



FAITH IN ACTION COMMITTEE

2012-2013

“Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.”
James 2:17

“It is through service to our fellow beings that we gain an understanding of the Lord.”
Guru Granth Sahib

“That gift which is made to the needy at the right place and at the right time, without aspiring for any return but as one’s duty of care for every being, is the most auspicious gift of all.”
Bhagavad Gita 17.20

“Whoever saves a life of one human being, it would be as if he saved the life of all mankind.”
Qur’an, Chapter 5, Verse 32

“I command you to be open-handed towards your brothers and towards the poor and needy in the land.”
Deuteronomy 15:11



Habitat for Humanity International

Founded in 1976 by Millard and Linda Fuller, Habitat for Humanity International seeks to end poverty housing worldwide. An ecumenical Christian housing ministry, Habitat works in partnership with people in need to build simple, decent homes. The houses are then sold to partner families at no profit, through zero-interest loans. Habitat operates in more than ninety countries around the globe. Habitat for Humanity was established to demonstrate the love and teachings of Jesus Christ. Habitat for Humanity understands that personal contacts with different communities are a must.



Bryan/College Station Habitat for Humanity

Bryan/College Station Habitat for Humanity is an ecumenical, nonprofit organization dedicated to eliminating poverty housing and making the right to simple, decent shelter a matter of conscience and action. Habitat brings together individuals, churches and faith-based organizations, businesses, and other organizations from all sectors of the community to build simple, decent homes with low-income families.



B/CS Habitat began building homes in 1989 on scattered sites throughout Bryan and College Station. In 1998, B/CS Habitat started its first subdivision, Miracle Place, a 16 home development. In 2001, construction began on a second 47 home subdivision, Sharon's Court, which was completed in 2005. Angel's Gate, a 20-acre, 110-home subdivision adjacent to Sharon's Court began in early 2006. Angels Gate will be followed by a fourth subdivision, Faith subdivision, where we will build 24 homes on East Martin Luther King Drive.

B/CS Habitat serves families in Bryan and College Station who earn between 30%-60% of the median income and are in need of quality affordable housing. Approximately 3,000 families in the area are in the target population.

About Faith in Action

The Faith in Action Committee is a volunteer-based committee formed to cultivate, improve, and facilitate B/CS Habitat for Humanity's relationship with local faith-based organizations. Since its inception, the Faith in Action Committee has worked to build 19 homes in the Bryan/College Station community.



The Faith in Action Committee has a chair who leads the group throughout the year. Members of the Faith in Action Committee are committed to carrying out the stated purpose of the Faith in Action Committee and Bryan/College Station Habitat for Humanity. A member will develop partnerships with churches and other faith-based organizations to further the ministry of Habitat to eliminate poverty housing, as well as create a close bond between his or her place of worship and B/CS Habitat for Humanity.

Chair of Faith in Action Committee

Desired Experience:

- Understand the Habitat for Humanity philosophy and have the desire to promote it
- Have good “people” skills and be able to work with all different kinds of individuals
- Be willing to take on and complete team projects
- Be a team player

Responsibilities:

- Lead monthly meetings.
- Work closely with the Habitat affiliate to ensure all B/CS Habitat for Humanity events are promoted in local faith-based organizations, listed in bulletins, and make sure that congregations are aware of Habitat's mission, local Habitat activities, and opportunities for congregation participation.
- Arrange for presentations, information tables, flyers, etc. to raise awareness of Habitat for Humanity in faith-based organizations of Bryan/College Station.
- Maintain close ties with currently involved churches and faith-based organizations.
- Contact local faith-based organizations to promote their involvement through meeting space, workers and work crews, material donations, religious leaders for wall raisings and dedications, etc.

Member of Faith in Action Committee

Expected Commitment:

- A minimum of one year.
- Attendance at monthly Faith in Action Committee Meetings.

- In addition, members will be expected to report monthly to their place of worship. On average, a commitment of 1-2 hours per month is expected for each member.

Responsibilities:

- Regularly attend Faith in Action Committee meetings in order to be fully informed about Habitat's mission, events, and activities.
- Initiate opportunities to communicate information and requests for action about all aspects of Habitat's activities to faith-based organizations and its members using telephone, email, announcements, newsletters, and congregation bulletins.
- Support religious leaders with promotional materials; make presentations to faith-based organizations, answer questions and offer encouragement to congregation members.
- Recruit individuals and groups from local religious organizations to assist in all aspects of Habitat's activities and to encourage financial support of Habitat.
- Actively work to secure the local faith-based groups' timely execution of a Covenant Agreement with Habitat.
- Share with Habitat the concerns, requests, commitments, and ideas of his or her place of worship by communicating the concerns to the Faith in Action Committee, the staff, and/or the Board of Directors, as appropriate.
- Actively assist the Committee to meet its responsibility to promote Habitat's mission to the entire faith community.

