

# Building Connections

Winter 2026

## An Adventure Day Keeps the Winter Blues at Bay!

Explore the cozy side of Portland when shorter days and wet weather can make getting out the door a little harder. Habitat Homeownership Staff share some of their favorite winter can't-miss spots to keep the gray away:

1. Light up the dark at Portland Winter Light Festival: February 6–14
2. Ice skate at The Lloyd Center – "Cheap Skate" nights on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 5:30–7:30 pm.
3. Enjoy a delicious bowl of pho at Luc Lac Vietnamese Kitchen or Pho Hung.
4. Visit the Snowbunny Sno-Park on Mt Hood. Oregon Sno-Park permit required.
5. Catch the gray whale migration during Spring Whale Watch Week, March 21–29. Visit one of 15 Oregon State Park designated whale watching locations for expert whale spotting guides.
6. Fill your eyes with color when you wander through Cargo Emporium for a dose of window-shopping inspiration.
7. Explore the new Rothko Pavilion at Portland Art Museum for FREE on the first Thursday of every month.
8. Catch a \$7 movie at Laurelhurst Theater all day on Tuesdays.
9. Warm up and unwind at McMenamins Kennedy School Soaking Pool. Reservations needed.
10. Celebrate Lunar New Year with the Dragon Dance Parade starting at Portland Chinatown Museum in February.

*Does your family have a great winter tradition or favorite winter adventure? We'd love to see them! Send to [hello@habitatportlandregion.org](mailto:hello@habitatportlandregion.org) and we'll share your suggestions in the next monthly email.*

## Questions? We're here to help!

Our main office is open weekdays from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm.  
1478 NE Killingsworth St, Portland, OR 97211  
Appointments recommended. Walk-ins welcome.

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## In this issue

- Homeowner Leadership Council Updates
- Winter Home Maintenance Checklist
- Utility Bill Discount Programs
- Homeowner Education Classes & Events
- Winter Weather Adventures

# Winter Home Maintenance Checklist

Keep an eye on your home during the winter months to stay comfortable, reduce energy costs, and prevent potential damage from wet weather and cold temperatures!

- Check and change air filters monthly
- Test smoke and carbon monoxide detectors
- Check for worn weatherstripping on exterior doors and replace as needed
- Check for drafts around closed windows and seal any gaps with caulk
- Check that gutters are draining properly, moving water off the roof and away from your home
- Prepare for winter storms: stock up on non-perishable food items, water, flashlights, and extra batteries!
- Protect your pipes: shut off any outdoor water faucets in extremely cold temperatures



## HLC Updates

At Habitat for Humanity, the journey doesn't end when families receive their keys. It continues as homeowners grow and lead in their communities. Last year, the Homeowner Leadership Council (HLC) launched to create space for homeowners to connect and shape the future of our work. Over the past year, HLC members have built a strong foundation together. They've established group agreements, explored personal leadership goals, and created a culture of trust, belonging, and collaboration. This collective energy reflects the heart of Habitat's mission: that we don't just build homes — we build pathways for families to flourish long after move-in day.

Now, as the HLC steps into its second year, members are looking ahead to even bigger goals. From advising Habitat on homeowner needs to piloting a small grants program, the council is eager to strengthen connections and expand its impact across the Portland region. Together, we build thriving and inclusive communities.

Follow along with us as the HLC continues to grow and inspire in the year ahead.

*Want to get involved? Contact Annette Pronk, HLC Staff Liaison and Community Development Program Manager: [annette.pronk@habitatportlandregion.org](mailto:annette.pronk@habitatportlandregion.org).*

## Utility Bill Discount Programs

When temperatures drop, our energy usage increases and so do our bills. Need some help? Visit the bill payment assistance options available in the region by scanning the QR code for your utility company to the right. Check your eligibility and apply online!

