



# Habitat for Humanity Toronto

## News Release

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Attention: Assignment editors, newsroom and city/photo desks  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Over 1500 women unite to end poverty housing in Toronto.**

*Habitat for Humanity Toronto will host thousands of women builders from across Toronto to kick start Canada's largest Women Build to date.*

**TORONTO- April 24, 2009-** On May 1 Canada's largest Habitat for Humanity Women Build event will commence where over 1,500 women will gather over nine days at a Scarborough build site to build homes and hope for families in need.

The Women Build Blitz will run until Saturday May 9th, 2009 on Mother's Day weekend and is taking place at Habitat for Humanity Toronto's Hainford build site near Lawrence Avenue East and Morningside Road.

The objective of the Women Build initiative is to break the cycle of poverty for 16 Toronto families, and generate thousands of new donors and volunteers to increase our ongoing build capacity. Over 30% of Habitat partner families are headed by single mothers and one in seven Canadian women are presently living below the poverty line. The Habitat for Humanity Women Build will have the hands and hearts of thousands of mothers, daughters, sisters and friends to ensure the success of this inaugural build. Together, the women of Toronto will unite to help break the poverty cycle and put these families in the safe, decent and affordable homes they deserve.

"A Women Build includes all the benefits of a regular Habitat for Humanity Toronto build," says Neil Hetherington, CEO of Habitat for Humanity Toronto, "but adds a twist by focusing on the encouragement of women to get involved in what had traditionally been considered a male dominated profession." This is the first time Habitat for Humanity Toronto has held a Women Build initiative and the organization has been amazed at the support and enthusiasm from women across the city.

#### **Women Build Achievements: But they are still short of their fundraising goal of \$2 million!**

The Women Build volunteer fundraisers and corporate partners have achieved amazing success with their fundraising efforts totaling over \$1.8 million for this initiative.

The Home Depot Canada is the 2008 Partner in Sustainability on three Habitat build sites. The Home Depot and its associates have volunteered hundreds of volunteer hours and continue to lead the way in corporate social responsibility – putting their hammers where there heart is.

Partners such as The Women of the Toronto Police Services and The Members of Verity have gone to great lengths to surpass their own goals in record time. The Women of the TPS have so far raised over \$200,000 adding another home sponsorship to their original goal of raising \$100,000 for a home on our Women Build site. This group of extraordinary women have truly showcased that their work does not end by just keeping the city of Toronto's streets safe. The Members of Verity surpassed their fundraising goal of \$100,000 in just 12 weeks! Currently, their fundraising is at \$150,000 and climbing.

Some partnerships began on old foundations such as Scotiabank Shared Services & Friends and Great West Life Realty Advisors, who have been proud supporters of Habitat for Humanity for years. Scotiabank Shared Services



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has raised over \$82,000 from their tournament towards sponsoring a Women Build home in 2009 while GWLRA donated \$200,000 to sponsor two Women Build Homes.

Other partnerships are just beginning like ones with CGI, Foresters™, Delta Chelsea and Kia Canada who collectively donated \$300K and are sending over 150 women from their Corporate Head Offices to participate in this unique event.

Even though Habitat Toronto is thrilled with the achievements of their Women Build partners, they still have a little further to go as they are still \$200,000 short of our Women Build goal of \$2 million.

### **Family Story: Women Build Partner Family Home recipients**

For Sonia Jaimes and Luis Orellano Castillo, the concept of family is one that holds special meaning for them. In their current home, the family's living conditions are cramped and unfavorable. Sonia, Luis, and their son Daniel all share one room and Sonia's mother sleeps in a small space off of the kitchen. The Castillo-James family will help build their new Habitat home with hundreds of fellow build volunteers during the Women Build Blitz on the Hainford build site.

For this family with a zest and passion for life, moving into their new Habitat house will mean leaving the confines of their small one bedroom apartment and being granted the opportunity to enjoy life to its fullest. In Luis's words, when asked what the term "home" meant to him, he replied simply, "family".

### **About Habitat for Humanity Toronto:**

Established in 1988, Habitat for Humanity Toronto is a non-profit, non-denominational Christian housing organization. We welcome all people without discrimination to join us as we build simple, decent, affordable homes in partnership with low-income families. One hundred percent of all administrative and fundraising costs are paid for by the operation of three ReStores. Habitat ReStores sell quality new and gently used donated building materials. Every 10 minutes, Habitat for Humanity helps a family improve their housing situation in more than 100 countries around the world.

The Habitat for Humanity Toronto Women Build project is a part of a one-time 60-home development of affordable and market value homes created by WRP Neighbourhood Housing. For more information on WRP please visit <http://www.wrphousing.org>

For more information about Women Build, please visit [www.helpwomenbuild.ca](http://www.helpwomenbuild.ca)

For more information about Habitat for Humanity Toronto, please visit [www.torontohabitat.ca](http://www.torontohabitat.ca)

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