

# building our future



**2019 Impact Report**





# Our Mission:

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

# Our Vision:

A world where everyone has a decent place to live.

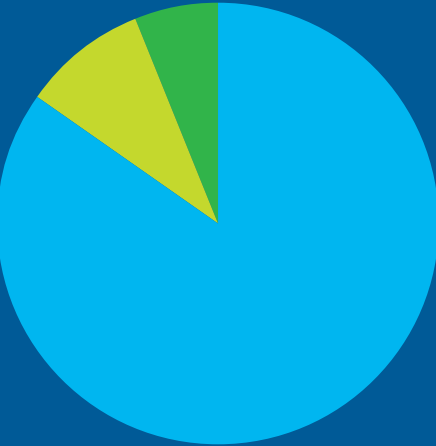
## 2018 FISCAL YEAR FINANCIALS

### Support & Revenues



- Unrestricted contributions, sponsorships, revenues, grants, and in-kind donations – 62%
- Revenue related to home sales – 17%
- ReStore revenue – 15%
- Other revenue – 6%

### Expenses



- Construction/program costs – 84%
- Fundraising costs – 9%
- Administration costs – 6%



## 2018-2019 Board of Directors

### OFFICERS

- Mark Mossing, *Chair*
- Mary Angelo, *Vice Chair*
- Jason Williams, *Treasurer*
- Marsha Veenstra, *Secretary*

### MEMBERS

- Sonali Allen
- Sue Buzzell
- Jeff Dykstra
- Bruce Emery
- Maria Erazo
- Chris Fridsma
- Jorge Gonzalez
- Steven Hoekzema
- Fred Johnson III, PhD
- Kim McLaughlin
- Jeff Ott
- Alexis Reame
- Melisha Roberts
- Soroya Pierre-VanArtsen
- Carmen Villahermosa de Cox
- Jenny Waugh
- James White
- Lizzie Williams

### MEMBERS EMERITUS

- Dan Molhoek
- Craig Van Ess

## Building Our Future

*In 2017, Habitat Kent began something bigger than anything we’ve done before: 3 years. 3 goals. \$9 million. We envisioned building a brighter future for the Roosevelt Park neighborhood, together. Since then, donors, neighbors, and supporters like you have joined us in making this vision a reality.*

You have given more to the **Bright Future Campaign** for Roosevelt Park than any other campaign in Habitat Kent’s history. But you didn’t stop there. You also helped us break new ground on a project unlike anything we’ve ever done. The cornerstone of the Bright Future Campaign is Plaza Roosevelt – a mixed-use development that includes 9 local partner organizations working together to bring new housing, health, education, and economic opportunities to the Roosevelt Park neighborhood.

One of Habitat Kent’s greatest strengths is our long history. We have been building homes in the greater Grand Rapids area for more than 35 years. In that time, we have learned a great deal about how to build beautiful, quality homes and how to walk alongside families on their journey to homeownership, ensuring they’re prepared for life-long success.

Building affordable homes for individuals and families in need of safe, healthy, affordable housing is the common thread that has been and will always be part of our work. But as the housing market shifts and grows and the needs of our community continue to change, what does the future ask of us?

Habitat Kent’s supporters – all of you – are propelling us forward into new territory. Our commitment to building affordable homes is unwavering, but there are new things we’ve begun building together, too.



Bev Thiel, Executive Director

Things like our commitment to innovation – innovation in the way we build each home, but also in structuring our programs to make affordable homeownership accessible to more people, more quickly.

Things like building strong neighborhoods and improving the quality of life for all who call a neighborhood home.

And things like our unwavering commitment to diversity, inclusion, community engagement, and collaboration – to not only honoring diverse backgrounds and perspectives, but intentionally bringing more voices to the table with the deeply-held belief that we are stronger together.

