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**Women Build 2024 raises more than \$75K towards Habitat home**

*Fourteen teams fundraised and built an Aberdeen home from the ground up*

**BEL AIR, MD (July 10, 2024)** – This year’s record-breaking Women Build campaign exceeded its \$60,000 goal and raised over \$75,000 through peer-to-peer fundraising. All donations were raised by individuals (through personal outreach efforts) and the money will be applied towards construction costs for a Habitat home being built at Liberty Street, Aberdeen. The homebuyer is Eureka Whittington, a Harford County Public Schools employee and single mother of three.

Habitat for Humanity Susquehanna’s Women Build campaign focuses on the construction of Habitat homes of female-headed households. The once-a-year effort combines fundraising with volunteering, and culminates in a private volunteer build day for each team of fundraisers. While Habitat Susquehanna’s records show that Women Build started in 2012, its form has evolved from a weeklong period of women volunteering, to the months-long fundraising and building campaign that has taken place annually since 2018. However, the purpose of Women Build has always been the same: to engage women to help empower other women in their community. (While all the teams are women-led, men are included in the overall participation and fundraising efforts.)

“When the Women Build teams began building at Liberty Street, there was only a vacant lot,” said the coordinator of this year’s Women Build, Michele Louderback, Habitat Susquehanna’s Community Engagement Manager. “Since then, exterior walls and a roof went up. All the interior walls were set in place so you can see each room in the house. Windows and doors were installed. The house has a front porch. Its side porch is framed and ready for concrete. The home is now prepped to begin siding. We are ahead of schedule because of all the people who came throughout the month of June to volunteer. And, that includes our Habitat homebuyer Eureka, who has been swinging a hammer alongside our Women Build volunteers, helping to build her own home for her family.”

In a friendly competition among the teams during the designated fundraising month of May, Janney MACWIN raised the most as a team (\$13,660) for the fourth year in a row. Damarys Ayala, from team Stellar Home Group, raised the most (\$3,940) as an individual. The other participating Women Build teams were: Allan Myers, Altus Group, Compass Home Group, Cummings & Co. Realtors, Emmett Fitness, Harford Leadership Academy Class of '23, Image 360 – Harford, Mountain Christian Church, Racquets to Wrenches, Tar Heel Construction, Trinity Lutheran Church, and Word of Faith Church.

Habitat Susquehanna's Site Construction Supervisor, Jim Diel, oversaw the work done by the teams, which was also supported by some of the Habitat staff, many weekly "core" volunteers, and two AmeriCorps members. Local businesses also gave a hand up to the Women Build efforts; several of the teams were fed lunches provided by Pats Pizzeria (Havre de Grace) and Chick-fil-A (Aberdeen).

"These amazing women-led teams have given us a huge push forward in our progress, but we can't rest on our laurels" said Louderback. "We're still in need of volunteers for this house build throughout the months of July and August. There's also more fundraising left to do, as we'll need to address the remaining costs of building this home to close the funding gap."

By holding fundraisers (such as Women Build), receiving sponsorships, and having volunteers help build these Habitat homes, Habitat Susquehanna is able to keep construction costs low and create an opportunity for someone who could not afford a home the traditional way. Each homebuyer applicant who partners with Habitat Susquehanna, such as Eureka, is required to complete 250 "sweat equity" hours before move-in day, building their home or the home of another Habitat homebuyer. They also attend mandatory financial literacy classes to learn good money management skills, as well as home maintenance classes. They purchase their Habitat homes with zero-interest rate mortgages, ensuring that their monthly payments are affordable and do not exceed 30 percent of their gross monthly income.

"Thanks to these wonderful Women Build participants, we are meeting the needs for affordable housing in our community, and Eureka and her three children will ultimately have a place to call home," said Louderback. "The accomplishments of these fourteen teams show our community that there is a lot of good in this world, and demonstrate what can be done when people come together for a greater cause. I hope it inspires others to support Eureka's dream of homeownership."

To volunteer at this home, or to be involved in next year's Women Build 2025, contact Michele Louderback at [mlouderback@habitatsusq.org](mailto:mlouderback@habitatsusq.org).

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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 1,400 families through its Homeownership, Repair and Financial Literacy programs, as well as provided tithe support to more than 100 Habitat home builds overseas. For more information, call 410-638-4434 (Harford County) or 410-398-3399 (Cecil County), or visit [www.habitatsusq.org](http://www.habitatsusq.org).