

New Homes, New Beginnings in Malden



Habitat partner families Mostafa and Laila (above), and Cynthia (below) finally enter their completed homes in Malden with their children after closing in early February.

Everyone dreams of their own life story's happy ending. **Thanks to your incredible support throughout the pandemic, two more families' dreams of homeownership finally became a happy reality.**

Mostafa and Laila's family of six needed more space than their two-bedroom rental apartment offered. **On closing day, pride filled their new home in Malden as four-year-old Leena raced room to room enjoying the space and imagining her soon to be bedroom.**

When asked, with a huge smile Laila expressed the family's sense of achievement, "*Finally our dream has become true!*"

Cynthia, a single parent of two, also is celebrating her family's newfound security and safety in a new home. **With area rents averaging \$2,720 for a one-bedroom unit, we work with partner families to ensure mortgage payments never leave them cost-burdened.** Moving forward Cynthia will be paying only 30% of her salary for home as opposed to 60% rent for a drafty, small, and noisy apartment that she was happy to leave behind. With the support of friends like you, Habitat's model also creates sustainable protections against the threats of inflation and other costs, and helps families create long-lasting financial security.

Tears of joy overcame Cynthia as she unlocked her front door as a first-time homeowner.

The families' resiliencies embody the spirit of what it means to be a partner family. COVID-19 upended life as we knew it, but they adapted to the challenges and persevered to become homeowners. **Habitat Greater Boston guided their hope-filled journeys**, as they both fulfilled their homesteader curriculum and required sweat equity hours with patience and determination.

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All Are Welcome: Building Habitat Boston's Diversity and Inclusion

Do you have the right blueprints to build a construction team? Habitat Greater Boston does and **every day we move toward bridging the industry's gaps of diversity and inclusion.**

As we progress through spring, there's no better time to work toward diversity in the workplace, especially in construction. The City of Boston mandates that all public agencies and large private developers employ women in at least 10% of total work performed. **While we're a small mission-driven nonprofit, we have exceeded this standard by at least 50% for many years!** With more organizations recognizing the value of diverse workforces, we are proud of our own progress.

Families partnering with Habitat Greater Boston build their future homes alongside a diverse, skilled construction team which includes five women.



Members of Habitat Greater Boston's construction team building together in Mission Hill.

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Dear Friends,

Nearly three years ago, you warmly welcomed me to the Habitat Greater Boston community, no one expecting the challenges we would soon face.

This year, Habitat Greater Boston celebrates its 35th anniversary and I invite you to share this moment in reflection. A moment to reflect on the extraordinary commitment, dedication, and perseverance of our past and present Board of Directors, staff, volunteers, and you, our supporters. Since 1987, we have built homes for over 120 deserving families in Greater Boston, helping each build strength, stability, and self-reliance through homeownership.

Reflection also offers time to consider our response to the worsening housing crisis as countless families working in lower paying industries are priced out of homeownership. With most recent data revealing a 7.9% inflation rate, the dream of homeownership feels even more out of reach for so many. However, Habitat Greater Boston has a critical goal to create even more success stories like that of the Tsige-Demmise family, whose one-year check-in you can read about in this special report to our community.

To make this happen, we will build homes for 35 families over the next three years and by the end of this year, we hope to start construction of homes in Malden, Weston, and Dorchester. We cannot do this alone and depend on the generosity of our donors and volunteers like you to make local families' dreams become reality. Your impact will continue for years as families create stability and their children thrive!

With endless gratitude and appreciation,

James Kostaras, AIA
President & CEO

With your support, we can help more local families! Thank you!

A Special Announcement – As we watch with disbelief the tragedies unfolding in Ukraine, we all feel compelled to help. For this reason, Habitat Greater Boston has decided to donate 10% of the total funds raised toward Annual Fund between April 1 and June 30. Our Board of Directors and entire leadership team have already pledged their support. The final amount collected will be donated to Habitat for Humanity International's Disaster Response Fund and directly support Ukrainian families in desperate need of emergency and temporary shelter in Poland, Romania, Hungary, and Slovakia where the affiliates operate. Thank you, and please stay tuned for updates.



All Are Welcome

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On build sites, staff welcome volunteers representing diverse racial, ethnic, faith, age and gender groups. Against this backdrop, volunteers find their experiences with us to be accepting, inspiring, and motivational.

*"I was afraid I would get in the way because I have no building experience, but they were nice and taught me. By the end of the day, I was putting up sheetrock with them and felt bad*ss!"*

Diana Restrepo, Definitive Healthcare

Habitat Greater Boston aims to be a local leader of diversity and inclusion because together, we build stronger communities and partnerships with many diverse families. **We recognize work lies ahead, but thanks to you we nailed down the formula for building a workforce our community counts on.**

Join us in celebrating our diverse, multi-talented construction team and hundreds of volunteers who make our work possible. Put on a hard hat and build with us this year... **all are welcome!** Visit our website to learn more.



