



BUILDING HOMES AND HOPE TOGETHER

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

On behalf of Habitat for Humanity of Benzie County (Benzie Habitat), I would like to extend our best wishes to everyone. I also want to thank all of you who have helped Benzie Habitat continue its mission to provide simple, decent housing to our fellow residents.

I am happy to report that 2023 has been a year of growth for Benzie Habitat. For the first time in our history, we were able to ramp up our production and engage in the building of 4 homes, a production level we intend to continue, as we address the ongoing need for housing in the county and region.

Affordable, decent housing in northern Michigan is a matter of utmost concern to us all. Recent surveys have underscored the severe lack of available housing in the region, both for ownership and rentals. We are working to contribute in our own way to alleviate the shortage in Benzie County.

We are not standing still in terms of providing a quality home for our families. As of 2023, all new Benzie Habitat homes are Energy Star® certified, a move that provides highly energy efficient housing in the area.

This year Benzie Habitat began construction of its 9th and 10th homes in the village of Thompsonville. We anticipate these homes being complete around year's end. We also are laying a foundation for Thompsonville house #11 this fall. Partner families have been selected for the homes nearing completion and we are taking applications for house #11.

With the assistance of the affiliate's Family Selection and Support Committee our families were able to obtain affordable, low interest mortgage loans from the USDA-Rural Development 502 Loan Program. Access to mortgages such as those available through USDA-RD are critical to establishing stable, long term home ownership for our partner families.

Habitat for Humanity provides hope and a hand up – not a handout. All our homeowners are required to contribute significant "sweat equity" as a part of the purchase of their home. These homes are not free, but the combination of reasonably priced, decent home, a low interest mortgage and the sweat equity contribution, provides partner families with the opportunity to

break the unattainable nature of home ownership to low-to-moderate income families/individuals.

By the end of 2024, we anticipate we will have completed approximately 20 homes in Benzie County since our founding in 2008. Almost half of this total will have been completed since 2020. With our anticipated increase in build capacity, our ability to serve Benzie County will allow us to provide more homes for our constituents.

This important work can't be accomplished without the continued generous financial support of our entire community; individuals, businesses, churches, as well as charitable organizations, such as the Benzie County Community Chest, 100 Women Who Care of Benzie County and the Father Lovett Foundation. National corporate sponsors like the Whirlpool Corporation also provide important support. Land continues to be made available to us through the Benzie County Land Bank and without their support, our cost of ownership would be significantly higher. We are deeply grateful for their support.

As you know, the cost of building any new home, not just a Habitat home, continues to increase. This past year has seen continued, significant challenges in terms of raw material prices, availability of contractors and availability of building materials. Through the determined efforts of our contractors and volunteers, we have been able to hold down building cost increases to an acceptable level. However, since about 2018, we have seen aggregate price increases of about 20-25%. We are working aggressively to deflect cost increase to the extent possible.

Because of your ongoing support throughout the years, we have been able to continue to provide housing for our fellow residents. However, we cannot sustain and grow our organization, as well as continue to provide homes and hope for Benzie County families without your continued support. Please consider a gift to Benzie Habitat in your year-end giving plans. You may donate online by visiting our website at benziehabitat.org. or sending a check to Habitat for Humanity of Benzie County, P.O Box 53, Frankfort, MI 49635.

Benzie Habitat is continually in need of additional volunteers to serve on one of our various committees. Examples include Volunteer Committee, Revenue Development, Family Selection and Site Selection/Construction, as well as work at build sites and events. We are also actively engaged in looking for individuals to serve on our Board of Directors. If you or an acquaintance might be interested in becoming a part of Benzie Habitat, please get in touch at: volunteer@benziehabitat.org.

If you know of a family in need of affordable housing, applications are available through our website. If you should have questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at admin@benziehabitat.org, or 231-399-0300.

Thank you for your continued support.

Best wishes,



Glen Tracy, President



Habitat for Humanity Benzie County

PO Box 53

Frankfort, MI 49635