



**Our Vision:** *A world where everyone has a decent place to live.*

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

**About Lexington Habitat for Humanity:** Lexington Habitat for Humanity is part of a global, nonprofit housing organization operated on Christian principles that seeks to put God's love into action by building homes, communities and hope. Lexington Habitat for Humanity is dedicated to eliminating substandard housing locally and worldwide through constructing, rehabilitating and preserving homes; working to improve and stabilize neighborhoods; advocating for fair and just housing policies; and providing training and access to resources to help families improve their shelter conditions. We believe that **no one** has a decent place to live until **everyone** has decent place to live.

**All are welcome:** Lexington Habitat for Humanity has an open-door policy: All who believe that everyone needs a decent, affordable place to live are welcome to help with the work, regardless of race, religion, age, gender, political views or any of the other distinctions that too often divide people. In short, Habitat welcomes volunteers and supporters from all backgrounds and also serves people in need of decent housing regardless of these distinctions.

As a matter of policy, Habitat for Humanity International and its affiliated organizations do not proselytize. This means that Habitat will not offer assistance on the expressed or implied condition that people must either adhere to or convert to a particular faith, or listen and respond to messaging designed to induce conversion to a particular faith.

## **History**

In September 1986, Jack Russell, Les Versaw and Dr. Jim Roach, then the director of Woodford County Habitat for Humanity, attended the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of Habitat for Humanity in Kansas City.

After the convention, Mr. Russell invited Dr. Roach to give a presentation on Habitat for Humanity to the Golden K Kiwanis Club in Lexington. As a result of this meeting and the actions that followed, Lexington Habitat for Humanity became an official affiliate and was incorporated in Kentucky in December 1986.

The diversity of the new affiliate members lent just the right ingredients to make a successful Habitat for Humanity program. From the beginning, there were construction professionals, a legal advisor, fundraisers, financial advisors, ministers and dedicated people willing to work hard.

On November 11, 1987, Lexington Habitat for Humanity (LHFH) had the ground-breaking ceremony for its first house at 224 Willard Street. On September 7, 1988, the home was dedicated and Henry and Edwina Smith, along with their four children, moved into their new LHFH home.



From this first family served in 1988, LHFH has increased its service exponentially. In 2018, the affiliate celebrated its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of serving families. As of 2020, we have partnered with nearly 600 households in Lexington through our Homebuyer and Love Your Neighborhood programs. We have served thousands through neighborhood clean-up projects; tens of thousands through referrals to other organizations and tens of thousands by offering folks the opportunity to support our efforts to ensure everyone has a decent place to live. Our tithe to global affiliates has served more than 360 families internationally.

Although the affiliate has experienced peaks and valleys – like most not for profit organizations – the overall growth has been outstanding. In 1997, the annual budget was \$515,000. By 2015, that had grown to over \$4 million.

LHFH has worked tenaciously to fulfill its mission of providing simple, decent, affordable homes to families in need. While the average income in Fayette Co. was \$47,207, in 2011, LHFH partner families averaged \$29,000 in annual earnings. The average appraisal for a LHFH home was \$85,000 in 2013. In 2015, the average appraisal is almost \$110,000 as we are building in a new development, Brookfield Chase, where the structures include brick and a garage.

LHFH's model for success is due to the dedication of partner families, sponsors, donors, board members, volunteers and staff. In addition to building homes for individual families, LHFH also strives to build and enhance stronger relationships and alliances with other affordable housing providers, private companies, individuals and Lexington's faith based community.

LHFH moved into a new office, warehouse and storefront in March 2001 at 1260 Industry Road. This property had most recently served as a lumberyard and store encompassing 2.71 acres. The warehouse, office and ReStore space provided 21,332 square feet, with additional shed/covered storage of 32,540 square feet.

LHFH opened Renovation Station – a retail store - in May 2001. Following the guidance of HFHI, the name was changed to ReStore in 2006. The store sold new and used home goods, building supplies, furniture and lawn and garden materials, with the proceeds supporting affiliate costs. In 2006, LHFH opened a second store on Southland Drive. This store showcased furniture and household goods, while the Industry Road location had appliances, cabinetry and building materials.

In 2010, the ReStore closed both the Industry and Southland locations into one space at 451 Southland Drive, with over 22,000 square feet of sales, storage and office space. In 2011, Congleton Lumber offered to purchase the Industry location, which needed an extensive amount of work to continue to be usable space. The building was sold and we purchased the former Ideal Tool building at 700 East Loudon Avenue. In 2018, the ReStore opened a second location at 817 Winchester Road.

LHFH implemented a Deconstruction program in late 2006. Deconstruction is the removal of salvageable items in the reverse order of their construction. LHFH uninstalls items for donation (such as cabinetry, appliances, doors, etc.). This service is ideal for homeowners who are remodeling or demolishing homes. These services save money on contractors, allow for a tax-deduction for the donated materials and keeps items out of the landfills.



In 2013 our Strategic Planning resulted in the implementation of *Love Your Neighborhood*, which includes neighborhood clean-up projects and owner-occupied home preservation and critical home repair. In 2019, this program provided home repairs to 18 people, nearly half of them receiving accessibility updates empowering them to age in place.

LHFH continues to evaluate and implement solutions to the need for safe, decent, affordable housing such as increasing availability and production through rental options, the construction of town homes and expanded advocacy.

## **Summary**

LHFH is a complex organization. By its very nature, LHFH is a construction company, a lending institution, real estate, investment, marketing, retail, and a social services organization. It takes board and staff members with diverse skills and knowledge to operate effectively.

No board member should expect to walk in for the first time and quickly understand how things work or how responsibilities are divided and carried out. Even with an orientation, it will typically take a considerable amount of time before the board member feels completely comfortable in the role. However, the more the board member engages with committees and various affiliate functions, the more quickly that sense of knowledge and comfort will occur.

Members of the community expect board members to be knowledgeable about the affiliate, so it is imperative that board members have a sound knowledge of family selection, partner family education and sweat equity, the sponsorship process, the general approach to construction (including the role of contractors), mortgage arrangements, etc. While it is impractical to know every detail of every program, it is important to understand the basics in order to engage in an informed and productive discussion. You never know when a casual inquiry from a friend might result in a donation, sponsorship, or creation of a valuable volunteer.

Lexington has an on-going need for quality, affordable housing. LHFH strives daily to help alleviate the housing problems, but can be successful only with the leadership and vision of the board, coupled with the effective execution of responsibilities by a talented and committed staff.