Longtime partner Definitive Healthcare building with us again!

Looking Back: Partner Family... Partner Community

We partner with families and their communities to build healthy futures! A year ago, three families transformed their lives when they closed on their homes and today, we share a check-in with one of them, the Tsige-Demmise family.

Mekdes Tsige, Abebaw Demmisse, and their two sons, Aron and Leul, left their one-bedroom apartment behind in pursuit of homeownership. These days, the parents greet guests in Mekdes' favorite room, the kitchen, with aromas of traditional Ethiopian cuisine such as injera, misir wat, or dabo, a dessert-style honey bread.

Aron and Leul offer their own greeting of playtime laughter from the basement, relieving Mekdes and Abebaw's worries of disturbing neighbors. With old worries fading away, the family instead found welcoming neighbors who have already been living in the Habitat Boston built homes.

All three families built a community of mutual understanding and support. Through our families, homeownership becomes a community building model to share advice, stories, and recipes. Children forge lifelong friendships and memories in the comfort of their own homes and communities.

There are countless benefits associated with homeownership. From generational wealth building to improved educational outcomes, each family is building the future they dreamed of, and then some. It can be challenging to narrow down the best of homeownership, but not for Mekdes and Abebaw.

"What we love the most about owning a home is the feeling of stability," they share.

Thank you for being the foundation of our families' partner communities. This year, when we begin transforming the lives of **12 new hardworking families, we will know it is possible because of our caring community of donors, volunteers, and advocates that support us each day.**



Overjoyed Mekdes receives overflowing welcome home basket from generous parishioners at St. Cecilia's!

Mekdes' Dabo Recipe

Ingredients

- 4 cups of bread flour
- 1½ cup of warm water
- 1 cup of oil
- ½ cup of sugar (Mekdes uses around ¼ cup)
- 2 tbsp yeast
- 1 tbsp nigella seeds
- 1 tbsp salt (Mekdes uses around ½ tbsp)



Steps:

1. Add the water, salt, nigella seeds, and sugar to a mixing bowl and briefly stir.
2. Next add the yeast and oil to the bowl and stir again.
3. Plastic wrap the bowl and let it sit at room temperature until the mixture thickens, about 20 minutes.
4. Add the flour and using your hands or a mixer, mix until you've created dough. Be sure to knead the dough well and shape it into a loose ball.
5. Plastic wrap the dough and let it sit at room temperature for 40mins - 1 hour, or until the dough doubles in size.
6. Use non-stick spray to coat the pan you'll use to bake the dough and place the dough in the pan, spreading it evenly throughout.
7. Again, plastic wrap the dough and let it sit at room temperature for 40mins - 1 hour, or until the dough doubles in size.
8. Preheat the oven to 375F
9. Bake the dough for 35-40 minutes, or until the dough is golden brown.
10. ENJOY!

Note: Worth the effort!

A Faithful Call to Help Habitat Boston Build More

Even the most frigid mornings can be warmed by the most heartfelt acts of kindness. In the cold of last December, a supporter called our office expressing her family's commitment to our work.

As Lisa and Richard renovated their home, they considered the countless Greater Boston families who may never experience the safety and pride of homeownership. The family believed in their faith's call to love others and decided to scale back their home's budget to offer others similar comforts.

Today, the couple and their three daughters hope this significant contribution will inspire others to feel an expression of God's love or be called to love others in a similar way.

Our construction team is ready to start building seven new homes for hardworking families with children through this campaign, but we need your help. **When you donate today, you will help us reach our \$35,000 goal. Lisa and Richard are ready to triple match your gift!**



"We could not be happier with the work done and deliberately left undone, knowing the latter similarly enables another Boston family to enjoy the day-to-day blessings of their own home."

Triple Your Impact... Triple Your Investment...

Triple the Number of Families in Habitat Boston Homes!

3X

Please make a gift today to **Triple Your Impact – a gift that Lisa and Richard will triple match!** Your support will bring the pride and joy of homeownership to more hardworking local families.

Every dollar donated to support this campaign will be matched not once, not twice, but three times!

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Two stories, three years in the making, all become worth it in the end. For a partner family embarking on a journey of health and wellbeing in a loving home, and for Habitat Greater Boston giving more families the resources to realize their dreams and change their lives.

In 2022, we will welcome 12 new hardworking families into our homeownership program. Your continued generosity bookends countless families experiencing happy, new beginnings!

