

# News from the CREW

December 2019



*Women Build days at Habitat for Humanity Portland/Metro East provide opportunity for women to learn, build, and lead. Women from all walks of life can gain valuable experience with tools and techniques while building affordable homes for low-income families.*

## Many Thanks to All!

About a year ago, we started planning a year's worth of exciting Women Build days and we were delighted to celebrate our final 2019 Women Build day on November 16 at Cully Place in NE Portland. We welcomed new volunteers and experienced builders alike – 29 in all! Many thanks to our volunteer crew leaders Leslie, Carolyn, Amethy, and Debbie, along with our wonderful staff Leo, Monika, Caitlyn, Elizabeth, and Raven. Everyone was hard at work digging trenches and building retaining walls, hanging exterior siding, painting interiors, and creating fencing for privacy. Cully Place is a nearly complete neighborhood now of 15 homes we were honored to dedicate on December 7! Habitat families will soon be celebrating holidays in their very own homes for years to come.

We were honored with a number of very special guests throughout the Women Build day. Two members of the Danner Boots marketing team were on hand to document the hard work of our crew

leaders – look for Habitat scenes soon on the Danner.com website. They graciously provided a generous discount coupon for Danner gear to all the volunteers. Thank you, Danner!

We are also very grateful to PorQue No! who, thanks to help from CREW-member and volunteer Susie Vischer, provided our hardworking team a delicious and nutritious lunch.

## Food and Housing

In honor of the Thanksgiving season, we focused this build day on the intersection of food access and housing. We welcomed an advocate from the Oregon Food Bank who shared potent information about the links between food insecurity and housing costs. We were also grateful for the perspective of Habitat homeowners who are feeding us bountiful and delicious food through their farming business. Cassie Punnett, Habitat’s volunteer coordinator shared this recap of the day:

“Last Saturday was another great day of women showing up for each other and their community! I’m continually impressed and humbled by everyone’s willingness to be open, learn new things, and give of themselves. Our guest speaker Prosper, who purchased a Habitat home in the Cully neighborhood two years ago, was kind enough to share his family’s story with all of us. Check out a great article about Prosper’s wife Rosata and their Happiness Family Farm [here](#), and a radio interview with Rosata on KBOO [here](#). A lot of you were interested in how to purchase their produce -- [Get yummy produce from Prosper and Rosata’s Happiness Family Farm here!](#) You’ll need to create an account with Masa, an online farmers market that Prosper and Rosata use to help promote their produce.

We also welcomed Anina Estrem, with the Oregon Food Bank. She spoke eloquently about food insecurity in our community and how the rising costs of housing affects women and their families. It disproportionately affects single mothers, the elderly, ethnic minorities, immigrants and refugees, the LGBTQ community, and low-income households.”



## Did you Know?

In a memo from the National Low Income Housing Coalition, the [Key Findings Report: 2019 County Health Rankings](#), shows that **severe housing cost burdens, (spending 50% or more of incomes for rent and utilities), significantly impacts food security and health.** Across all counties in the U.S., every 10% increase in the share of households who are severely cost-burdened is linked to 86,000 more people

who are food insecure. That also leads to 29,000 more children in poverty and 84,000 more people in fair or poor health.

And right here in Portland, as housing becomes more expensive, more of our neighbors are losing ground. A study released by Multnomah County's Commission for Economic Dignity found **a third of households in Multnomah County are below the area's self-sufficiency standard.**

"Within this group are 126,836 people — 16 percent of the county's population — who meet the official definition of poverty," according to the report. "Communities of color, immigrants and refugees, children and youth, single-parent families, seniors, people with disabilities and the LGBTQ community are disproportionately impacted by poverty." The group defines the self-sufficiency standard as being able to meet basic needs for housing, child care, transportation and taxes without public benefits or income supports. **For a family with two adults and an infant and preschooler, a household income of \$89,273 is required to meet the self-sufficiency standard.**

The growth in high-paying jobs for workers with advanced degrees has driven the county's economic growth, making Portland the 10th wealthiest major U.S. city. At the same time, **the county's population in poverty has grown at twice the rate of the county's overall population** and wages for low- middle-wage workers were stagnant.

"Unemployment rates have declined, but even full-time employment isn't enough to lift many workers out of poverty," the report said. "Meanwhile, steep increases in the cost of housing, child care, and other necessities have made it harder for households with low incomes to meet their basic needs."

**Habitat is rising to the challenge. We are building affordable homes and creating affordable mortgage opportunities for families earning as little as \$30,000 per year.** This lets families be able to spend more of their incomes on other necessities like food, transportation, clothing and healthcare.

Nearly 40% of Habitat homebuyers represent single women-led households. Your gifts are helping create a lifetime of security for them and other low-income families in the Portland area. We are currently building 57 homes in three communities in N and NE Portland. Thanks to supporters like you, another 41 homes in two sites are in the permitting stage for breaking ground in 2020!

To see more about Women Build, please visit our Women Build page. If you're inspired, you can even make a gift right now!

<https://habitatportlandmetro.org/get-involved/volunteer/women-build/>

## CREW

The CREW stands for "Connecting Resources to Empower Women" and we have been working for nearly a year to fuel Women Build's work in Portland. The CREW is now 10 women strong. If your personal resources allow you to make Women Build a higher priority in your charitable giving, and you can help connect others who may be inspired to help, please contact [Lauren@HabitatPortlandMetro.org](mailto:Lauren@HabitatPortlandMetro.org) or 503-287-9529 x21.





**Work hard. Keep it on the level. Happy Holidays from all of us at Habitat!**

In partnership,

Lauren Johnson for the CREW

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**P.S. Our next Women Build day is March 7, 2020 in honor of International Women's Day!** Save the date and contact [Cassie@HabitatPortlandMetro.org](mailto:Cassie@HabitatPortlandMetro.org) if you'd like to participate.

**P.P.S. Save the date for the HopeBuilders Breakfast on April 29.** Our keynote speaker is the amazing journalist and humanitarian Ann Curry! Email me if your company might be interested in sponsoring, or if think you might like to host a table. It's free to host and your involvement can support Women Build directly!

