

Habitat for Humanity International Overview

Habitat's vision: A world where everyone has a decent place to live.

Mission statement: Seeking to put God's love into action, Habitat for Humanity brings people together to build homes, communities and hope.

Mission principles:

- **Demonstrate the love of Jesus Christ.**

We undertake our work to demonstrate the love and teachings of Jesus, acting in all ways in accord with the belief that God's love and grace abound for all, and that we must be "hands and feet" of that love and grace in our world. We believe that, through faith, the minuscule can be multiplied to accomplish the magnificent, and that, in faith, respectful relationships can grow among all people.

- **Focus on shelter.**

We have chosen, as our means of manifesting God's love, to create opportunities for all people to live in decent, durable shelter. We put faith into action by helping to build, renovate or preserve homes, and by partnering with others to accelerate and broaden access to affordable housing as a foundation for breaking the cycle of poverty.

- **Advocate for affordable housing.**

In response to the prophet Micah's call to do justice, to love mercy and to walk humbly with God, we promote decent, affordable housing for all, and we support the global community's commitment to housing as a basic human right. We will advocate for just and fair housing policy to eliminate the constraints that contribute to poverty housing. And, in all of our work, we will seek to put shelter on hearts and minds in such powerful ways that poverty housing becomes socially, politically and religiously unacceptable.

- **Promote dignity and hope.**

We believe that no one lives in dignity until everyone can live in dignity. We believe that every person has something to contribute and something to gain from creating communities in which all people have decent, affordable places to live. We believe that dignity and hope are best achieved through equitable, accountable partnerships.

- **Support sustainable and transformational development.**

We view our work as successful when it transforms lives and promotes positive and lasting social, economic and spiritual change within a community; when it is based on mutual trust and fully shared accomplishment; and when it demonstrates responsible stewardship of all resources entrusted to us.

Non-proselytizing policy

Habitat for Humanity International and its affiliated organizations will not proselytize. Nor will HFH work with entities or individuals who insist on proselytizing as part of their work with HFH. This means that HFH will not offer assistance on the expressed or

implied condition that people must adhere to or convert to a particular faith or listen and respond to messaging designed to induce conversion to a particular faith.

Operation

Habitat for Humanity International, a nonprofit, ecumenical Christian housing ministry, works in partnership with people in need to improve the conditions in which they live. Habitat challenges people of compassion to provide the initial capital to build or renovate simple, decent homes with the inadequately sheltered. Houses are sold at no-profit, with no-interest or third-party-originated affordable mortgages that are repaid over a 15 to 30 year period. The house payments are recycled to build more houses.

All Habitat affiliate building programs are governed by a local, ecumenical Habitat committee or board of directors that sets up a nondiscriminatory family selection process. The committee or board also ensures that the houses are affordable and are sold at no profit. Habitat relies heavily on volunteers for construction and administration in all its building. The work is a cooperative effort between volunteers and new homebuyers who contribute labor to build their house. In seeking to build up both the tangible and the spiritual aspects of a community, Habitat proclaims the love of Christ in word and deed and aims always to glorify God.

History and Expansion

Habitat for Humanity was born more than 40 years ago on a farm in southern Georgia built on the principle of radical, racial inclusivity. In 1968, Millard Fuller, lawyer and businessman, and Dr. Clarence Jordan, scholar and farmer, began work aimed at dealing practically with the problems of substandard housing. The Biblical admonition of Exodus 22:25 provided what was to become the basis of the Habitat ministry: If you lend money to one of my people among you who is needy, do not be like a moneylender; charge him no interest. This intentional, interracial community near Americus, was a place where people of all backgrounds worked together and lived together on equal terms, even though doing so put their lives in peril.

Koinonia Partnership Housing was established and the Fund for Humanity became a reality. With a no-profit, no-interest loan program and with the assistance of many volunteer workers, Koinonia Partnership Housing provided a means by which people in need in Sumter County, Georgia, could obtain decent housing. In 1973, Millard Fuller and his family moved to Zaire in central Africa to see if this idea would work in a developing nation. Koinonia, along with numerous church denominations, organizations and individuals, gave to the Mbandaka Fund for Humanity. Upon their return to the U.S. in 1976, the Fullers met with a group of close associates and created a new independent organization: Habitat for Humanity International. From 1976 to 2005, the Fullers devoted their energies to the expansion of Habitat throughout the world.

The racial inclusivity practiced on Koinonia Farm remains a core guiding principle in Habitat's work today. In the U.S., Black families comprise 40% of the total families we assist in becoming homeowners. Non-white households as a whole comprise two-thirds. We further invest in communities of color by helping revitalize the neighborhoods where we work through inclusive, asset-based neighborhood development, cooperative partnerships and local leadership development. We multiply the impact of our work through advocacy to achieve a world where truly everyone can afford a decent and safe place to live and thrive.

HFHI Founders Millard & Linda Fuller

After years of extraordinary service and achievement, Millard and Linda Fuller were fired from HFHI in 2005 by the international HFH board in 2005. This unfortunate occurrence came about after several attempts to arbitrate a mutually beneficial exit strategy. Three of these sessions were facilitated by President Jimmy Carter.

Fuller went on to create The Fuller Center for Housing, *Building on Higher Ground*, which is still in operation today.

Millard Fuller died in February 2009 at the age of 74.

Jonathan Reckford, Current CEO

Jonathan T.M. Reckford is chief executive officer of Habitat for Humanity International.

Since 2005, when he took the top leadership position, local Habitat organizations in all 50 states and in more than 70 countries have grown from serving 125,000 individuals each year to helping more than 5.9 million people last year build strength, stability and self-reliance through shelter.

Jonathan graduated from the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill where he was a Morehead Scholar. He was also the recipient of a Henry Luce Scholarship, which enabled him to do marketing work for the Seoul Olympic Organizing Committee and coach the Korean rowing team in preparation for the 1988 Olympics.

He earned his Master of Business Administration degree from the Stanford University Graduate School of Business before spending much of his career in the for-profit sector, including executive and managerial positions at Goldman Sachs, Marriott, The Walt Disney Co., and Best Buy. While serving as executive pastor at Christ Presbyterian Church near Minneapolis, Minn., he was recruited for the CEO position at Habitat.

Jonathan is the chair of Leadership 18 and is a member of the Freddie Mac Housing Advisory Council. He is also a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the Urban Steering Committee for the World Economic Forum.

Named the most influential nonprofit leader in America in 2017 by The NonProfit Times, Jonathan is the author of *Our Better Angels: Seven Simple Virtues That Will Change Your Life and the World*.

He and his wife, Ashley, have three children and live in Atlanta.