

## Family Selection

Family Selection is the process through which Habitat for Humanity of Bulloch County selects people to enter our Program toward Homeownership. (It is after a potential homeowner completes the Program Toward Homeownership that they become eligible to purchase a Habitat House.) The application process begins with interested candidates attending an Application Seminar to learn about the program and how to apply for it. After the seminar they are offered an application packet to be completed and returned by a predetermined due date.

The completed application includes the applicant's financial information, recommendations from their employer and landlord, an essay about why they are interested in the program, completion of five sample volunteer (sweat equity) hours and other pertinent information. Then the Family Selection Committee reviews the applications, makes home visits to qualified families, and commends to the Board of Directors the applicants who appear ready to be admitted into the Program Toward Home Ownership.

In December we held three application seminars in Statesboro and one in Portal. Over fifty people in all attended. Nine of them submitted completed applications by the January 10th deadline. The Family Selection Committee is currently vetting the applicants.

Potential Homeowners are selected based on the following criteria:

- ◆ Must have lived or worked in Bulloch County for the twelve months prior to submitting the application
- ◆ Must have a need for decent housing because current housing is unsafe or inadequate
- ◆ Must have sufficient reliable and verifiable income within 30% - 60% of Area Median Income and have an acceptable credit history
- ◆ Must be willing to partner with Habitat by agreeing that each adult over 18 will complete 250 hours of "sweat equity" volunteer time on construction and other Habitat activities including financial education.

## A Family's Generosity



Cole Musial of the Good Dog Foundation presenting a check of \$700 to Executive Director Linda Christy

Habitat for Humanity of Bulloch County recently received a large donation from the Good Dog Foundation. This foundation is run by the Musial Family and is a 501(c)3 corporation under the Cobb Community Foundation. Their mission is to improve the lives of children, support families in need and give opportunities to those who may not be able to otherwise afford them.

Habitat for Humanity was nominated by Cole Musial, trustee and founding member of Good Dog and a first year student at Georgia Southern University in the pre-athletic training program. "Because of your Habitat Bulloch's Christian ministry focus of providing housing for families living in the Statesboro community", Cole knew instantly that Habitat Bulloch was the non-profit organization to support with one of this year's grants. Cole said: "Having a safe and warm place to call your own home is so important to families, especially children, in the Statesboro community."

Habitat for Humanity would like to thank Good Dog for their generous gift. In addition we love the idea of families setting up a nonprofit foundation where they participate as a family in benevolent giving. This strikes us to be an excellent way to train children for a lifestyle of generosity.



# The Hammer of Hope

The Quarterly Newsletter for  
Habitat for Humanity of Bulloch County

Winter 2017 Edition

912-489-2076 [HabitatBulloch.org](http://HabitatBulloch.org)



## Neighborhood Revitalization Along the Blue Mile



### Prayer Walk on the Blue Mile

Habitat for Humanity of Bulloch County and representatives from other Blue Mile Partnership organizations joined a grass roots prayer walk organized by the City of David Worship Assembly, a church in the Blue Mile Neighborhood. By walking with the City of David we acknowledge that the key and essential active ingredient in neighborhood revitalization is the people living in the neighborhood itself. This walk focused on the issues of suicide, drugs and violence.

Habitat for Humanity of Bulloch County continues to see significant progress in our efforts to facilitate neighborhood revitalization in residential areas just west of South Main Street in Statesboro, AKA "The Blue Mile". No doubt the most tangible part of our effort is house construction. To this end we finished two houses within the revitalization area this past summer and plan to begin construction on a third one for Theresa Reed on Institute Street sometime in March or early April, 2017.

However, the most important work in any neighborhood revitalization project is not brick and mortar construction, but drawing

people and organizations within a community together to become agents of positive change.

Since the Summer we have worked in the background to secure land and partner families (prospective home buyers) so that we can build more houses within the Blue Mile Revitalization Area and elsewhere. But we have also been putting lots of energy into helping the Blue Mile Committee and other partner organizations to better engage the revitalization neighborhood and more effectively draw from their hopes and dreams for the Blue Mile Area.

We began this process by conducting an intensive survey of neighborhood residents to find out how they feel about their

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neighborhood and to learn what improvements they would like to see take place. Through the survey and a follow-up community meeting six areas of improvement were identified.