Friends, the future holds complex work for us to do together. While we can’t know exactly what the future holds, I am confident when we work together, we will find the answers and the power to build a stronger community where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

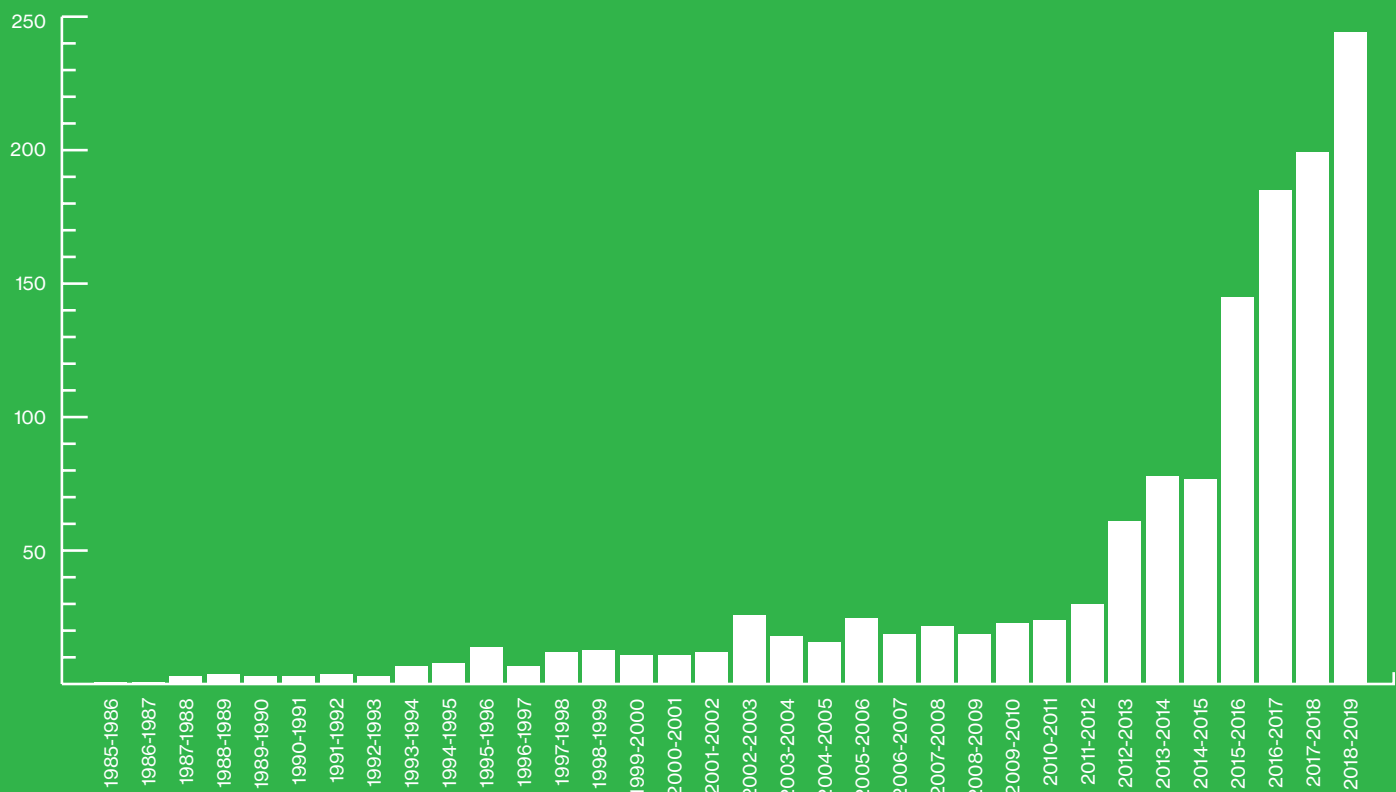
**With excitement for the journey ahead,**

*Bev Thiel*  
Bev Thiel, Executive Director

# Your Impact at a Glance

In 1983, Habitat Kent got our start building a home for one family in need of affordable housing. Since then, thanks to continued innovation and your support, our impact has soared – and your reach keeps growing!

## TOTAL FAMILIES SERVED



## VETERAN PROGRAM



We served  
**14 veteran families**  
this year through  
homeownership & home repair



We're celebrating our  
**100th veteran**  
served through  
homeownership & repair



*The Bright Future Campaign is the largest, most holistic undertaking in Habitat Kent's history, and it wouldn't be possible without you. Because of you, the neighbors in Roosevelt Park will have a stronger, more stable foundation to build their future—a future that is bright, because it is full of hope.*

### INVESTING IN 400 HOMES

**34 families**

have become homeowners or are currently building homes.

**13 families**

have legally preserved their homes for long-term homeownership.

**43 families**

have completed health, safety, and/or accessibility home repairs with Habitat Kent.

**350** Roosevelt Park neighbors

beautified their homes or businesses through Habitat Kent Curb Appeal Contests.

