



Habitat Chat

strength. stability. self-reliance. shelter.

SUMMER 2016



a good kind of busy

By the time 2016 reached its half-way point, it seemed like Habitat Charlotte had already experienced at least a year's worth of events, activity and excitement. Here's a brief recap of what's been a banner year for the affiliate so far.

As soon as the calendar turned to 2016, the silver anniversary of Women Build had arrived.

What began in Charlotte in the spring of 1991 with the construction of a single-mother's home by an all-female crew, has grown into an international movement over the last 25 years. Before 2016 arrived,



Pioneer women builders (l to r) Susan Sewell, Darlene Jonas and Mary Nell McPherson changed the course of Habitat history with the first all-women build in 1991.

months of planning had already gone into recognizing and celebrating the spirit of innovation, dedication and empowerment displayed by the women who made the first build possible.

The first event, an open-to-the-public conversation on the building blocks of a strong and healthy community, was held on CPCC's main campus Tuesday, March 8. Building Futures: A Symposium on Affordable Housing was attended by over 300 community members who gathered to hear from

the expert panelists the many reasons why safe, stable and affordable housing is foundational and essential for a thriving community.

In the weeks following Building Futures, preparations were being made for the biggest Women Build construction season the affiliate had ever seen. Thanks to the support of so many committed community partners, three new Women Build homes began construction the first weekend of May, with two more getting underway

two weeks later – a record for Habitat Charlotte. Volunteer crews continued to work on these five homes through June and July, and a group dedication was celebrated August 19. Thank you to all the volunteers and community sponsors who gave their time, sweat and resources to serve five new Habitat homebuyers during this record-setting Women Build!

Top: Habitat Charlotte president and CEO Laura Belcher.

Right: Building Futures symposium moderator Pamela Wideman, City of Charlotte's Deputy Director of Neighborhood and Business Services.

Far Right: Symposium panelists included former CEO of the Atlanta Housing Authority Renée Glover, Research and Policy Director for Children's HealthWatch Stephanie Ettinger de Cuba, and Executive Director of the NC Housing Coalition Satana Deberry.

Below left: Janet Stewart, a single mother of two young girls, at the site of her future home in 1991.

Below right: 25 years later Janet, Susan, Darlene and Mary Nell together again on a 2016 Women Build job site.

Bottom: House sponsors included (l to r) MetLife, Wells Fargo and Bank of America, appropriately represented here by Brenda Suits, the only woman who has volunteered on every Habitat Charlotte Women Build house in the program's 25-year history.



calendar

Aug. 23 – Welcome new AmeriCorps members

Aug. 27 – HomeJoy celebration

Sept. 3 – Homeowner picnic

Sept. 5 – Labor Day, office and ReStores/Julia's closed

however, no celebration is complete without a party!

As a way both to celebrate the legacy of that first all-female crew, and a way to raise additional funds for those five homes, the inaugural Blue Jean Bash – a fundraising gala with a Habitat twist – was held on Saturday, May 14 in Founders Hall. Once again, Habitat Charlotte’s supporters did not disappoint, and filled the uptown venue to capacity. The sold-out crowd shared in dinner and dancing, participated in both live and silent auctions, but most importantly, helped recognize the women who were instrumental in making Women Build a reality back in 1991, and honored the woman whose home they built.

At the Blue Jean Bash, Women Build’s founding mothers Darlene Jonas, Mary Nell McPherson and Susan Sewell were awarded Habitat Charlotte’s Founders Award in honor of their pioneering achievement. Please visit habitatcharlotte.org to see and share the brief video about Janet, the first Women Build homeowner, and the women who changed her life.

Even after construction began and the confetti of the gala was swept up, the affiliate was still in high gear. May 22-28, Habitat Charlotte was host to over 180 AmeriCorps members from across the country for the 2016 AmeriCorps Build-a-Thon. These young men and women spent their week making huge progress on new homes and home repairs in Charlotte, Gaston County, Lincoln County and York County.



Top (clockwise from upper left) Guests of honor Janet Stewart and daughter Tanita are flanked by Habitat Charlotte Associate Director of Family Services Nancy Pugh (l) and 2015 Women Build homeowner Doris Miller.

Habitat for Humanity International board chair Joe Price.

Sellout crowd fills Founders Hall.

Susan Sewell, Mary Nell McPherson, Darlene Jonas and Laura Belcher backstage before Founders Award presentation.

Quilt of many colors made from past years' Women Build T-shirts.

Left and below: If you build it, they will come. And so they did, in droves, on June 18.



Surely that had to have been the last big event, right? Not quite.

For some within the organization, the end of May was just starting to get busy, with less than three weeks to go before the **opening of Charlotte’s third ReStore**. Located in the flourishing University City area, the new ReStore celebrated its grand opening on Saturday, June 18. Joined by the #18 M&Ms show car, courtesy of Joe Gibbs Racing, and live radio remote broadcasts throughout the day, it was a proper celebration for Habitat Charlotte’s first new ReStore opening since 2006.

Visit us often! The new store’s address is 8104 University City Blvd., and it’s open Monday through Saturday from 9:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m.

habitcharlotte.org

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With everything happening from March through June, it was only fitting to close out this busy season with some good, clean fun. Sunday, June 26 was the **10th anniversary of Habitat Charlotte Young Professionals' Mud Volleyball tournament.**

This event has become one of the city's landmark summer events, and this one was no different as hundreds braved the heat and mud to participate or just watch the madness. This year's event was another great success, raising nearly \$20,000 for Habitat Charlotte.

As exhausted as some of us were from the busyness of the first half of the year, we wouldn't have it any other way. And while the rest of the year may not be as busy, we never slow the pace of progress in leading the fight against substandard and poverty housing in the community. So now that we've taken a day or two to catch our breath, we're right back at it again. Because—believe it or not—fall is considered to be Habitat Charlotte's *busiest* season.



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