Then with the help of two neighborhood churches, The City of David Worship Assembly and Agape Worship Center, we asked the community to prioritize the desired improvements. A second community meeting was held February 11th, at the City of David Worship Assembly for a discussion between community residents, representatives from the city and county governments and Blue Mile Committee about the next steps given the identified priorities.

The three priorities for neighborhood improvement that came out of the surveys in order of priority were:

- #1 Removal of abandoned, uninhabitable houses;
  - #2 Neighborhood cleanup and beautification;
  - #3 Development of public transportation.
- Probably the next step after the community meeting will be a neighborhood cleanup day which we expect will happen sometime in March.

## House 52



Habitat for Humanity plans to dedicate House 52 on March 18, 2017 at 10 am, and hand the keys over to the prospective home buyer, Patricia Davis. The whole community is invited to come to the dedication.

This was a very brief and mostly cosmetic renovation project of a relatively new house donated unexpectedly to Habitat Bulloch in early January.

The photo above shows Georgia Southern University students who volunteered to help with painting and yard cleanup.

## Flags for Housing Program



Habitat Bulloch's Flags for Housing Program has changed a bit! Now Habitat for Humanity of Bulloch County invites all residents of Bulloch County no matter where they live to show their support for our great nation and for Habitat Bulloch's mission by flying an American flag on a Habitat Bulloch flag pole.

Bulloch County residents, if in the next few months you donate \$60 or more to fund the construction of one square foot of a Habitat house, you can receive an American Flag mounted on a Habitat Bulloch flag pole to fly on the following six patriotic holidays: Memorial Day, Flag Day, Independence Day, Labor Day through Patriots Day and Veterans Day.

If you live in a neighborhood where Habitat volunteers already set out and take down flags for each of the holidays, Habitat Bulloch will continue to offer this service for this year. We encourage people to set out and take down the flags themselves if they are able because it's becoming harder to recruit volunteers for this.

However, we want to emphasize that anyone living anywhere in Bulloch County can fly a Flags for Housing flag this year by donating \$60 or more to Habitat for Humanity of Bulloch County if they are willing to set out and take down their Habitat flag for the designated flag holidays. After we receive your donation, we will deliver the flag to your home before the next flag holiday and pick it back up when the flag season is over.

Through your donation, you are helping to make home ownership affordable for a low income family. You are also helping to bring strength,

stability and self-reliance through shelter in their lives and in our community as a whole. Please consider volunteering to help set out flags so that we can continue offering this additional service to those who need it. For more information on Habitat for Humanity of Bulloch County and the Flags for Housing Program, please contact the Habitat office at (912) 489-2076 or visit our website at [HabitatBulloch.org/flag](http://HabitatBulloch.org/flag).

## Celebrating a Legacy

By June Spencer & Marcus Toole



Many people have been instrumental in helping build Habitat Bulloch's program. Two such unsung heroes are John and Billie Pickett. Both John and Billie served on Habitat's board in the 90s, and John was the board president in 1995.

One of the Picketts' lasting legacies at Habitat Bulloch is their brainchild, the Flags for Housing Program. John got the idea of putting out flags as a fundraiser for Habitat Bulloch from his brother in Texas who was active in a similar and highly successful fundraiser program for the Kiwanis chapter in his brother's community.

Habitat Bulloch introduced our Flags for Housing Program in 1995 with the Picketts doing most of the work. That year John and a couple of volunteers installed the flag holes and set out 50 flags while Billie did most of the coordination and marketing for the project.



In the role of Flag Coordinator Billie called people to ask for flag donations before any flags went out. Then on flag holidays while the flags were out Billie would call the neighbors of all the flag donors and asked how they liked their neighbor's flag and if they would like to have a flag as well. (As the current flag coordinator that sounds like a herculean amount of work to me. I'm in awe! — Marcus.) She also tracked the donations to make sure flags got out to the right houses and that flag donors and volunteers were properly thanked,

The flag program quickly grew to about 350 flags, and the number of flag holidays grew as well. At one point the flag program grew to nearly 500 flags. This past year about 360 flags went out on six patriotic holidays raising just over \$19,000 for building houses.

The Picketts led the flag program for over ten years before they handed the program off to others. In addition to their work with Habitat, John Pickett served 22 years in the Air Force.

Habitat Bulloch has recently learned that the Picketts will be leaving our community soon for California to be closer to grandkids. On behalf of all of Bulloch County, Habitat Bulloch wants to say thank you to the Picketts for their hard work at building this organization. You are an inspiration to us all.



Fridays 1pm - 4pm

Saturdays 9am - 3pm

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