DEAR FRIENDS,

We uplift each other.

In a year that has been marked by repeated tragedy, it is too easy to think of these hard times as fleeting. The truth is, for many, hard times are the norm. For the family struggling in inadequate living conditions, the litany of bad news is not an anomaly, but more of the same. In neighborhoods of New Orleans where homeownership rates are lower, where over a third of renters pay more than 50% of their income for housing, where crime is high and blight is around every corner, the average life expectancy is less than 60 years of age.

And so we must uplift each other. This is why every home dedication continues, even after three decades, to bring joy. We know the lives of our partner families are changed by homeownership, and since we build not just homes, but also communities—like on America Street, which has been completely transformed in three years—that change can mean better (and longer) lives for entire neighborhoods. Earlier this year, we celebrated the dedication of ten homes, a year after we had finished ten homes in ten days on the same street during Build-A-Thon. On that one block of America Street, over 23 children have new yards to play in and new friends to play with. On that one block that was once blighted houses, a brand new community has been born.

Because we’ve seen time and again the deep impact of the work you have made possible by your generosity, we are grateful to have begun building in the Lower Ninth Ward. Already, we
have built one home there this year, as well as two affordable rental units, and in the coming years, we plan to build dozens more. As the Lower Ninth is uplifted, palpable benefits come to those who live there: crime rates shrink, life expectancy increases, businesses return—and, remarkably, as homes are built higher (literally uplifted), insurance rates decrease, making it more affordable to live there. As life becomes more stable, families save more and feel a greater sense of pride in their homes, becoming more independent of government resources and more invested in their communities.

As we have seen on America Street and in Musicians’ Village, where we build, others follow. The Lower Ninth is an under-sung but critical part of New Orleans, a neighborhood with historically high homeownership rates, where so much of our unique local culture was born, and where flood waters wrought unfathomable destruction. We look forward to the day when we have 100 affordable units built and hundreds more have joined us, reinvigorating one of our most important communities.

Throughout the year, your support has uplifted us. It is our privilege to work with so many of you who have made our mission a part of your lives. Together, we will continue to revitalize New Orleans and uplift our communities.

Thank you,

Jim Pate
Executive Director, NOAHH
Ways to Give

There are many ways to give back and be involved. Here is a list of some of NOAHH’s most dedicated partners and the different ways they’ve found to support our mission:

ReStore Donations

Donations to the ReStore help fund NOAHH’s programs and help provide affordable home materials to the community. Over the last year, hardware distributor PrimeSource sent 5 trailers full of fasteners, tools, shingles, and more to the ReStore. Their donations have kept usable materials from going to the landfill and raised significant funding for NOAHH’s programs.

Advocacy

Local apparel and design company Dirty Coast has supported NOAHH through discounted shirts, design work, and continual advocacy in the local community. Their support has helped raise awareness of affordable housing issues in New Orleans.

Third Party Partnerships

You can give while cleaning out your closet! Just leave your old clothes at any dropbox with NOAHH’s logo in the New Orleans area. The bins are owned by Charity Clothing Pickup, who donate a portion of proceeds to NOAHH.

Green Building

Through their Blue Jeans Go Green™ program, Cotton Incorporated has provided UltraTouch™ Denim Insulation made from post-consumer recycled denim for all New Orleans Habitat homes since Hurricane Katrina. Habitat affiliates across the country have been the primary recipients of this environmentally responsible home-building material that is safe for volunteers to install.

Comprehensive Partnership

The local Marriott hotel group always finds new ways to give back to NOAHH. Whether through direct donations, material and furniture from hotel renovations donated to the ReStore, volunteer build days, or giving NOAHH opportunities to speak at employee outreach events (14 partner families have been Marriott employees!), they have made affordable housing one of their top priorities.

Thank you to these partners and all of our supporters! If you’ve got a creative new way to give back, contact Jenna at jennat@habitat-nola.org or call 504-609-3339.
Covenant House Partnership: Expanding Our Reach

A brief conversation two years ago has turned into a unique partnership.

What NOAHH Executive Director Jim Pate and Covenant House Executive Director Jim Kelly discussed in that first meeting would become the first partnership of its kind in the country. NOAHH would build rental units for Covenant House Rites of Passage program graduates, and Covenant House would help their graduates with the rent, gradually allowing them to take more and more financial responsibility until they achieved independence. In August 2015, the walls were raised on the first of the units, and in June 2016, the first graduate moved into his new home.

