

UFF-DA!

Useful Facts and Figures - Data for Affiliates!

March 2011

Habitat Affiliates Engage Elected Officials

Second Annual Habitat on the Hill - Minnesota Tuesday, April 5, 2011

9:00 am Registration & Training at the
Minnesota History Center
35 Kellogg Blvd West, St. Paul

****No Registration Fee****
Parking at History Center \$5

11:30 am Free Lunch

1:00 - 4:00 pm Legislative Meetings at Capitol

- Bring a camera!
- Wear your favorite Habitat t-shirt and comfortable shoes
- Participants are responsible for their own transportation

Register On Line at:

www.tchabitat.org/habitatonthehillMN

Check out videos from last year!



Representatives from Habitat affiliates across the state are working with elected officials to advance our work of building communities where everyone can afford a place to call home. Whether it is on the local level with city or county leaders or on the state level with State Legislators or the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, Habitat affiliates are finding support for the important work we do in creating and maintaining affordable housing.

In order to educate and engage elected officials in Habitat's work, some Habitat affiliates recruit policy makers to volunteer on build sites, speak at dedications, or attend events. These are exciting ways to highlight the impact Habitat affiliates have on the whole community - not only the Habitat homebuyers.

2010 Habitat on the Hill

Some affiliates connect with their State Legislators when they are at home in their Legislative Districts or when they are at the State Capitol. In 2010, the first ever Habitat on the Hill - Minnesota event was organized as a joint affiliate effort to reach out to State Representatives and State Senators when they are in Saint Paul. The day was a huge success with over **175 participants** sharing stories of the important role Habitat affiliates play across the state. **The second annual event is planned for April 5, 2011** (see box for details).

Civic Engagement Workshop at the OLE Conference

If you are interested in learning more from representatives of Habitat affiliates who are involved in civic engagement efforts at the local or state level, please consider attending the OLE Conference break out session on March 11. It will be an opportunity to learn about how your peers are engaging elected officials and how this engagement is advancing their work to build communities where everyone can afford a place to call home.

Civic Engagement Success Story

In 2010, the State Legislature passed the MN SAFE Act, which aligned the state with federal requirements to protect homebuyers. In an effort to eliminate risky mortgage products and loan origination practices, the MN SAFE Act unintentionally would have imposed burdensome regulations on Habitat affiliates that originate mortgages for Habitat homebuyers. Habitat affiliates worked together with their State Legislators to create an opportunity for affiliates to be exempt from the costly requirements.

At the 2010 Habitat on the Hill - Minnesota event, representatives of Habitat affiliates shared with State Legislators information about the impact the MN SAFE Act would have on our ability to originate our mortgage products. We asked State Legislators to work with us to create an exemption from the State law. Elected officials were receptive to the request and paid attention to the issue throughout the session.

The final MN SAFE Act language was resolved during a conference committee in May of 2010. Thanks to the continued communication from representatives at the North St. Louis County affiliate with two key members of the conference committee, the exemption language was adopted and Habitat affiliates are able to avoid the burdensome regulations.

If you are interested in following State Legislative issues, you can sign up for regular advisories and occasional action alerts at www.tchabitat.org/advocate.



*Rochester Area Habitat:
Kevin Worden, Executive Director*

"Our efforts to engage local elected officials are ongoing. It's all a matter of building relationships in a positive context before you come asking for something, which is what happens to these officials every day. For example, our Youth United chapter gathers signatures and information about the need for affordable housing and 'presents' them to the Mayor of Rochester, who is a gracious, wonderful person.

We also work with the Mayor's office to have the day of our annual volunteer appreciation event be declared 'Habitat for Humanity Volunteer Appreciation Day.' The Mayor will often come and read the proclamation at the event itself."



*Winona - Fillmore Counties Habitat:
Stephanie Orr, Program Coordinator*

"At our affiliate, we engage local elected officials by inviting them to our groundbreaking and dedication celebrations and by talking with them when we see them around town at school or at the grocery store. We also make a presentation to the City Council where we present a big check representing the amount of tax revenue our homeowners contribute.

During Habitat on the Hill -- Minnesota, I met with two of my Representatives. It was a wonderful experience and I would do it again. I participated in the day because I wanted my Representatives to know the impact Habitat makes on lives of people in our community."



*North St. Louis Co. Habitat:
Nathan Thompson, Executive Director*

"We have good working relationships with the city governments and HRAs where we build. As a result, we've had lots donated, building permit fees waived, and we've qualified for government grants. These type of collaborations would not have been possible without the trust established due to our years of building in local communities."

Caroline Owens, Board President

"Habitat on the Hill -- Minnesota was a great educational opportunity. We shared with our state officials the impact of our work and of issues such as the MN SAFE Act. It was important that Habitat affiliates came from all over the state as the Representatives really took us seriously when we were there from their districts."



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