### EMPOWERING NEIGHBORHOOD LEADERS

In 2016, 12 neighbors formed the Neighborhood Partner Committee (NPC) to help plan Plaza Roosevelt. Today, the committee is

**75 neighbors strong**

**6 invested neighbors**

serve as the NPC board, planning neighborhood events and rallying support for neighborhood priorities.

### BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER TO BUILD PLAZA ROOSEVELT

In total, the Plaza Roosevelt partners are bringing approximately

**\$40 million**

in new investment to the Roosevelt Park neighborhood.

Construction is underway on

**17** Habitat Kent homes

on the Plaza Roosevelt site, and is moving quickly!

The new GRPS high school is under construction, with building by other partners soon to follow.

### SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR BRIGHT FUTURE CAMPAIGN CABINET MEMBERS:

Jack & Rita Kirkwood, Paul Boyer, Kim McLaughlin, John & Micki Benz, Cameron Young, Mary Angelo, Mark Custer, Chadd Dowding, Eric Fischer, Chuck Fridsma, Dirk & June Hoffius, Mike & Sue Jandernoa, Fred Keller, Brian & Kelly May, Peter & Gabriella Meijer, Dan & Kathleen Molhoek, Mark & Carolyn Mossing, Jim Williams, Lizzie Williams, Kate Pew Wolters, Doug Young, Milinda Ysasi



# Impact Stories

## The Future is Service

When Jorge, a United States Marine Sergeant, first stepped onto a Habitat Kent build site, he was a volunteer. He wanted to help other veterans repair their homes. In the process, he learned about Habitat Kent's Veteran Build program.

Now Jorge, his wife Blanca, and their three children are Habitat homeowners.

For years, the couple struggled to pursue their education and still earn a living to support their three children. But they have seen the process of becoming Habitat homeowners begin to change all of that.

"This is going to be a great step because now, we're getting to the point where we can help ourselves, and to the point where we can start giving back a lot more," Jorge said.

Most of all, Jorge and Blanca are grateful for the opportunity to provide stability for their children and to teach them the importance of serving others.

"I hope they learn to be humble, and to be able to give back," said Jorge. "I hope they understand that it is hard, but it's nice to give because it somehow, some way ends up coming back tenfold."

— “  
I hope they understand that it is hard, but it's nice to give because it somehow, some way ends up coming back tenfold.  
— Jorge, United States Marine Sergeant



## The Future is Coming Home

Sometimes the promise of a new home is less about a fresh start and more about returning to one's roots. That's certainly the case for homebuyers Gary and Emma, and their son Jovante.

This family has deep roots in the Roosevelt Park neighborhood. Emma was raised in the neighborhood and her husband, Gary, grew up nearby, walking over the expressway bridge to Franklin School every day. The two met years ago, fell in love right here in Roosevelt Park, and now they've been married 26 years.

They still spend much of their time here, whether it's to visit Emma's mother who still calls Roosevelt Park home, or for Jovante to attend programs at the Cook Arts Center.

"I was raised on this side of town and it wasn't like it is now," Emma told us. "So just to see it growing, that means a lot."

But there is one thing missing – while their hearts are here, their apartment is across town. So when Habitat Kent mailed an application packet for the Plaza Roosevelt homes to every household in Roosevelt Park – including Emma's mother – the family knew they wanted to apply.

— “  
I was raised on this side of town and it wasn't like it is now. So just to see it growing, that means a lot.  
— Emma



"Something told me to go for it, so we did the application," Emma said. We were so excited when they called us."

By working on their sweat equity and taking the required finance classes, Gary, Emma, and Jovante have already met their future neighbors. They say they like how people in this neighborhood look out for each other. Most of all, the whole family is looking forward to finally calling Roosevelt Park "home."



# The Future is Bigger than Ever

Beginning in January 2017, a group of Roosevelt Park neighbors organized to represent the neighborhood voice in planning for the Plaza Roosevelt Development, and to help bring their neighbors around the table in decision making. Today, the **Neighborhood Partner Committee** is a formal partner in the Plaza Roosevelt project. Their commitment to the project is to be the gatekeeper of the community's voice and the lead partner in community engagement and neighborhood leadership, empowerment, and advocacy. Read on to learn how each partner organization has been influenced by the Neighborhood Partner Committee's leadership.

### 1 Dwelling Place

is building 48 new affordable rental housing options, community spaces, and commercial spaces, and connecting new residents to neighborhood resources.

