

Lake-Geauga Habitat for Humanity breaks ground on 97th home in Painesville

Lake-Geauga Habitat for Humanity officially launched their 100th Home and Beyond fundraising initiative with a groundbreaking of their 97th home in Painesville. (Marah Morrison — The News-Herald)



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PUBLISHED: April 2, 2023 at 4:45 p.m. | UPDATED: April 2, 2023 at 5:12 p.m.

[Lake-Geauga Habitat for Humanity](#) officially launched its 100th Home and Beyond fundraising initiative over the weekend with a groundbreaking of its 97th home in Painesville.

The initiative came about as the organization completed 96 homes to date as an affiliate.

“We are looking forward to getting to a milestone of celebrating our 100th home,” said Michael Barb, executive director of Lake-Geauga Habitat. “Our goal is to raise \$1.2 million over the next couple of years. That’ll give us the proceeds we need to build five more homes, taking us to 100 and beyond. We also have 30 repair projects.”

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Located near Lake Erie College, home No. 97 will be built in the next six to eight months once the final permitting is completed, Barb said.

“When we build in any neighborhood, we do try to make sure that we are staying true to the architecture on the type of homes in that area,” he said. “This will be a

two-story, four-bedroom, home with two baths and a basement. The real joyous moment is when we actually finish a home, dedicate and hand the keys over, but this is fun to be involved on the front end of the process. We talk about all the time about inviting people to be part of our story. We couldn't be more thrilled to get this project started."

The launch and groundbreaking took place April 2. Barb said it's not just about the launch of the fundraiser, but a celebration with a future home owner.



"She'll be here to celebrate and participate in the groundbreaking of her own home," he said. "Our homeowners are at the heart of what we do as a Habitat affiliate."

Charne, a mother of two, has been a Painesville resident since high school. A graduate of Harvey High School, she is over filled with many feelings and is extremely thankful, she said.

Per Lake-Geauga Habitat's policy, the last names of homeowners are kept private.

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"It's hard to describe," Charne said. "This is one of my greatest blessings outside of my children. It's like having children all over again."

Charne is grateful for not just her family, but for all the families Lake-Geauga Habitat's program was able to help, she said.

"I wanted this for my girls so much and I'm so thankful to Habitat for giving me this opportunity to give this to my children," Charne said. "I want to be able to give back to the community. I would love to volunteer, help build anyone else's home and learn more about how I can help others."

Charne has wanted to have a home since she was a young girl and she's worked hard, going to various homeowner classes and saving programs, said Becky Gillespy, family services manager.

"This has been a dream for her and for me, it's encouraging to be a part of that dream for someone," Gillespy said.

Gillespy started out volunteering for what was Geauga County Habitat for Humanity in 2006. She has been a part of the Selection Committee, as well as the Support Committee.

"I love it," she said. "It's incredibly rewarding. I said Charne, I have one more question for you because I had been calling back and forth while we were in the selection process. I said how would you like a Habitat home? She screamed, cried and she was so happy."

Putting people who need to be in a nice home is an awesome experience, said Al Romanini, board chairman.

"Habitat's mission is everybody deserves a safe, nice place to live," he said.