“I’m just thrilled,” said Jim Kelly. “Because I think that the Habitat people and the Covenant House people coming together could do exponential good for young people in need.”

Since that first wall raising, four units have been built, each one part of a double. The other half of each double is rented by someone unaffiliated with Covenant House, allowing transitional renters easy access to someone who can serve as a mentor or give assistance when needed. As the Covenant House graduates achieve financial independence, with NOAHH’s affordable rental rates and Covenant House’s financial support, many will also become eligible for NOAHH’s homeownership program. As graduates find stability and move on, new graduates from Covenant House will join the transitional rental program.

“As people who do housing, we feel,” Jim Pate said, “one of the things we could do is make sure these young people have a decent, safe, affordable place to live with a quality landlord who’s going to take care of the property, and in time, we hope these young people will ultimately become Habitat homeowners.”

This partnership expands NOAHH’s reach, allowing the affiliate to provide affordable housing to people who might not otherwise qualify for our programs, and it fills a critical need for Covenant House, as many of their graduates reach an age where government support ends. Together, each organization is amplifying the impact of the other, and therefore, the impact of our supporters as well.
Big Freedia: Queen of Bounce
A conversation with the Queen Diva about her partnership with NOAHH.

In May 2016, NOAHH and Big Freedia, star of FUSE network hit show *Big Freedia: Queen of Bounce*, began a partnership to raise awareness of affordable housing and financial literacy. She and NOAHH Executive Director Jim Pate spoke about her partnership and what they have learned.

Jim Pate: Thank you for joining us. It was a pleasure having you on site with us, and in the ReStore. We appreciate your involvement.

Big Freedia: It’s been great working with Habitat! I got involved because I wanted to give back. I was looking for a way to do that, and me and Habitat found each other. Growing up here, I know what it’s like in New Orleans, especially since Katrina. It’s hard. Rent is so high. So I liked that Habitat helps people find a better way to live, so they can afford it.

JP: You worked alongside Leonard Fruga at his home in the Lower Ninth. How was working on site?

BF: It was hard! It was hard, but it was good. I liked meeting the family that was buying the home. Meeting Leonard made it worth it, you know, no matter how sore I was afterward. They were working on the house while we were there, and they came next day to the concert. I loved getting to meet them.

JP: We’ve had many volunteers talk about connecting with partner families. That’s an important part of what we do.

BF: Right! Working with the families helps you realize that it’s not easy if you’re paying too much for rent, because you can’t save anything. It takes all your money. Habitat helps people to start saving money because they don’t pay as much. If you’re used to fighting just to pay rent, it can be hard to know how to save, even when you got enough money. That’s one reason financial literacy is important.

JP: It is essential for new homeowners.

BF: And I know it’s hard for people to think about it. You gotta pay the bills and pay for things when they come up, but that doesn’t mean you can’t know where your money is. There are people who can help you. Habitat helped me meet with a lady from Desire Community Housing who told me about how I could best use my money, and she worked with me like she does with Habitat’s homeowners. There’s other groups that do it, too. Habitat has a whole list so people can go where it’s convenient to them.

JP: We understand how much extra effort our families put in to buy a home, so we provide options. Our goal is to set up our families to succeed in every way we can. Some families already have everything together. Some need a little guidance. But we’ve found that almost everyone takes something away from the classes.

BF: Yeah, I did. I learned about how important your credit is and about budgeting your money. It’s not just what you got, but what you owe and what people owe you and what your bills are. It’s how much you’re getting and spending, and for some people, how much you’re saving. And there’s different ways people can save and earn money. But you gotta know where it is and take control.

JP: And it’s important to understand that that’s what our partner families are doing when they step forward and join our homeownership program.

BF: As a volunteer, I was privileged to work with them, with the Fruga family. Working on site, it was amazing. We put the frames up for the walls of the whole house. It was amazing seeing it at the end of the day. Some of us had never done anything like that.

JP: Some of us hadn’t been to a bounce concert before you performed on site. Everyone loved it, especially the homeowners.

BF: It was so good to see people having a good time. The neighbors came and watched, and the Frugas were up in the house with us, which was the stage—we had just put the frames up. We were dancing in their house! Some of the neighbors got up and danced with us, too. Knowing that the house was going to a family like that felt good.