*"Our overall design changed as a direct result of neighbor input. The idea of one large multi-family building was changed to two smaller buildings, and on Grandville Avenue in particular, our contribution became a two-story building facing Grandville with a third story set back away from the streetscape."*

### 2 Ferris State University

is the lead higher education partner, operating a community-inspired neighborhood center and hosting seminars, classes, community workshops, and outreach programs.

*"As [we heard from neighbors], our vision of our possible impact grew. University leadership noted community interest in access to resources that would build the talents and skills by which residents can generate wealth—the need to create pathways to a range of educational and career opportunities."*

### 3 Mercy Health

is the primary healthcare provider, expanding their existing clinic, adding pharmacy options, and hosting classes in nutrition and women's empowerment. This will give greater access to care and improve the client experience.

*"In remodels and builds, we generally pay close attention to what our nurses and doctors want and need in a facility, since they work in them every day. This time, our awareness was raised by neighbors—many of whom are our patients."*

### Hispanic Center of Western Michigan

is providing expertise in cultural competency and advocacy, offering after school programs, and focusing on advancement of Latino achievement.

*"Our biggest asset as a center is the community. By being at a table with community members, developers, stakeholders, and community-based organizations, we are seeing first-hand that together, we can always reach our goals."*



### 4 Grandville Avenue Arts and Humanities

is offering youth programming in arts and humanities, literacy, and academic support, as well as safe spaces for neighborhood leaders.

*"As a result of the closer relationships we have developed with our neighbors, we are taking steps to add neighbors to our board of directors to further shape and guide our work and mission in the neighborhood."*

### 5 Grand Rapids Public Schools

is building a \$20 million expansion of Southwest Community Campus (PK-12) for the Roosevelt Park and Black Hills neighborhoods.

*"The Plaza Roosevelt project is having a transformative impact on the way we engage with neighbors, partners, and*

*community stakeholders—including how we engage neighbors, share information, gather input, and raise overall awareness about SWCC. We are using our Plaza Roosevelt experience to reevaluate our approach to neighborhood-school engagement."*

### 6 Habitat Kent

is investing in 400 homes throughout the neighborhood, including 17 new homes on the Plaza Roosevelt site. We're also acting as the convener of the Plaza Roosevelt partnership.

*"As a brand new kind of project for us, Plaza Roosevelt gave us an opportunity to talk with*

*our neighbors about more than housing and ask what they would like to see happen in their neighborhood. We didn't have a framework for neighborhood engagement before Plaza Roosevelt, and now we do. After this project, listening to and planning alongside neighbors is no longer something we are trying out—it is part of who we are."*

### Roosevelt Park Neighborhood Association

is overseeing the Area Specific Plan (ASP), lending expertise in crime prevention and safety, and supporting the Neighborhood Partner Committee.

*"Because of what we've learned from this process, we have formed a Land Use Task Force on our*

*Board of Directors. The task force is in charge of vetting new development projects to ensure alignment with the "Viva la Avenida" area specific plan, and creating Community Beneficiary Agreements with developers that keep the best interests of the neighborhood at the forefront."*



# The Future is Our Responsibility

In so many ways the work you help us do is about building a better future – for children, for neighborhoods, and for the Earth.

Since 2008, all of Habitat Kent’s new homes and gut rehabs have been LEED-certified, and we’ll soon celebrate our 200th certified home. That means that Habitat

Kent homes include things like efficient appliances, water-saving systems, optimized insulation, and more. The advantages are clear: our homeowners have lower utility bills, their homes have increased value, and precious resources are saved.

LEED-certification is one part of Habitat Kent’s philosophy of sustainability, something we strive for in all facets of our work. So when had a chance to expand that philosophy from one home at a time to the entire Plaza Roosevelt development, we jumped in.

Plaza Roosevelt will be a LEED for Neighborhood Development (LEED-ND) certified project. The premise of LEED-ND is that neighborhoods are the fundamental

units of urban change and innovation. Because of the rate of urban growth – especially in mid-sized cities like Grand Rapids – LEED-ND encourages thoughtful community planning that supports things like affordable housing, climate protection, and improved public health, in addition to the construction of “green” buildings. It takes all the advantages of single LEED-certified buildings and widens the impact.

This will be among the very first LEED-ND certified projects in the state of Michigan. You can be proud that your support of Habitat Kent is leading the way in building a healthy, sustainable community.



