



VISION

“Transforming lives through a hand up, and not a hand out”

HOME SWEET HOME: First Habitat Family Took Chance 35 Years Ago

More than 35 years ago, Ernesto and Sylvia Torres took a chance when a non-profit brand new to San Antonio approached them with the exciting idea of owning their own home.

They were one of two low-income families being considered for the fledgling project, but it was their commitment to and belief in the organization that ultimately led the Torres family to see the completion of their new Habitat for Humanity of San Antonio home. Known then as the San Antonio Fund for Humanity, this non-profit worked side by side with the Torres family and volunteers to build the first Habitat for Hu-



HAPPY AT HOME - Ernesto and Sylvia Torres stand in front of their Habitat for Humanity of San Antonio home, the first Habitat house built in the United States.

manity home on a parcel of land on the city’s west side.

“We didn’t have anything so I said, let’s

give it a try,” Mrs. Torres said through an interpreter. “We were willing to take a chance and we believed it would happen.”

Both Mr. and Mrs. Torres recall the difficulty organizers had securing the needed funds to build the home on Hidalgo Street. The land’s location also posed a problem in finding a family who wanted to live there. The Torres family was more than happy to remain in the same area they already resided in – as they lived in a three-room shack just a short distance away.

There were also language barriers. Habitat officials would rely on the Torres’s 7-year-old son to translate during
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COMMUNITY IN THE MAKING – Coleman Ridge, Habitat for Humanity of San Antonio’s newest community, is moving along with 24 homes currently under construction and scheduled for completion by year’s end.

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35-Year History Filled With Milestones

As we celebrate our 35th anniversary of Habitat for Humanity of San Antonio this fall – we’re really celebrating the success of the past 35 years and the 700 + families whose lives we’ve changed forever.

Many of you know HFHSA was founded in 1976 as a vision of one concerned citizen. Gathered around her kitchen table, the late Faith Lytle and a group of committed friends began dreaming up an organization that would eliminate substandard housing in San Antonio. In that kitchen, our local housing organization was born!

Construction of the first Habitat for Humanity house was begun that year on a small parcel of land on Hidalgo Street on San Antonio’s near west side. A house painter and his family eventually moved from a three-room dilapidated house into

President’s Corner

their new Habitat home. That home is still a true blessing to the Torres family who paid off their mortgage in 2006.

Since its founding, our ministry has celebrated many milestones. Over the years, we have gone from building homes on single (infill) lots to building larger-scale communities that not only keep costs down and increase efficiency, but also instill a sense of community among its homeowners. HFHSA recently

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Dennis L. Bechhold

Volunteer feels accomplishment from helping others

"Make sure you end it here, on the stud," said Flo Jonas to a small group of volunteers working recently on a home sponsored by the South Texas Lutheran Cluster.

Stopping to survey the work being done before moving on to another group of volunteers, Jonas moved about the Habitat for Humanity of San Antonio construction site at Coleman Ridge as if she is a seasoned HFHSA employee, when in fact she is a volunteer with a few years of construction knowledge learned through her own "do it yourself projects."

"I've just had houses of my own and fixed them up," Jonas said, explaining she's also managed rental properties. "In fact, that's how I started here."

Earlier this year, Jonas passed by



Flo Jonas

HFHSA's current community while on the way to work on a friend's home. She noticed the Habitat construction site.

"I said, 'is that Habitat [for Humanity],'"

she explained. She immediately stopped and asked if she could volunteer. That was in July. She has volunteered most weekends since, turning what could be a bad time for her into a good experience.

"I enjoy helping others and volunteering whenever possible. I recently was let go from my job of 25 years, so what better way of feeling like I am accomplishing something in life but to help others and to see the progress we are making and the excitement in the eyes of the family members we are helping," she said.

Helping others and the Habitat families is what keeps her coming back.