211info provides updates about tri-county (Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington counties) energy assistance funding on a regular basis. Core operating hours are Monday through Friday, 8 am–6 pm. Call 2-1-1 or text your zip code to 898211 for the latest information. Language interpreters are available. For a complete list of all Oregon utility assistance resources, visit [211info.org/get-help/utility-assistance](http://211info.org/get-help/utility-assistance).



Northwest Natural  
Bill Program



Pacific Power  
Bill Discount Program



Portland General Electric  
Bill Discount Program



For a complete list of all Oregon utility assistance resources, visit:  
[211info.org/get-help/utility-assistance](http://211info.org/get-help/utility-assistance)



New for 2026:

## SAFE Program – Complete Personal Finance Series

Presented by  FINANCIAL BEGINNINGS®



This year, take control of your financial future. The "Strategies to Achieve Financial Empowerment" (SAFE) Program is full of essential knowledge for homeowners. Led by industry professionals, each class builds your understanding of personal finance tools and resources, equipping you with the skills you need to manage your money with confidence. Learn foundational strategies including:

### Class 1: Goals & Tools

Create your financial goals and build a budget to achieve them, using money management tools

### Class 2: Credit & Debit

Enhance your financial well-being through an understanding of credit, debt, and repayment and an assessment of your personal financial situation

### Class 3: Income & Taxes

Tackle your financial legal obligations with confidence when you understand income, paystubs, tax forms, and filing requirements

### Class 4: Protecting Yourself

Guard yourself against fraud using tools that can protect you from financial loss

### Class 5: Savings & Retirement

Develop your savings plan and consider the types of retirement plans and investment strategies that build wealth

Registration for all five programs includes a personal finance resource workbook.

Attend ALL FIVE classes in the series and be entered to win a \$200 Visa gift card to put toward your goals!

## Meet the Instructor: Carl Nelson



Tell us about your background and how your work impacts homeowners.

*I have a Masters in Electrical Engineering and worked in Telecommunications most of my career. I was fortunate to retire early (2017) and now spend my time volunteering with Habitat for Humanity, MFS Cash Oregon, and Financial Beginnings. One major factor of being able to retire early was saving early, saving often, goal setting and investing.*

What would you like to share with Habitat homeowners about the SAFE program?

*Financial Beginnings is working to provide adult learners with tools and strategies to enhance personal financial wellness and achieve greater stability. As a volunteer with this organization, I love sharing the basic financial tools and strategies that have helped me with others. As a volunteer with Habitat, I see valuable synergy between the two programs. You can't be a successful homeowner without good financial management and homeownership is one of the best ways to build equity.*

# Homeowner Education Workshops

Share ideas, build confidence, and connect with experts! Our education workshops are a great place to dig into topics that matter to homeowners.

### Resource Rundown for Homeowners

**Save Money & Connect!**  
Wed., Jan. 7, 12–12:30 pm | Virtual

### SAFE Financial Beginnings #1: Goals & Tools

*With Financial Beginnings*  
Sat., Jan. 24, 10 am–12 pm | Main office

### SAFE Financial Beginnings #2: Credit & Debit

*With Financial Beginnings*  
Wed., Feb. 11, 5:30–7 pm | Virtual

### DIY Workshop: Bathroom Basics

*With Habitat Home Repair Team*  
Sat., Feb. 28, 10 am–12 pm | Main office

### SAFE Financial Beginnings #3: Income & Taxes

*With Financial Beginnings*  
Wed., March 11, 5:30–7 pm | Virtual

### Homeowner Tax Prep 101

*With MFS CASH Oregon*  
Wed., March 18, 5:30–7 pm | Virtual

### SAFE Financial Beginnings #4: Protecting Yourself

*With Financial Beginnings*  
Wed., April 8, 5:30–7 pm | Virtual

### SAFE Financial Beginnings #5: Savings & Retirement

*With Financial Beginnings*  
Sat., May 30, 10 am–12 pm | Main office



Register now to learn new skills! Use the QR code to go to [bit.ly/habitatclasses](http://bit.ly/habitatclasses).