

PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Habitat for Humanity Donation Shapes Future

(Brookings, SD, January 5, 2020) – Brookings Area Habitat for Humanity announces the largest single contribution in the non-profit's 26 year history: a one million dollar gift from an anonymous donor.

"The generosity is overwhelming," Habitat's Executive Director Dan McColley said. "This means we will be building in the city of Brookings for the next decade."

However, a home cannot exist without the land upon which to build. Acquiring such property has often been a struggle for the organization that relies on volunteers to help construct the home. "It is difficult to build an affordable home when the starting cost of owning the land is high," McColley said. "This will be a game changer for us."

The donor's gift will now allow a large tract of land to be purchased at one time for use in coming years. Longtime Habitat supporters Keith and Cathy Vanderwal-Rounds are selling Habitat roughly 7.5 acres of a 22 acre development along West 20 Street South in Brookings.

The Habitat acreage is planned to primarily consist of single attached homes or duplexes, but will have some single family homes as well. This will allow more homes per acre, also reducing the cost of each for the organization, ultimately helping increase the number of families serviced.

"The City of Brookings vision is to be a welcoming, inclusive community where all can bring their dreams! The recent generous gift and innovative efforts of Brookings Area Habitat for Humanity will ensure many families will attain the dream of homeownership," according to City Manager Paul Briseno. "The City of Brookings is committed to continued efforts that integrate better land use and opportunities for homeownership."

While land costs may be covered for the immediate future, it does mean that Habitat will look to the public to make sure the building goals are met. An increase in physical labor in the form of volunteers as well as an increase in financial help to purchase the building materials needed now take on an increased importance for the organization.

The donor has designated these funds for the purchase and development of land. It cannot be used for building materials or any other cost. Those funds, instead, need to come from other means such as individuals, businesses, grants, gifts in kind, planned giving, etc. "It means we need the community's support now more than ever." McColley said

"We cannot thank the donor enough for showing how much they believe in our community and our mission to help build a better Brookings." McColley said. "Now it's time to roll up our sleeves and get to work."

Brookings Area Habitat for Humanity was established in 1996, celebrating more than 25 years serving the community. It has built and sold 73 homes, with four projects currently under construction. Additionally, they have completed more than 65 repair projects for families in need.