



smithcountyhabitat.org ■ 822 West Front Street Tyler, TX 75702 ■ 903 - 595 - 6630

Habitat for Humanity of Smith County Partners with First Presbyterian Church and the University of Texas at Tyler for Next Home Build

A wall raising was held in October for Habitat for Humanity of Smith County's 112th home at 1309 W. Shaw St. in Tyler.

The home is being sponsored by First Presbyterian Church of Tyler as part of their 150th anniversary. "We are thrilled to partner with Habitat to build a home for a great family. As our motto says, we are "rooted in a compassionate faith." That means our faith compels us to serve our neighbors far and near," said Rev. Dr. Stuart Baskin, pastor of First Presbyterian Church.

The building of the house will be managed by Capstone Construction Management students at the University of Texas at Tyler.

"By utilizing a real construction project, the students are developing valuable skills using collaborative software for construction management as well as learning the value of experience as part of being a successful construction/project manager," said Dr. Gilbert Abel, UT Tyler lecturer of construction management.

"As a team, we are glad to be involved in a non-profit organization that helps low-income working families experience home ownership in Smith County," said Gilberto Cardenas, UT Tyler senior.

"We are honored that First Presbyterian Church selected Habitat as the project they wanted to work on to give back to Tyler as part of their celebration," said Jack Wilson, Habitat CEO. "We are also delighted to work with the UT Tyler college students so they can receive real-life experience."



Thank you to First Presbyterian for sponsoring the house.



Volunteers raise the first wall.



UT Tyler students will manage the project.

Thank you to our sponsors and partners.



Tyler Veteran's Home Repaired Under Grant Program

Larry Harrison's Tyler home has been crumbling around him over the past several years. The ceiling was caving in due to water leaks; the electrical system needed a major overhaul and the house had poor insulation.

"It's been rough living here," said Harrison. He is a Navy veteran and already had problems getting around because of polio and a busted kneecap from an accident. "The house was built in 1935 and I haven't been able to keep up with the needed repairs."

Harrison was referred to the ReHabitat program with Habitat for Humanity of Smith County. Grants help fund repairs for seniors, veterans, and people with disabilities.

"There is a substantial need in East Texas for critical repairs that will make the homes safe and livable once again," said Raimund Gideon, director of construction. "I go in and triage the home. Is the roof leaking? Are the appliances outdated? It's amazing what you see when you go inside these homes."

Habitat for Humanity of Smith County averages 150 projects a year and maintains a waiting list. "The need is so great, and we try to go after as many grants as we can to help our clients. We also receive some individual funding or companies who want to donate a repair like a new roof," added Gideon.

Harrison has received a new roof, new heating and cooling system, sheetrock work, updated electrical, new windows and doors and the exterior has been painted. Other work being done will include relocating the washer and dryer from an outside shed to inside the house and redoing his front porch, so it is easier to get inside his house.

"When we complete the repairs on a house you see an amazing change in the homeowners," said Gideon. "Many times they are depressed about the situation they are living in and we give them hope when Habitat comes in and transforms their house and they can take pride in their living space and themselves and feel more independent."

And for Harrison, the smile in his face gives away the joy he feels over the renovations that will make his life more comfortable, healthy, and safe.

"I am so grateful for this help from Habitat as I feel so comfortable in my house that I was raised in once again," said Harrison.



Habitat to Hold Monopoly Tournament Fundraiser

Habitat for Humanity of Smith County will hold a Monopoly™ Tournament on Saturday, Jan. 9 as a fundraiser.

The tournament will be held at First Christian Church. Players must register ahead of time at smithcountyhabitat.org. The number of players will be limited due to COVID 19 restrictions. Please visit the web site for the latest information. The cost to play is \$25. Players must be at least 10 years of age and able to play the game without any assistance.

"The games will be played throughout the day and tables will be socially distanced. Players must wear masks as well as any spectators," said director of development Rebecca Berkley. "We want to have fun but also make sure it's a safe environment. Only players and one guest will be allowed inside so we can limit the amount of people."

The games will be 60 minutes in length and the top earning player from each game will move forward to the next round. Games will be played using classic Monopoly and the official rules. Habitat received permission from Hasbro to hold the tournament. The top four players of the day will compete in a final round for cash prizes.

If you are interested in being a sponsor please email rebecca@smithcountyhabitat.org for more information.



Tyler Chamber of Commerce Recognizes Habitat

Habitat for Humanity of Smith County was recognized as the “Small Business of the Year” by the Tyler Chamber of Commerce at their annual banquet in November.

Habitat CEO Jack Wilson accepted the award. “We are so honored to be recognized by this community for the contributions we make to East Texas to make it a better place to live. 2020 has been a challenging year but we are pleased that we continue to grow our program to build more affordable homes and are on task to complete 150 critical repairs for veterans, seniors, and people with disabilities this year.”

