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For Immediate Release

City of Orillia renews partnership with Habitat for Humanity
Council decision means affordable homeownership for three local families

ORILLIA, ON – In a renewal of its long-standing relationship with Habitat for Humanity, Orillia Council on Monday evening opted to make two surplus city lots available for affordable housing – and affordable homeownership – for three local families.

“We’re thrilled to once again partner with the City of Orillia on the issue of affordable housing,” said David Morris, chief executive officer of the regional Habitat for Humanity Ontario Gateway North affiliate. “With the city’s past support, we provided decent, basic housing for six hardworking area families. Council’s decision allows us to rally the community to do the same for three more.”

Construction of semi-detached housing for two families on the city-donated lot at 499 Bay Street will begin later this summer, Morris said. A single family unit at 75 Victoria Street will be built next spring.

Habitat relies on volunteers and donated materials on its construction projects not only to reduce the cost of the housing it provides, but to build community around the families selected to purchase the homes. “A Habitat build is a wonderful event,” Morris said, “a celebration of local families, neighbourhoods, and a communal spirit of giving.”

Working families that wouldn’t qualify for a conventional bank mortgage are permitted to purchase a Habitat home at fair market value without a down payment and with an interest-free mortgage. Before doing so, families must invest 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. “The Habitat philosophy,” Morris says, “is a hand-up, not a hand-out.”

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