JP: It was good for staff morale to see a few managers up there trying to twerk!
The path to becoming a Habitat homeowner is full of excitement, anticipation, and hard work. Over the course of a year, the future homeowner must earn 350 hours of sweat equity. Future homeowners who begin this process around the same time often get to know one another as they work side by side, first in the ReStore and then out on build sites. Because we know that we’re not only building homes, but also communities, we’re always delighted when future homeowners become friends. Here are the stories of two Habitat friendships.

When asked about their friendship, Gloria and Trenace are all smiles. These new neighbors finish each other’s sentences and throw their arms around each other’s shoulders. Each took a winding road to get here, but they’re happy to be on the journey.

Trenance Walker was born and raised in New Orleans, living in the 7th Ward until Hurricane Katrina forced her to relocate to Virginia for nearly a year. She was thrilled to choose a lot for her Habitat home back in the 7th Ward, and she’s proud to achieve the dream of homeownership, something her mother always longed for but was never able to attain. Gloria Poolaw was born and raised in Oklahoma, but she’s been happy to call New Orleans home for some time now. She’s overcome many challenges in building a life here. Becoming a homeowner is a symbol of all she’s achieved along the way.

When Gloria and Trenace met in the ReStore, they were delighted to learn that they had chosen lots just a few blocks apart on the same street. As they chatted, Gloria mentioned that she didn’t have a car, so the two women decided they would coordinate their volunteer hours to work together. Ever since, the duo has been a steady, sunny presence on our build sites. Trenace explains it like this: “Our first site we started out on was in the Ninth Ward, and ever since then we’ve been pals. Good buddies. So we’re on the journey together…”

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Habitat homebuyers Marty and Reid met early on, volunteering in the ReStore, but they were surprised they hadn’t met even sooner. Marty says, “Given the size of this town and the fact that we play similar music, we eventually would’ve met, but I thought this was a pretty cool way to meet.”

Marty Peters grew up in Connecticut. He was initially drawn to New Orleans for its music, but he also loves what he calls the living culture of the city, “not some dusty thing under glass in a museum,” but an “emphasis on celebrating life itself.” Reid Poole also came to New Orleans by way of jazz. Originally from Colorado, he learned of Habitat in getting to know residents of the Musicians’ Village. Reid is already deeply involved in the city’s music scene, but he’s ready to commit to the city in a new way, as a homeowner.

Once Reid and Marty were given the list of available lots they visited all of the areas where we build, but it was a quiet corner of the Lower Ninth Ward that captured their imaginations. They chose lots directly next to each other, and they each have a spark in their eye when they talk about the future. Reid has been daydreaming about walks along the levee, and Marty imagines their west-facing porches as prime sunset-watching territory.

When asked why they chose adjacent lots, Reid explains, “I really like the whole idea that we can work together in the ReStore, and then we’re gonna go out and we’re gonna do construction. We get to build a relationship and then jump into a community together.”

Marty agrees: “It’s great to be able to know your immediate community. Having neighbors who you know went through a program like this, you know that they’re people who are hardworking, disciplined.”

Day by day, Marty and Reid are coming closer to their dream of a new community. They’ve already played a few gigs together, and they can’t wait for the day when their homes become a hangout for fellow musicians.
In the spring of 2016, NOAHH was honored to learn that we were included in Barbara Lister’s will planning, an extension of her long history of generosity to NOAHH. In fact, at the end of nearly a decade of steady commitment to our work, Mrs. Lister’s gifts add up to half the cost of a Habitat house.

Barbara Lister worked as a telegram operator in England during World War II, beginning at just fourteen years old. Throughout her long life, Mrs. Lister committed to supporting organizations whose work aligned with her own passions, and we count ourselves lucky to be among those she supported. She first visited New Orleans when her daughter emigrated here in the 1980s. New Orleans was a place she connected with back then, and this old connection made the destruction following Hurricane Katrina and the subsequent levee failures all the more poignant. After Katrina, Mrs. Lister committed specifically to supporting affordable housing, and she chose to support NOAHH to this end.

Both Mrs. Lister and her husband were particularly passionate about improving the quality of children’s lives. It’s easy to imagine, then, how delighted they would’ve been to see the dedication of ten new homes on a once-empty block of America Street in June 2016. In this new community 23 children from 10 families are now enjoying their own bedrooms, their own yards, and a wealth of new playmates. By partnering with NOAHH through annual and planned giving, Mrs. Lister empowered these families and many others to create a future full of hope. We are deeply grateful to be a part of such an amazing legacy.

