



home matters

In the beginning, none of us could have known how drastically the coronavirus pandemic would disrupt our lives. Even those of us who have the luxury of sheltering in place and working remotely from homes that we own have had to make huge adjustments with children who need to be homeschooled, fed and entertained.

Atlanta Habitat homeowners have had a far more difficult time. Some were laid off or furloughed, not knowing how they were going to make ends meet until they could access unemployment benefits. Others continued to go into their workplaces with acute concerns about how to keep themselves and their families safe. All of us have had to adjust to managing this massive change in our routines.

Then, the killings of Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd and too many others ignited protests in Atlanta, across the country and around the world. At the time of publication, many people are looking for ways safely to promote equity in our society. Atlanta Habitat

has worked alongside diverse people from all walks of life to build affordable homes that can be a foundation for education, professional achievement and personal growth for families. We have always been a catalyst for positive change; and, as our sponsors, volunteers, donors and partners, you have joined us in being change agents in our community.

Atlanta Habitat homeowners know how much home matters. They worked hard to build their homes from the ground up, learned how to maintain their investment and counted on home to be the foundation from which they could build a better life for their families. Now they are better able to weather the pandemic thanks to donors who have invested in the Home Matters mortgage relief fund.

“We launched the Home Matters mortgage relief fundraiser because we quickly realized how hard some of our homeowners were hit by job disruption, school and daycare closures and healthcare issues,”

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It still feels surreal. At the beginning of this new decade, Atlanta Habitat was celebrating the fact that our donors, sponsors, volunteers, staff, partners and friends had empowered 208 more families through affordable homeownership, critical home repairs and education in 2019. We raised the roof (and \$727,000) with our Block Party gala, broke ground on our Browns Mill Village development—a \$25M affordable community, put finishing touches on our plans for a new ReStore and operations center in south Fulton County and announced our capital campaign was close to being fully funded. Atlanta Habitat was poised to make even more of an impact in 2020.

Then, the unthinkable: a pandemic. As the impacts began to be felt, one thing was certain, and that is, everything was uncertain. The way we live, work and play changed in an instant. Suddenly, we were sheltering and socially distancing, washing our hands until they cracked and realizing that we touch our faces all day, every day. Through this crisis, I have seen unprecedented change and enormous kindness. Through it all, you have been supportive of Atlanta Habitat families and mission.

Thank you for continuing to support our Home Matters Campaign. Every \$10,000 raised supports 20 homeowners with one month of mortgage relief. Within 30 days, nearly 100 homeowners in need reached out for help. With record unemployment in Georgia, we anticipate that this number will only increase as this crisis lingers. As we work remotely and shelter in place, the value of a safe, decent place to live resonates deeply with all of us.

We are also working hard to support homebuyers who were scheduled to build this year but were postponed due to shelter-in-place orders. In mid-May—in sync with City of Atlanta's recommended reopening guidelines—Atlanta Habitat began a carefully phased reactivation of our on-site operations. Construction, Warehouse and ReStore teams returned to the Atlanta Habitat campus and build sites. They are working in shifts and following strict new health safety protocols.

Things are ever-evolving, not least of which is the aftermath of protests sparked by the killings of Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd and too many others. Atlanta Habitat continues to stand with those who are working for justice and lasting change. Everyone deserves to live in an equitable society. We believe that when people feel invested in their communities, included in the political process, treated fairly with opportunities to thrive—they are a part of what Dr. Martin Luther King called the Beloved Community. We will continue to be a catalyst for change and create housing that supports our families and communities. We hope that you will continue to work with us in being change agents in our community.

We are beyond grateful for you as we continue to build, thrive and, yes, grow.

Lisa Y. Gordon, CPA
President and CEO



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Homefront is produced for donors, sponsors, volunteers and friends of Atlanta Habitat for Humanity—one of the largest nonprofit builders of affordable, single-family homes in Atlanta.

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OUR MISSION

Atlanta Habitat for Humanity transforms communities by acting as a catalyst for neighborhood revitalization through education, innovative development, partnerships and long-term relationships with families.



atlanta habitat surpasses commitment to community capital campaign goal!

THANK YOU! Amid all that is happening in our world, dedicated supporters helped Atlanta Habitat cross the finish line and surpass its \$15.5 Million Commitment to Community Capital Campaign goal in April.

We raised \$15,527,194. These funds are serving more than 618 new families, with a goal to reach nearly 1,200 by 2025. As of May, \$7.8 million of Capital Campaign funds have funded:

- ▶ South Fulton ReStore/Operations Center (\$5.3M): construction underway with an anticipated completion and opening in 2021.
- ▶ Browns Mill Village (\$4.5M): infrastructure upgrades, greenspace and recreation designs and site development in preparation for new home construction in 2021.
- ▶ Repair with Kindness (\$4.5M): forecasted to complete 75 critical home repairs in 2020 to add to the 50 in 2018, and 77 in 2019. There are 23 remaining projects to reach our goal of helping 225 homeowners with this program.
- ▶ Land Acquisitions (\$1M): purchased 35 lots or parcels to build homes and improve neighborhoods.
- ▶ Faith and Community Partnership Fund (\$200K): goal achieved for diverse communities to build together.

