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**Edgewood Veteran and His Neighbors Receive Help from Habitat for Humanity Susquehanna**

 *Veteran receives new roof, wheelchair lift, ramp; volunteers revitalize his yard and neighborhood*

**BEL AIR, MD (May 8, 2018)** – Maurice James served in the U.S. Air Force during the late 1950s, primarily working as an aircraft mechanic. After receiving an honorable discharge from the Air Force, he joined the Navy for three years. Following his military career, he worked in a variety of occupations. He and his wife, Annie, live with their daughter Marcia in a townhome the couple has owned for 45 years. Although Maurice’s bad knees require that he use a cane, Annie’s disability makes her unable to leave the upstairs area of the house, so Maurice and Marcia carry meals up to her daily.

The family decided to apply to Habitat for Humanity Susquehanna’s Repair Program, which is designed to help low-income homeowners in Harford and Cecil counties with critical home repair and weatherization needs. After it was determined that the family met the qualifications of the program, Home Rehabilitation Supervisor Terry Hottle conducted a house visit to assess what available Critical Repair and Weatherization grants could be used to help the family.

Then, the work began:

* The family's roof was replaced free of charge thanks to the national Owens Corning Roof Deployment Project, a program that works closely with Habitat for Humanity to provide new roofs to Veterans. Brothers Services Company, an Owens Corning Roofing Platinum Contractor, donated the labor.
* After an Energy Audit was conducted, recommended weatherization and insulation measures (paid for by a Maryland Energy Administration grant) were put in place based on the audit’s recommendations.
* Repairs were made to the basement stairs and lighting.
* The upstairs bathroom was modified, replacing the bathtub with a wheelchair accessible shower, adding new grab bars and seat, and an adjustable height shower head.\*
* A stair chair lift was installed between the first and second floors of the home to enable Annie to come downstairs.\*
* Home Depot employees installed an aluminum 16-ft. accessible ramp from the front door to the sidewalk, paid for by a Team Depot Home Preservation grant.

\**The accessibility bathroom modifications and stair chair lift were paid through funds from the Home Depot Foundation Veteran Program and Harford County’s Community Development Block Grant.*

A week after the accessibility ramp was installed, 45 of Habitat Susquehanna’s volunteers came and performed A Brush With Kindness (ABWK) activities at Maurice’s house and at approximately 15 other neighbors’ homes in the First Harford Square neighborhood. The ABWK was paid for through a generous donation from the Southern Harford County Rotary (SHCR). Volunteers consisted of members of the SHCR; students from Notre Dame Preparatory School and Edgewood Lacrosse; congregants from Mountain Christian Church and Fork Christian Church; representatives from Sleep in Heavenly Peace and Empowering Minds; and, other interested individuals. The volunteers did general yard work, gardening, mulching, tree trimming and gutter cleaning. Free smoke detectors donated by the American Red Cross were also installed at the request of homeowners.

ABWK focuses on revitalizing the appearance of neighborhoods and strengthening connections within the community. It helps low-income homeowners who struggle to maintain the exterior of their homes, allowing them to reclaim their homes with pride and dignity. Habitat Susquehanna typically does ABWK in three designated neighborhoods each year – at Harford County’s First Harford Square (Edgewood) and Swan Meadows (Aberdeen); and, at Port Deposit in Cecil County.

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**About Habitat for Humanity Susquehanna, Inc.**

Habitat for Humanity Susquehanna, Inc. is an ecumenical Christian housing organization devoted to building, renovating and repairing houses in partnership with the community in Cecil and Harford counties. Since its inception in 1993, Habitat Susquehanna has served over 700 families through its Homeownership, Repair and Financial Literacy programs.  For more information, call 410-638-4434 (Harford County) or 410-398-3399 (Cecil County), or visit www.habitatsusq.org.

**About Habitat for Humanity International**

Driven by the vision that everyone needs a decent place to live, Habitat for Humanity has grown from a grassroots effort that began on a community farm in southern Georgia in 1976 to a global nonprofit housing organization in nearly 1,400 communities across the U.S. and in over 70 countries. People partner with Habitat for Humanity to build or improve a place they can call home. Habitat homeowners help build their own homes alongside volunteers and pay an affordable mortgage. Through financial support, volunteering, or adding a voice to support affordable housing, everyone can help families achieve the strength, stability and self-reliance they need to build better lives for themselves. Through shelter, we empower. To learn more, visit habitat.org.