FOR FULL STORY SEE:

<http://www.habitatsa.org/>

[faces/MeetOurVolunteers.aspx](http://www.habitatsa.org/faces/MeetOurVolunteers.aspx)



MEMENTOS – An original hand-written payment schedule is among the many mementos saved by the Torres family to document their Habitat experience.

TORRESFrom page 1 meetings.

They began working with the organizers and volunteers in 1976. Mr. and Mrs. Torres and their four young children moved in when the home was completed in 1978. It was the first new home on Hidalgo Street, the older run-down homes having been demolished.

"We are proud of ourselves...there are people who have lived here all their lives and still don't have a home of their own," explained Mrs. Torres, who moved to San Antonio from Coahuila, Mexico with her husband in 1969.

FULL STORY, MORE PHOTOS AT:
<http://www.habitatsa.org>

Agressive Purchasing=Home Center Bargains

Fall has finally arrived and the Home Centers are well stocked with goods recently acquired during our semi-annual buying trip to the surplus merchandise shows.

Many people don't know that much of the merchandise we sell in our Habitat Home Centers was purchased by us for resale to the public. Our customers' demand for bargains in our stores began to outpace the flow of donated goods several years ago, and we began to actively seek opportunities to purchase merchandise that we could mark up and resell like virtually all retail stores do.

Needless to say though, we could not compete with large retailers who had a lot of buying power and could operate profitably with small margins. What we discovered was that there are a lot of opportunities out there for us if we are aggressive and persistent in our pursuit of quality merchandise. Closeout goods, buybacks from large retailers, bankruptcies, and scratch-n-dents present some excellent bargains. We discovered two large shows where dealers, wholesalers, manufacturers and importers attempt to move large volumes of these goods at some pretty incredible discounts when compared to normal supply channels.

We have the ability (as in warehouse

space and multiple stores) to buy in large volume and acquire some fantastic deals to be able to sell goods for prices well below normal retail. First time store shoppers are always amazed at what we have for sale.

Our merchandise offering goes miles beyond a bunch of old scratched up doors and cabinets. Comments like "Where do you get this stuff?" and "How can you sell it so cheap?" are heard every day.

Our stores will always thrive on donated goods and that remains our biggest focus. As always we ask you to please call us when you hear of an opportunity that might allow us to acquire new or used donated home improvement items.

However, we have found that taking advantage of some buying opportunities presents our customers with some great deals, keeps a wide variety of fresh merchandise in the stores, and thus allows Habitat to generate more funding for our mission of building quality affordable homes in partnership with low income families.

If you haven't been in our stores lately then please come see the latest bargains we have brought in. There really is always something new in our Habitat Home Centers!

THANK YOU

Habitat for Humanity San Antonio thanks the following house sponsors for their generous support:

American Bankers Association & Federal Home Loan Bank of Dallas

Bank of America
Citi

Coker United Methodist Church & Woodland Baptist Church

KCI

Knights of Columbus - Archdiocese of San Antonio Chapter

South Texas Lutheran Cluster & Friends of Habitat

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church & St. Thomas Episcopal Church & St. Luke's Episcopal

Tesoro

Well Fargo & the The Terry Lynn Poerner Charitable Foundation Fund of the San Antonio Area Foundation

Community Build

Broadway National Bank
Trinity Baptist Church
University United Methodist Church

Ecumenical Genesis

St. Brigid Catholic Church
Windcrest UMC
Sunset Ridge Church of Christ
Universal City UMC
Colonial Hills UMC
Trinity UMC
St. Gregory Catholic Church
St. Vincent De Paul Catholic Church
Our Lady Queen of Heaven Catholic Church
Sacred Heart Catholic Church



BUILDING A COMMUNITY

A volunteer, top left, for Tesoro works on the roof of a Habitat for Humanity of San Antonio home being built by the company. Above, a volunteer assists a Habitat staff member in preparing a door to be hung on a home sponsored by St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church, St. Thomas Episcopal Church and St. Luke's Episcopal Church. At left, a KCI employee helps install siding on a home sponsored by KCI. There are currently 24 homes under construction. All 24 will be dedicated in ceremonies on November 19. The public is invited.