“  
*The **Bright Future Society** is the perfect way for you to get involved and really start making a difference.*  
– Kim, campaign co-chair  
”

# The Future is All of Us

The Bright Future Campaign is all about lifting up children – the next generation of neighbors in Roosevelt Park. But it’s also about an opportunity for the next generation of philanthropists to say that they’re all in to strengthen our shared community.

Kim McLaughlin and Cameron Young joined the Bright Future Campaign cabinet alongside their fathers. Now that they’re leading the community phase of the campaign, Kim and Cameron are grateful for the contributions and the example set by their parents and other philanthropic leaders in our community. Yet they know this kind of philanthropy still feels out of reach for many next generation donors like them.

“When we hear words like ‘affordable housing crisis,’ it’s easy to feel like

the problem is too big and we can’t do enough to make a difference,” Kim said. “But the good news is that Habitat Kent has an effective model to strengthen neighborhoods and increase affordable housing. And they have a perfect opportunity for us to get involved.”

Donors like Kim and Cameron were the inspiration behind Habitat Kent’s **Bright Future Society**, a new group of donors who sign on to make affordable monthly donations that add up to huge impact – now and for the next generation.

“If you believe that a bright future for our community depends on affordable homes for all, the Bright Future Society is the perfect way for you to get involved and really start making a difference,” said Cameron. “We hope you’ll join us.”



# The Future is Taking Root: An Interview with Tuere Sims

*Paying the mortgage in full and owning a home outright is an important goal for any homeowner – but for Habitat homeowners, who often spend years wondering whether they will ever have a permanent place to call home, paying off their mortgage is a monumental achievement.*

*Tuere became a Habitat homeowner in 1998, and last year she paid off her mortgage. Here are some of her thoughts, memories, and words of wisdom about the transforming power of home.*

**On life before becoming a Habitat homeowner:**

“I was working full time, I was in school full time, and I was a single mom [with children ages 10 and 3]. My apartment had leaks, and the landlord didn’t take care of it. I had concerns. What would I be able to leave my children? To put it in one word: I was insecure. When I think back to that time I just think about uncertainty, and that’s not any way to live.”

**On why stable, affordable housing is so important:**

“Because when you have stability, then you can build. You’re not worried about whether they’re going to come and sell the house from up under you. You’re not worried about if rent will go up. So when you don’t have to worry about your foundation, your home, you can really start dreaming again. You can relax and go to school. You can start talking to your kids about the importance of owning a home, the importance of being a citizen.”

**On Habitat and healing racism:**

“Today, we have these different terms thrown out there, like ‘race relations’ and ‘diversity building.’ But with Habitat back then, before all these buzz words, that’s

what was actually happening. We had this sense of, ‘You don’t know me, and I don’t know you, your world is different than mine, but we’re building something together.’ My home was located right where the race riots really kind of popped off in Grand Rapids. That exact block. I just know that God was saying ‘We’re going to breathe life again right here. We’re going to make what was ugly in Grand Rapids beautiful again.’ And that is exactly what happened.”

**How her Habitat home changed her life, and the life of her kids:**

“As a homeowner, your pride goes through the roof. You want to learn more. You want to become more. Now you’re a part of society, now they want you at the table – they want to know what you think. I hope that my kids keep walking around feeling proud. Feeling empowered. Actually not just feeling, but knowing.”

“  
*My gratitude to Habitat? There are no words. If there is a word for it, it would just be: **Hallelujah.***  
”





# Want to keep building the future?



## Here are **THREE WAYS** you can build more with Habitat Kent:

**Volunteer:** Volunteering for a full day on a Habitat Kent build site is 7 hours. Your volunteer hours are worth \$165 per day and are priceless to Habitat homebuyers.  
**[habitatkent.org/volunteer](http://habitatkent.org/volunteer)**

**Donate:** Habitat Kent depends on donations from the community to build homes, communities, and hope. Every dollar makes a difference. The more funding we receive, the more we can build for families in our communities.  
**[habitatkent.org/donate](http://habitatkent.org/donate)**

**Repurpose:** Things like furniture, cabinets, appliances, and building materials help Habitat Kent's mission by being sold in our ReStore or used in our construction and repair projects.  
**[habitatkent.org/restore](http://habitatkent.org/restore)**



**Habitat  
for Humanity®**  
of Kent County

Habitat Kent is intentionally focused on eliminating racism and working to ensure that all people, regardless of their race, have the resources and opportunities they need to reach their full potential.

Visit **[www.habitatkent.org](http://www.habitatkent.org)** for our full financial report and 990 form.

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