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For Immediate Release

Habitat for Humanity renews Orillia commitment
Two local families to be housed in 2016 – ReStore to move in town

ORILLIA, ON – Affordable homeownership will become a reality for at least two more Orillia families this year as Habitat for Humanity ramps-up its local construction activity. In addition, Habitat's popular Severn Township ReStore is expected to relocate to the south-central business district by early summer.

The twin announcements represent a renewal of Habitat's commitment to the greater Orillia community, says David Morris, CEO of the regional Habitat for Humanity Ontario Gateway North organization.

"Study after study has demonstrated the tremendous benefits of homeownership for our partner families," Morris said. "Those benefits range from improved physical, mental and financial well-being for the family, to greater academic achievement and increased participation of their children in extracurricular arts and sports. Stronger families," Morris adds, "make for stronger communities."

Habitat has already provided housing for six families in and around Orillia. The organization's model, Morris says, is to recruit volunteer help and donated materials to build decent, basic housing on land that is often donated or provided at low-cost to the internationally-recognized charity.

"Selected hard-working families that wouldn't qualify for a conventional bank mortgage are permitted to purchase the Habitat home at fair market value under an interest-free mortgage," Morris explained. That purchase comes only after the family has invested 500 hours of voluntary 'sweat equity' with Habitat or in approved community service. Once a year, mortgage payments are re-aligned to the family's annual income. "Habitat provides families with a hand-up, not a hand-out."

The organization is aggressively pursuing building lots and fixer-upper opportunities in the city limits, Morris says, with construction to begin in the early spring.

Now numbering 95 across Canada, Habitat for Humanity's ReStores are clearing centres for donated new and gently used construction materials and household goods. By funding the organization's operating overhead, ReStores ensure that 100 percent of all donations to Habitat, plus profit from the stores themselves, is dedicated to Habitat's affordable homeownership program.

With thanks to support from Orillia's Economic Development Office, Morris says, lease negotiations for a relocated ReStore in the city's south-central business area are expected to be completed this week.

Anyone wishing to donate to Habitat for Humanity or volunteer is invited to call 705-646-0106 ext 205, toll free 855-646-0106 ext 205, email info@habitatgatewaynorth.com or visit habitatgatewaynorth.com.

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