officers, employees and agents (collectively, "Habitat"). The Volunteer desires to work as a volunteer for Habitat and engage in the activities related to being a volunteer. (The "Activities"): The volunteer understands that the "Activities" may include constructing and rehabilitating buildings, working in the Habitat offices and/or Re-Stores and living in housing provided for volunteers of Habitat.

The Volunteer hereby freely, voluntarily, and without duress, executes this Release under the following terms: **Release and Waiver.** Volunteer does hereby release and forever discharge and hold harmless Habitat and its successors and assigns from any liability, claims and demands of whatever kind or nature, either in law or in equity, which arise or may hereafter arise from volunteer's activities with Habitat.

Volunteer understands that this Release discharges Habitat from any liability or claim that the volunteer may have against Habitat with respect to any bodily injury, personal injury, death or property damages that may result from volunteer's activities with Habitat, whether caused by the negligence of Habitat or its officers, directors, employees or agents or otherwise. Volunteer also understands that Habitat does not assume any responsibility for or obligation to provide financial assistance or other assistance, including but not limited to medical, health or disability insurance in the event of injury or illness.

**Medical Treatment.** Volunteer does hereby release and discharge Habitat from any claim which arises or may hereafter arise on account of any first aid treatment, or service rendered in connection with the volunteer's activities with Habitat.

**Assumption of the Risk.** The Volunteer understands that the "Activities" include work that may be hazardous to the volunteer, including but not limited to construction, loading and unloading and transportation to and from the worksite. Volunteer hereby expressly and specifically assumes the risk of injury or harm in the "Activities" and releases Habitat from all liability, for injury, illness, death or property damage resulting from "Activities." **Each Volunteer is expected and encouraged to obtain his or her own medical or health insurance.**

**Photographic Release.** Volunteer does hereby grant and convey unto Habitat all rights, title and interest in any and all photographic images and video and audio recordings made for Habitat during Volunteer's "Activities" with Habitat, including but not limited to any royalties, proceeds or other benefits derived from such photographic images or recordings

**Other.** Volunteer expressly agrees that this Release is intended to be as broad and inclusive as permitted by the laws of the State of Pennsylvania, and that this Release shall be governed by and interpreted by the laws of the State of Pennsylvania. Volunteer agrees that in the event any clause or provision of the Release shall be held to be invalid in any court of competent jurisdiction, the invalidity of such clause or provision shall not otherwise affect the remaining provisions of this Release which shall continue to be enforceable.

Misconduct of a sexual nature within the organization interferes with its moral mission and will not be tolerated. Greater Erie Area Habitat for Humanity seeks to create an environment of hospitality for all persons, male or female, which is free of misconduct of a sexual nature and encourages respect, equality and kinship in Christ.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, Volunteer has executed this Release as of the day and year first above written

SIGNATURE OF VOLUNTEER \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE OF PARENT OR GUARDIAN(18+) \_\_\_\_\_