



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Habitat for Humanity Susquehanna completes its 117<sup>th</sup> house**

*Ceremonial keys handed over to the Williams family during a December 3<sup>rd</sup> house dedication*

**PERRYVILLE, MD (DEC 7, 2021)** – On Friday, Site Construction Supervisor Dwayne Coakley handed over the house keys to Tracey and Connie Williams during a home dedication ceremony attended by Habitat Susquehanna staff, local Cecil County officials, sponsors, volunteers and other supporters. The sponsors of this Richmond Street, Perryville house were IKEA, Gutter Guys, Long Fence Home Products, Maryland Affordable Housing Trust, and Vulcan Materials.

Habitat Susquehanna’s Executive Director, Karen Blandford, presided over the event. She remarked that it was especially moving for her as it was the last home dedication ceremony she would be attending in her role as ED since she was retiring on February 1<sup>st</sup> after nine years at the nonprofit.

The homebuyers both faced physical disabilities requiring a house that could accommodate their special needs. According to their Habitat Susquehanna application to the Homeownership Program, Connie suffered a traumatic brain injury in 2004 and had to “learn to live life all over again,” and her husband, Tracey, was in a severe car accident 10 years later. They stated they wished to purchase a Habitat house that would be a “safe place” for them to live, as well as in a location where their teenaged son could “play outside without any worries.”

Adjustments needed to be made to the original plans for the three-bedroom home to make it wheelchair-friendly. The main bathroom was converted to incorporate a 5’ radius, and accessibility modifications were added to the bathroom’s shower and sink, including grab bars and an open vanity.

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Other features included adding a ramp off the front porch, and enlarging the doorways and hallway to 36” wide to provide adequate clearance for a wheelchair.

Like all Habitat homeowners, Tracey and Connie went through the rigorous financial review process to ensure they were eligible candidates. The eligibility criteria include demonstrating a housing need; showing an ability to make monthly mortgage payments; and, having the willingness to partner with Habitat Susquehanna.

Habitat homebuyers are required to contribute “sweat equity” hours working on the construction of their homes (normally 250 hours, but the time was adjusted for the Williamses due to their disabilities). They participate in educational programs designed to strengthen the entire family to help ensure their success as new homeowners, such as taking mandatory financial literacy classes. They purchase their homes through an affordable mortgage and will continue to make monthly payments which in turn will go towards building more Habitat Susquehanna homes.

The Williams family will be living next door to another Habitat Susquehanna house, one that was built by the students of the Cecil County School of Technology in 2019. Once they have gone to settlement, Tracey and Connie will officially become the 117<sup>th</sup> Habitat Susquehanna homeowners since the organization was established in 1993.

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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](http://www.habitatsusq.org).