

“We talk a lot about children and children being our future, but we forget about the aging population. They are our yesterday, our present and our tomorrow. They’re the people who have built the foundation of our communities; they are our storytellers. If we could just change the narrative of that conversation, I think that could be really powerful.”

– Janice Watkins, Executive Director, Topeka
Habitat for Humanity



Aging in Place with Habitat for Humanity

Through our Aging in Place program, Habitat partners with families, communities and local organizations to offer products and services that foster safe, livable homes and communities, improving the quality of life for older adults. In many areas, Habitat uses our Housing Plus model and Aging in Place strategies when working with older adult homeowners.

Housing Plus includes two different assessments to make sure we understand each homeowner’s needs. The first is completed by a health or human services professional who has a conversation with the homeowners about their activities of daily living, such as how they pay bills, clean their homes, communicate with others, run errands and shop. The second assessment includes a home repair evaluation by a construction specialist from the local Habitat organization.

The assessments allow Habitat to provide modifications specific to each homeowner’s lifestyle. Combining repairs and modifications along with an understanding of community resources allows homeowners to remain safely and securely in their homes as they age.

In light of the COVID-19 crisis and its increased impact on older Americans, funding to keep these older adults in safe, decent homes is more important than ever. Habitat is committed to completing repairs and modifications and continuing to enhance community resources when it is safe to do so.

20%

of the U.S. population will be 65 or older by 2030, and by 2034, older adults will outnumber children.

7,242

homeowners were served by Habitat through home repairs in fiscal year 2019.

54%

of the repairs were for individuals age 65 and older.

“Most older adults plan to remain in their current homes as they age. To do so, though, many of these households will need to modify their homes to accommodate the physical limitations of aging, fueling strong growth in the remodeling market.”

– Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, *The State of the Nation’s Housing 2019*

STAYING IN THEIR FAMILY HOME

Bobby, 66, and his 91-year-old mother, Vera, live together in a home in Gwinnett County, Georgia, that they purchased in the 1970s. The home is more than 60 years old and was in need of a number of repairs that Bobby was unable to complete on his own. When Bobby learned about Habitat for Humanity of Gwinnett County's Aging in Place home repair program, he immediately applied.

Employees and volunteers from Gwinnett Habitat helped Bobby and Vera make their home beautiful once again. They replaced rotted siding on the outside of the home and power-washed the remaining siding before giving the entire house a new coat of exterior paint.

More importantly, Gwinnett Habitat was able to address some accessibility issues that made the home much more livable for Bobby and Vera. They both need assistance to get around; Bobby uses a cane, and Vera uses a walker or a scooter. The main bathroom in the home had become unusable because of mold and rotting floorboards, and neither Bobby nor Vera could safely get in and out of the bathtub. Gwinnett Habitat installed a new ADA-compliant

toilet and sink, along with a walk-in shower stall to minimize future risk of falls. Now Vera is able to take showers regularly in a much safer environment. Bobby and Vera also received new front steps to replace the old ones that were deteriorating and a new ramp that allows Vera to safely get down from the porch on her scooter.

Alleviating home repair and accessibility issues enabled the mother and son to remain in their much-loved family home, and they feel relieved and grateful for the assistance Gwinnett Habitat provided.

"Nothing would have been done without Gwinnett Habitat," Vera says.



Thanks to Habitat's Aging in Place program, more people like Bobby, above, and Vera can choose where they grow older.

"As both the number and share of older households in the United States increase to unprecedented levels, inequalities are becoming more evident. Within the 65-and-over age group, most recent income gains have gone to the highest earners, and the number of households with housing cost burdens has reached an all-time high."

– From *Housing America's Older Adults 2019*, published by the Joint Center for Housing Studies

Over the next 20 years, households in their 80s will be the fastest-growing age group.

Older residents provide stability in their communities. We invite you to honor and assist them today by making a gift to Habitat to help us partner with older adults and support them as they age in place.



285 Peachtree Center Ave. NE, Suite 2700, Atlanta, GA 30303-1220 USA
322 W. Lamar St., Americus, GA 31709-3543 USA
(800) 422-4828 fax (229) 928-8811 publicinfo@habitat.org habitat.org