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said Lisa Y. Gordon, Atlanta Habitat's president/CEO. "The fund is to support homeowners who can't pay their mortgage and essential bills or who were having to make impossible choices between buying food or medicine because of the pandemic." In all, the Home Matters fund has raised more than \$120,000 with the help of partners such as Equifax, the Atlanta Women's Foundation and generous individual donors.

"I was so afraid of losing my home because I was laid off from my job," said one homeowner. "When I reached out to the staff to explain why my mortgage payment would be late, they offered three months of assistance to help me get through. I broke down and cried like a baby. That help gives me the ability to feed my family and the time I need to find another job without falling into debt. I'm thankful to everyone who contributed."

For more information or to donate to help an Atlanta Habitat family, please visit our website at atlantahabitat.org/HomeMatters.

Considering the COVID-19 global pandemic, we have adjusted our construction schedule and related activities.

Atlanta Habitat is grateful for the generosity of so many supporters who believe in our expanded mission to help more families. They include the Chick-fil-A Foundation, The James M. Cox Foundation, Deloitte, The Delta Air Lines Foundation, The Georgia-Pacific Foundation, Georgia Power Foundation, The Home Depot Foundation, The Kendeda Fund, King & Spalding, SunTrust Foundation, Tull Charitable Foundation, Wells Fargo, Joseph B. Whitehead Foundation, The Vasser Woolley Foundation and numerous individual donors.



atlanta habitat's restore is now open!

Visit shopatlantarestore.org for great merchandise and to support our mission. If you want to shop in person, the ReStore has reopened with shorter hours and new health safety protocols.



free to pursue my dream

by Kim

I was so proud of myself when I bought my Atlanta Habitat home in 2007. I was in my mid-20s, with three young children in elementary school. That was right at the start of the Great Recession, but my kids didn't go without, and most importantly, we had a stable home of our own.

Now, all three of my kids are in college; I was so proud that they each decided to pursue higher education. I never finished high school, but I always told them that getting their education was the key to a better life. Once they were out of the house, I felt free to pursue my dream, one that I had for a very long time. In April 2019, I opened Blendz Café—a New Orleans-style coffee shop that also serves healthy smoothies, snow cones and dessert treats in the Sylvan Hills neighborhood.

From the beginning, people in the neighborhood were so supportive; sometimes, we had lines going out the door. I still volunteer on Atlanta Habitat builds, and we were so proud to be able to provide coffee for Clark Howard's builds in Sylvan Hills. We were planning our first anniversary—it was going to be a block party with all kinds of entertainment, vendors and kids' activities—when we realized that none of it could happen. We had to shut down because of coronavirus. I had poured everything I had into my little business, and it was gone, just like that.

But I still had my house. When all three of my kids came home from college to shelter in place, this home was here for them to do it safely. We're all hugely grateful for that, and it means everything that I can keep my kids safe here in the home they grew up in.

I will say it's challenging, having three grownish kids back at home. I love them, I'm happy they're here, but boy, do they eat a lot! Just keeping up with food for them has been a financial strain. But I have faith that we will be fine.

Now, I'm in the process of reopening Blendz Café safely. I've missed my customers so much. I missed the smell of treats baking, coffee brewing and the taste of healthy fruits blended in a smoothie. It's stressful, trying to figure it out because there is no room for error. My kids are my employees, and the community is beginning to feel more confident about driving by and picking up coffee and a treat. There's a lot at stake, including my ability to keep my home.

I know I'm not the only one going through hard times. Atlanta Habitat has always been there to help in every way, now with the Home Matters mortgage funds, which was a huge blessing. At the end of the day, I'm grateful, because I know our family will get through this, together.

living is worth it

by Gregg

I work in the Army National Guard full-time as a medic. A couple of years ago, before I got married, I was a single dad raising two kids. Like everyone else, life was normal until it came to a screeching halt in early March. The coronavirus pandemic completely upended our lives. Suddenly, the kids were home from school and needed to be homeschooled, the National Guard was activated, and my job focused on intensive testing for the virus, making sure that every soldier is ready to medically deploy wherever they are needed.

Because I am on-call 24 hours a day and highly likely to be exposed to the virus, my kids are staying with their mother for the time being. Luckily, they have a safe place to go. Every day, I see people who have no safe space to go. Living in an apartment makes it harder to socially distance, especially when there are several family members, several generations living together in a small space.

I have always appreciated the advantages my Atlanta Habitat Home has given me—from stability and safety for my kids to financial security to a sense of neighborhood, community and pride. But I appreciate my home now more than ever.

To my fellow Atlanta Habitat homeowners: please take this virus seriously. You have an advantage, a home you can stay sheltered in until the health experts say it is safe to resume normal activities. Most likely, you have a large enough yard where you can enjoy the outdoors with your kids. I know it's hard. But living is worth it.

I know. I see nurses and doctors and essential frontline personnel out here working around the clock—some of them even dying—to help keep us alive. Take a minute. Think about what's important: Home, and everyone you love. That's what matters.

For more information about Atlanta Habitat, visit atlantahabitat.org or follow us on