HISTORYFrom page 1

finished our largest scale neighborhood near Palo Alto College on San Antonio's south side. It is now home to 282 families and includes a home built in memory of Lytle, who passed away in April, 2005.

Construction on HFHSA's newest community, Coleman Ridge, near the corner of Old Pearsall Road and Loop 410, began in August. There are 24 homes currently under construction, including one being built in honor of Lytle's co-founder and husband, the late Rev. William P. "Bill" Lytle, who passed away in May, 2011.

This neighborhood will eventually house 184 hard working families.

Distinguished as the first U.S. partner

affiliate in the United States, our organization has grown to become the fourth largest producer of new Habitat homes in the country and the largest producer of new Habitat homes in Texas.

We are known for our great stewardship of donor dollars – proceeds from our Home Centers cover our general and administrative expenses so 100% of every donated dollar goes toward our home building program.

We have the San Antonio community to thank for our great success! With your gifts of both treasure and talent we have built 713 homes (to date) in partnership with families in need!

Because of you we have weathered the last 35 years!

Organizational facts:

Volunteers:

17,400 – number of volunteers in 2010 who helped build a Habitat home

Stewardship:

100% of every dollar donated by the community is used for home building. Zero donor funds are used for operating expenses. Habitat generates its own operating funds through our Home Centers.

Contribution to Community Tax Base:

\$ 41,671,000 added to the property tax rolls per BCAD.
\$ 845,000 Property Taxes Paid in 2010 by Habitat home owners.

Family Success Information:

Less than 1.5% foreclosure rate (out of 713 families).



www.habitatsa.org

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VISION

OCTOBER 2011

Calendar

OCTOBER

- 4** **Volunteer Orientation**
Tuesday, 6:00 p.m.
Habitat for Humanity Office
No RSVP Required
- 12** **Volunteer Orientation**
Wednesday, 12:00 p.m.
Habitat for Humanity Office
Bring your brown bag lunch
No RSVP Required
- 21** **Hab-i-Tour**
Friday, 1:00 p.m.
Habitat for Humanity Office
Lunch Provided
RSVP to Shelly, 210-223-5203

NOVEMBER

- 1** **Volunteer Orientation**
Tuesday, 6:00 p.m.
Habitat for Humanity Office
No RSVP required

- 15** **F.I.A.T. (Faith in Action Team)**
Tuesday, 12:00 – 1:00 p.m.
San Pedro Presbyterian Church
14900 San Pedro Ave.
RSVP to Barbara,
210-223-5203
- 16** **Volunteer Orientation**
Wednesday, 12:00 p.m.
Habitat for Humanity Office
Bring your brown bag lunch
No RSVP required
- 19** **House Dedication**
Saturday, 10:00 a.m.
Coleman Ridge Community

DECEMBER

- 6** **Volunteer Orientation**
Tuesday, 6:00 p.m.
Habitat for Humanity Office
No RSVP required



HARDWORKING – Staff members from Medio Creek Elementary School take a break from volunteering on the Habitat for Humanity of San Antonio construction site. The group spent the weekend before school started helping to build a home in the community serviced by the school. Part of Southwest ISD, the elementary school opened its doors for the first time in August and serves HFHSA's Coleman Ridge.

VISION

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210-223-5203 • 210-223-5536 (fax)
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Habitat for Humanity of San Antonio
is an ecumenical, Christian organization working in partnership with God's people in need to build simple, decent and affordable homes without interest or profit, thereby witnessing God's love in action.



FUTURE BUILDER – A young volunteer does his part at a recent "Joshua Build" held at Coker United Methodist Church. Approximately 80 volunteers spent a September morning at the church assembling wall panels for a Habitat home. During Joshua Builds, Habitat for Humanity of San Antonio staff transports all materials and tools needed for the wall panels for one complete Habitat home to the sponsoring organization's site of choice. For information about hosting a Joshua Build, call Faith Relations at 210-223-5203.