Qualifications:

- The desire to lead congregations into a partnership with Bryan/College Station Habitat for Humanity.
- Willingness to speak to members of their congregation, as well as new religious groups about Habitat for Humanity.

Training Provided: An overview of Habitat for Humanity International and B/CS Habitat for Humanity. At each meeting, additional topics will be discussed.

Meetings

Committee meetings will be held on the third Tuesday every month from 5:30pm-6:30pm. All meetings are held at Habitat's Education Center. One member from every Habitat Partner congregation holds a spot on the Committee.

Congregation Liaisons for 2012 (as of 7/16/12)



A&M United Methodist Church
Bethel Lutheran Church
Christ United Methodist Church
Covenant Presbyterian Church
First Christian Church
First Presbyterian Church
Institute of Interfaith Dialog
Our Saviour's Lutheran Church
Peace Lutheran Church
St. Andrew's Episcopal Church
St. Joseph Catholic Church
St. Mary's Catholic Church
St. Thomas Episcopal Church
Unitarian Universalist Church of the Brazos Valley

Brian and Aimee Smith
Brenda Lehmann
Gordon Carstens
Thomas Woodbury
Anita Foley / Jess Myers
Allyn & Judith Jordan
Yunus Zeytuncu
Sam Vernon
Connie Flickinger
Lewis Ford
Dave Stasny
Clotilde Pichon
Rhoda Montgomery / Kay Parker

Interfaith Build

Several years ago, Habitat for Humanity International realized that the three largest monotheistic religions - Islam, Judaism and Christianity - as well as other faith groups had in common strong theological calls to care for the poor and long traditions of providing shelter as a means of helping families move out of poverty. This became the basis of engaging diverse faith communities to work and advocate together in all parts of the world to focus on adequate shelter in efforts to end poverty.

Many people are drawn to the work of Habitat for Humanity because it allows them to put their faith into action. Interfaith groups are based on individual and shared faith beliefs to build community and offer dignity to people in need. Sharing and learning from and about each other can also enable the groups to develop wider advocacy opportunities, community actions and transformational interventions.

2012 First Interfaith Build in Bryan

B/CS Habitat for Humanity dedicated its first home built by a collaboration of Christians, Muslims and Jews on Saturday, March 24, 2012. The financial and volunteer support that made this Interfaith home possible came entirely from local members of these three faiths. The home is located on 1488 Cassib in the Angels Gate subdivision in Bryan.



The new house is one of many that Habitat's partner churches have sponsored, but this is the first time they have been joined by Muslim and Jewish groups. Connie Flickinger, a member of Peace Lutheran Church, first promoted the idea of an Interfaith build and explained, "Helping others is a strong tenet of all of our faiths and this project allowed us to come together and share some of our many similarities instead of worrying about our differences."

The beneficiaries of this cooperation are the Alvarados, a Mormon family. The new homeowners are looking forward to finally moving into their new house. Luis and Alicia Alvarado, along with their two young children, have been living in a crowded one-bedroom apartment, but now are just days away from realizing their dream of a new home.

But this new home isn't only benefitting the Alvarados. According to Yunus Zeytuncu, a member of Raindrop Turkish House and an active participant in the build, "The Interfaith build was a great idea and it clearly showed that people of different backgrounds and beliefs can indeed come together and move the community forward. I don't think we only helped the Alvarados; I think we helped ourselves. We learned and taught that we are all friends and neighbors, and when we put our sources together we can accomplish more than we can imagine."

2013 Interfaith Build in Bryan

B/CS Habitat for Humanity is inviting all faith-based organizations from Bryan and College Station to come together and build a safe, decent, affordable home for a local family.

By participating on this build, faith-based organizations will:

- Engage with an established, faith-based housing organization with an excellent reputation
- Participate in a ministry of service that has a beginning and an end
- Have a tangible opportunity to put faith into action
- Grow in their faith and desire to serve God
- Build community and mutual respect with other faiths

A house build typically takes three months and requires \$40,000 to be raised. There is no minimum contribution. The funds for the home must be delivered to Habitat before the walls are raised. By participating in this unique home build, faith-based organizations will be investing in our community for years to come.

Building on Faith

“Building on Faith” was organized in 1995 to provide churches a specific opportunity to live out their faith. Affiliates are urged to organize a church-sponsored project in which volunteers from churches work on a house or houses during the week prior to the third weekend in September. Many affiliates proclaim that “Building on Faith” was the event that helped them get their churches motivated or that jumpstarted a lifeless church relations program. “Building on Faith” week should be a catalyst for energizing the faith community to new levels of commitment. In 2012, “Building on Faith” week is September 10-16. Building on Faith is also tied to the International Day of Prayer and Action for Human Habitat, which is always the third Sunday in September. Advocating for housing and praying for those in need of housing are also important emphases for Building on Faith.