To discuss leaving a gift in your will, please call Marguerite at 504.609.3335.

Barbara Lister’s Legacy
An outstanding woman’s gift to NOAHH

Service Learning Spotlight Carolyn Tapp

NOAHH’s Service Learning program connects classroom content to real-world experience. Partnering teachers present students with material relevant to NOAHH’s mission, and NOAHH staff lead students in on-site reflection as they serve. NOAHH currently works with two local schools in this capacity, including the Louise S. McGehee School. In this partnership the McGehee junior class considers housing in the context of government.

Carolyn Tapp, the dynamic educator leading McGehee’s side of this exploration, has been with the school for twenty years. She explained, “I’ve always been interested in housing, but I don’t think I would’ve been motivated to do this if you guys hadn’t approached us. It was a great fit. The questions you’re
posing are great for my class because they’re the questions I was thinking about.”

For Tapp, the big-picture question is always this: “How do you live well together with other people in a well-ordered society?” In her classroom this question becomes a jumping-off point: “I see the class as helping students find something that they’re passionate about. I ask them, ‘What’s something you’ve always wanted to learn about?’ I’m trying to give them a sense that they can contribute, or at least get a deeper understanding of that particular public policy issue and the range of opportunities that are there to address it.”

Housing provides a way into many issues of public policy. By having students all volunteer on the same day, Tapp gains a common, shared experience that she can reference in the classroom. So far students have worked alongside future Habitat homeowners on interior painting, framing, and a number of other tasks. One student described the experience by saying, “I learned about the importance of community when accomplishing a goal. Coming together, we can accomplish so much.”

This is exactly the kind of learning Tapp strives for. “Anything else ‘government’ is endlessly boring in a textbook,” she said. “This is an interesting way of taking some of the textbook stuff and making it real.” From there students are able to explore more deeply where their interest is piqued and, Tapp hopes, gain insight into the kind of citizen they want to be. “We keep coming back to the question of what’s government’s role, what’s the citizen’s role. What’s your responsibility to other people? And I don’t want to answer that question for them. That’s not my job. I want them to be able to answer that question.”

Founded in 1912 as a college preparatory school for young women, the Louise S. McGehee School enrolls over 500 girls from Pre-K through 12th grade. The school is located in the historic Garden District of New Orleans.

Each year, thousands of students choose to spend their spring break giving back with NOAHH. In 2016, students worked a total of 42,440 volunteer hours, or the equivalent of 4.8 years of continuous work. They worked on 13 homes, or about half our annual output.

**SPRING BREAK VOLUNTEERS**

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<td>Total hours</td>
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**Did you know?** Every year, the Juilliard School volunteers in New Orleans through their ARTReach program, and on one of their days on site, they perform for partner families, staff, and other volunteers.
Fidelity: Here for Good

All Habitat homeowners pay a mortgage. NOAHH serves as the loan originator and holds the note—Habitat loans the money to the homebuyer (at no interest) and receive their payments (which all go directly into building more homes)—but Fidelity Bank services hundreds of mortgages for the affiliate, for free.

Since their founding in 1908, Fidelity has made housing in New Orleans a priority. Their partnership with NOAHH began in 2001, when NOAHH Board Treasurer Tony Sciortino realized that Habitat partner families would be better served by a bank with multiple locations where they could make payments, rather than coming to Habitat's offices. It also allowed Habitat to focus their energy on homebuilding rather than accounting. Fidelity's commitment to housing in New Orleans is tied up in their motto, Here for Good, which reflects their long history in the city as well as their commitment to the communities they serve.

"Here for Good speaks to the fact that our bank has been here since 1908," said Katie Crosby, Chairman of the Board of Fidelity Bank and former Board President at NOAHH. "Even going forward, we are here to serve the community we work in. We're here for the community as it grows, and we support entities that work alongside us in the community—and what better partner than Habitat. One of our core products is residential mortgage loans, so there's a lot of synergy there. We think it's important to allow people to own a home. A home gives people real roots in the community. It makes them feel connected and makes a better community. We believe that, and Habitat does, too. If we help families by providing that, we start them on a foundation of being Here for Good."