The East Texas Food Bank received the “Large Business of the Year” award from the chamber.

Non-profits have been at the forefront of the pandemic this year by helping many East Texans with shelter, food, clothing, medical care, and other resources.



Habitat board members attend the event.



Habitat team members celebrate the chamber award.

Habitat Concrete Partner Gives Back



Habitat’s new partner Viking Ready Mix is giving us a discount on our concrete. Viking allows each driver to select their favorite Bible verse for the door of their truck. If your company is interested in partnering with Habitat give us a call at 903-595-6630.

Habitat for Humanity of Smith County receives USDA grant

Habitat for Humanity of Smith County has received a \$327,312.00 Housing Preservation Grant from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for critical home repairs for rural East Texans.

“This is the one of the largest grants we have received in our 30-year history,” said Jack Wilson, Habitat CEO. “We are elated that the USDA is partnering with Habitat in our critical repair program.”

The USDA grant will be used to repair 30 homes in rural Smith, Anderson, Henderson, Rusk, Van Zandt, Wood and Cherokee counties. Renovations will assist low income homeowners in making their homes accessible, healthy, and safe. Critical home repairs can include new roofs, plumbing, foundation cracks, unstable floors, energy efficient doors and windows, hot water tanks, HVAC and more.

Jerry Russell, a Navy veteran, who resides in Van Zandt County, will be one of the first homes Habitat will assist with the USDA grant. “I can’t thank Habitat enough. This is a miracle from God. My wife and I have health issues and the ceiling is caving in, the roof leaks, and we look forward to having several of the safety issues addressed.”

The funds will be leveraged with the \$250,000.00 grant Habitat received this summer from the Texas Veterans Commission Fund for Veterans’ Assistance.

“When we have multiple grants from different sources, we can combine them and make a bigger impact on someone’s home,” said Raimund Gideon, Habitat’s Director of Construction.

Detailed information is available at smithcountyhabitat.org under ReHabitat.



Habitat staff members celebrate receiving the USDA grant with Habitat client Jerry Russell at his home in Van.

Historical ReStore Building Receives Facelift

Henry Bell, chief operating officer for the Tyler Chamber of Commerce, remembers when the now Habitat ReStore building, was a gathering spot for local youth. "This building was originally a bowling alley in the 1950s and we would come here to hang out. Right down the street was a skating rink, and this neighborhood was a bustling area of activity in Tyler."

The building has housed other businesses but for the past 13 years has been the home to Habitat's ReStore. Habitat for Humanity has over 900 ReStores in the United States. The businesses sell donated items at highly discounted prices such as usable building materials, lighting, gently used furniture, appliances and other items and funds the operations of Habitat.

"During the beginning of the pandemic business was slow so we decided it was a good opportunity to freshen up the store," said Carl Watson, director of operations. "The entire store was painted in a soft mint green. The interior walkway was resurfaced, and a wood floor was installed around the checkout area. The ramp walls were rebuilt using pallet materials, the lighting grid was upgraded so more fixtures can be plugged in and every square inch of the store and warehouse was reorganized."



This year more people stayed home and started looking for home improvement projects. "We have definitely seen more East Texans coming in to see what we offer as they paint their own spaces or redo their floors," said Danny Saenz, director of the ReStore. "We also are busy taking donations of items as homeowners cleaned out."

The ReStore is open Monday-Saturday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. and is located at 822 W. Front St. If you have questions or want to donate items, please call 903-531-0072. Also like their page on Facebook "Habitat ReStore Tyler" to see the latest arrivals.

Kendra Scott Supports Habitat with Special Shopping Experience



KENDRA SCOTT

A new Tyler jewelry store is having a giveback shopping event on December 2nd that will support Habitat for Humanity of Smith County.

Kendra Scott will donate 20 percent of your purchase to Habitat if you shop anytime Dec. 2 online and use the code GIVEBACK-OEYK in your cart at the checkout.

You can also shop in person at the store located at 8934 S. Broadway at the Villages of Cumberland Park, on Wednesday, Dec. 2nd from 4-7 p.m. If you plan to attend the in-person event on Dec. 2 please RSVP at this link: <https://kendragivesbackhabitatforhuma.splashthat.com/>

If you shop in-person on Dec. 2, please do so between 4-7 p.m. and just let them know you want your purchase to benefit Habitat.

CEO Kendra Scott started designing her own jewelry with natural materials and genuine stones and shells in 2002 in Austin where her flagship store is located. Today Kendra Scott has 108 stores across the U.S. and is known for its kaleidoscope of beautiful accessories as well as the innovative and customizable Color Bar™ experience. The company remains true to its founding philosophy of "Family, Fashion, Philanthropy" and has given back well over \$30 million to local, national, and international causes.

Habitat Buys New Box Truck

This year we finally had to replace our old box truck. Thanks to Hall Truck Center and Sign Masters for helping with the cost of the new graphics.