The International Day of Prayer

Since 1983, HFHI has observed the Day of Prayer by encouraging congregations around the world to set aside the third weekend in September to pray for those inadequately sheltered. The Day of Prayer was established to make housing a matter of conscience in the faith community. Our vision is to place on the hearts, minds and souls of all people the idea that poverty housing is unacceptable.

For affiliates participating in Building on Faith, the Day of Prayer can provide a great opportunity for thanksgiving and celebration. Every project needs an ending and a sense of completion. A Day of Prayer worship service is a wonderful time to come before God in gratitude and thanksgiving for the blessings of Building on Faith week and for other blessings experienced throughout the year.

The Day of Prayer also can be a new beginning. As we offer ourselves to God in service and seek God’s direction, we can be empowered for new projects and new mission opportunities.

Affiliates can also take advantage of this special day to come together in prayer. Invite the office staff, board and committee members, homeowners and volunteers to gather for prayer and thanksgiving. Offer thanks to God for the blessings of this ministry and pray for your work and the individuals involved. Pray for the churches in your community and pray that God will help people use their gifts and put their faith into action.

Faith-based organizations can observe the Day of Prayer in a variety of ways. You can encourage congregations to:

- Shape the worship service during the third weekend in September around the theme of loving God by serving one another.

- Incorporate into the worship service the prayer for shelter printed in the bulletin inserts produced each year.
- Do something big on the Day of Prayer. Religious organizations can plan a dedication, groundbreaking or community worship service. They might organize a walk at the building site, invite guest speakers to your congregation, provide time for homeowner and volunteer testimonies and so forth. This is a time to bring together faith and action. It is also a time to bring together house building and housing advocacy.

It is important to remember that we can get so involved in making plans for Day of Prayer events that we lose sight of the purpose. The events are simply a means for encouraging the entire community to pray for those in need of a decent place to live. Emphasize the power of prayer and expect God's blessings.

Building on the Dream

Another exciting option for many churches is to participate in Building on the Dream, an initiative of Habitat for Humanity International that seeks to honor the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. each year in January. The national holiday set aside to honor Dr. King's birthday is meant to be a day of service rather than a day off.



Enthusiastic supporters build houses and raise awareness of the need to eliminate substandard housing during the week surrounding the holiday observance. One of the primary goals for Building on the Dream is to create a positive atmosphere for bridging the racial divide and to encourage diversity on all levels. Building on the Dream seeks to engage the broader faith community, civic and humanitarian organizations and businesses by offering them opportunities to partner with local affiliates.

Affiliates are encouraged to tie Building on the Dream celebrations to local observances of Dr. King's birthday.

Possibilities include:

- Breaking ground (actually or ceremonially) for a new house
- Dedicating a home
- Raising the roof or beginning construction on a house
- Renovating a home
- Organizing a kick-off campaign for construction of a home

Worship is also a major emphasis of Building on the Dream. Speakers at many worship events emphasize the messages of servanthood and unity. Building on the Dream seeks to turn dreams into reality. It demonstrates what can be accomplished through love, unity of purpose, and faith in action.

Ways for your congregation to get involved with Habitat....

- Pray for the ministry of Habitat for Humanity.
- Supply volunteers for construction crews and committees.
- Provide space for Habitat meetings.
- Prepare and serve meals for the construction workers.
- Make a financial contribution that may or may not be tied to a specific project.
- Offer devotions at the work site.
- Sponsor a Habitat house.
- Participate in the International Day of Prayer.
- Participate in the Spring 2013 Interfaith Build.

Resources

- **Adopt-A-Family** – provides Habitat families in the pipeline with basic needs.
- **Brush with Kindness** – provides minor exterior repairs and home improvements to those who are unable to complete home repairs of their own (not currently offered by B/CS Habitat for Humanity).
- **Building a House of Love** – family devotional booklet includes stickers and daily devotions that emphasize caring and sharing.
- **Building on Faith brochure** – This brochure offers congregations a brief description of the project, tells how they can participate and suggests opportunities for study in conjunction with Build on Faith.
- **Building on the Dream brochure** – Explains how congregations can participate in this event to honor the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
- **Congregations Guide to Sponsoring a House** – Offers step-by-step suggestions for a faith-based organization that is funding and building a Habitat house.
- **House Banks** – small cardboard house with slot for coin donations.
- **International Interfaith Toolkit** - provides tools for starting and completing an interfaith build.
- **Offering Envelopes** – Use these envelopes, which include the Building of Faith logo, at any time for collecting Habitat offerings.
- **Sermons of Love Brochure** – provides a brief look at possibilities for partnership with congregations and Habitat.

Bulletin Inserts:

- **Faith In Action** – describes Habitat for Humanity & the involvement from religious groups.
- **International Day of Prayer & Action for Human Habitat** – used for Building on Faith week.
- **“Litany for Shelter” on the Day of Pray bulletin inserts** can be used in worship services at any time of the year.