Fidelity’s involvement with Habitat homeowners gives them perspective on the impact of NOAHH’s homeownership program. Chad Bonura, Vice President Loan Analytics & Technology Development, has been working with NOAHH’s partner families for 13 years. He works with them directly and sees how the program benefits them.

"Homeownership is a significant event in a person's life," he said. "We take pride in what we do and that we do it free of charge, that we're doing it for the betterment of the community and homeowners' lives. They're realizing a dream and making it long lasting so they can live in the house the rest of their lives. We help make that possible."

Fidelity has also been involved in build days and special events. For the 2015 Habitat AmeriCorps Build-A-Thon on America Street, they sponsored a home and even brought out a grill to cook for special guests on site.

"One of the things Habitat does that is critical is sweat equity," said Robert Baer, Innovation and Product Development Manager at Fidelity. "If you've got to put skin in the game, you're way more committed to make sure it works out. When you go to a meeting and hear a family's matriarch or patriarch talk about what getting a home means for them, you have to get involved. We definitely want to help people who are willing to put their own time in. We have no problem helping people who want to help themselves."

Lafarge: A Timeline of Partnership

The international supplier of building materials has formed a lasting partnership with NOAHH.

- Brainstorming and coordination of efforts begin. For the next 11 months NOAHH and Lafarge work together to determine the best fit for partnership.
- Lafarge donates concrete for the foundation of a home in the Hollygrove neighborhood, a home their employees will help to build just one month later!
- Lafarge participates in a team-build volunteer day on site and makes a check presentation to NOAHH that will directly support construction of the home they are helping to build.
- Lafarge donates safety gear to the NOAHH team!
- Lafarge donates 4 concrete foundations for the 10th anniversary Build-a-Thon homes on America Street.
- Lafarge makes a cash donation to fund half of a house in honor of the 10th anniversary.
- Local Lafarge employees volunteer on site, constructing the floor system just a block away from the home they sponsored in 2015.

NOAHH extends special thanks to Lafarge for their support.
Have you heard about the Habitat Urban Gardens program? The HUG program allows local groups to grow everything from fruit trees and flowers to vegetables and herbs on NOAHH’s unused lots. HUG helps create new resources for residents where NOAHH builds as part of its mission to renew communities while also saving NOAHH $40,000 per year in lot maintenance costs. NOAHH currently has 40 lots in use by 15 people and organizations.

Meet HUG partner Jeanette Bell, a 15-year-plus New Orleans resident. Jeanette has been gardening since she was 5 years old. Her flower and vegetable gardens called Garden on Mars are located on two vacant lots in the Lower Ninth. Here she teaches anyone who wants to learn how to grow organically both for their own consumption and to sell to local restaurants, markets, and florists.

Why did Jeanette choose the Lower Ninth Ward? She says it started years ago when she accidentally made a wrong turn into the neighborhood and was struck by the vast amount of open land. For several years, she thought about what she could do to replace the storm-torn landscape with beauty. Thus, the idea was born to teach others how to garden in order to rejuvenate the landscape in the Lower Ninth and earn a little additional income. Jeanette’s gardening techniques are relaxing, low maintenance, and designed for people who work all day.

Recently, Jeanette was awarded $5,000 from the Propeller Pitch Competition. Her pitch: Give 30 Lower Ninth Ward residents a 4’x 8’ kitchen box that costs $100 to build, then show them how to save $100 on their monthly grocery bill by teaching them to grow the items they purchase the most. To do this, you begin with a simple question, “What do you buy when you grocery shop?”, and then plan from there. Seed by seed, Garden on Mars is working to “give hope, health, and opportunity” to the Lower Ninth Ward community.
Women Build 2017 will celebrate the contributions of women to our mission with an all-woman blitz build. A Habitat home to be purchased by a hardworking New Orleans woman and her family will be built in one month, and the entire blitz will be organized by women, led by women, supported by women, and, of course, the home will be built by women.

Join us! Learn more at www.nolawomenbuild.org

...ARE WOMEN!

Coming in 2017: Our Second ReStore

Thanks to your support, we have secured a location in Kenner and expect to break ground in the first quarter of 2017, with a grand opening to follow in the fall. The new location will bring fresh clientele and a larger donor base, which will lead to new relationships in a new community. Funds generated from ReStore sales directly support our programs and operations, so with a second location, NOAHH will be better equipped to plan for the future with confidence. Keep an eye out for further detail in future newsletters, and visit us online at www.nola-restore.org to learn more!