



How We Give Voice to the People We Serve



North St. Louis County
Habitat
for Humanity®



Twin Cities
Habitat
for Humanity®



Iowa Heartland
Habitat
for Humanity®



Beyond the Blueprint

2025 Habitat for Humanity Midwest Regional Conference

Introduction of Panel

Marnie Maki

Family Services Manager - North St. Louis
County Habitat for Humanity

Jenny Sanford

Homeowner Engagement Manager - Twin Cities
Habitat for Humanity

Ali Parrish

Executive Director - Iowa Heartland Habitat for
Humanity



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A background image showing two hands, one from the left and one from the right, gently cupping a bright red, textured heart. The hands are light-skinned and the background is a soft, out-of-focus grey. Overlaid on the image are two semi-transparent text boxes: a white one on the left and a teal one on the right.

“Giving Voice”

To "give voice" to the people you serve means to actively listen to their needs, opinions, and concerns, creating an environment where they feel comfortable sharing their perspectives and being heard.

This can be achieved through:

- **Open communication channels**
- **Soliciting feedback regularly**
- **Actively engaging with them to understand their experiences.**

How We Give Voice... During Pre-Purchase

Marnie Maki, Family Services Manager
North St. Louis County Habitat for Humanity



Strategies for Giving Voice During Pre-Purchase

Invest in Relationship Building from Inquiry to Post-Closing



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Strategies for Giving Voice During Pre-Purchase

Encourage Sharing Stories



Strategies for Giving Voice During Pre-Purchase

Engage Partner Families in Decision Making



Challenges and Lessons Learned



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Impact of Giving Voice During Pre-Purchase

- Partner families feel safe to use their voices or find their voice in the process of partnering with Habitat.
- Listening to partner family feedback can impact program changes.
- Being involved in making design decisions, although limited, gives partner families ownership.
- Building relationships and keeping the lines of communication open aids in problem solving (delinquency, home issues).
- Sharing stories brings attention to the need for affordable housing.
- **Partner families enter homeownership with more confidence and feel more equipped to advocate for themselves.**





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How We Give Voice... After Closing

Jenny Sanford, Homeowner Engagement Manager
Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity





Reimagining the
way we support
homeowners after
purchase.

Person-Centered
Programming

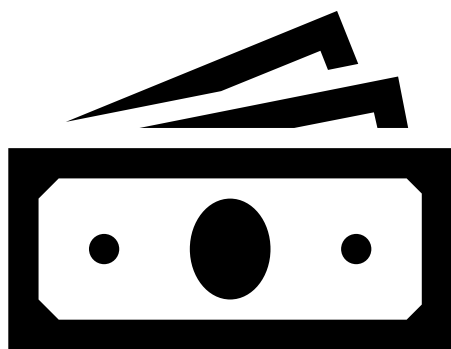
Pillars of a Post Purchase Program

Home Maintenance



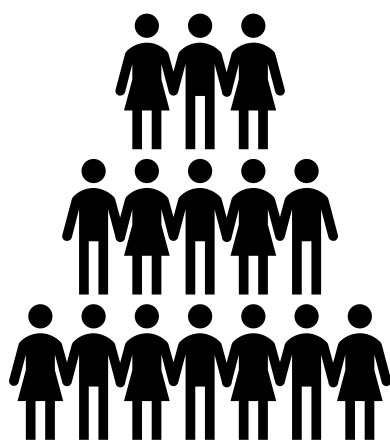
Provide proactive learning opportunities and support for homeowners building maintenance skills.

Financial Well-Being



Build off established relationship to provide information about financial topics relevant to homeowners.

Community Building

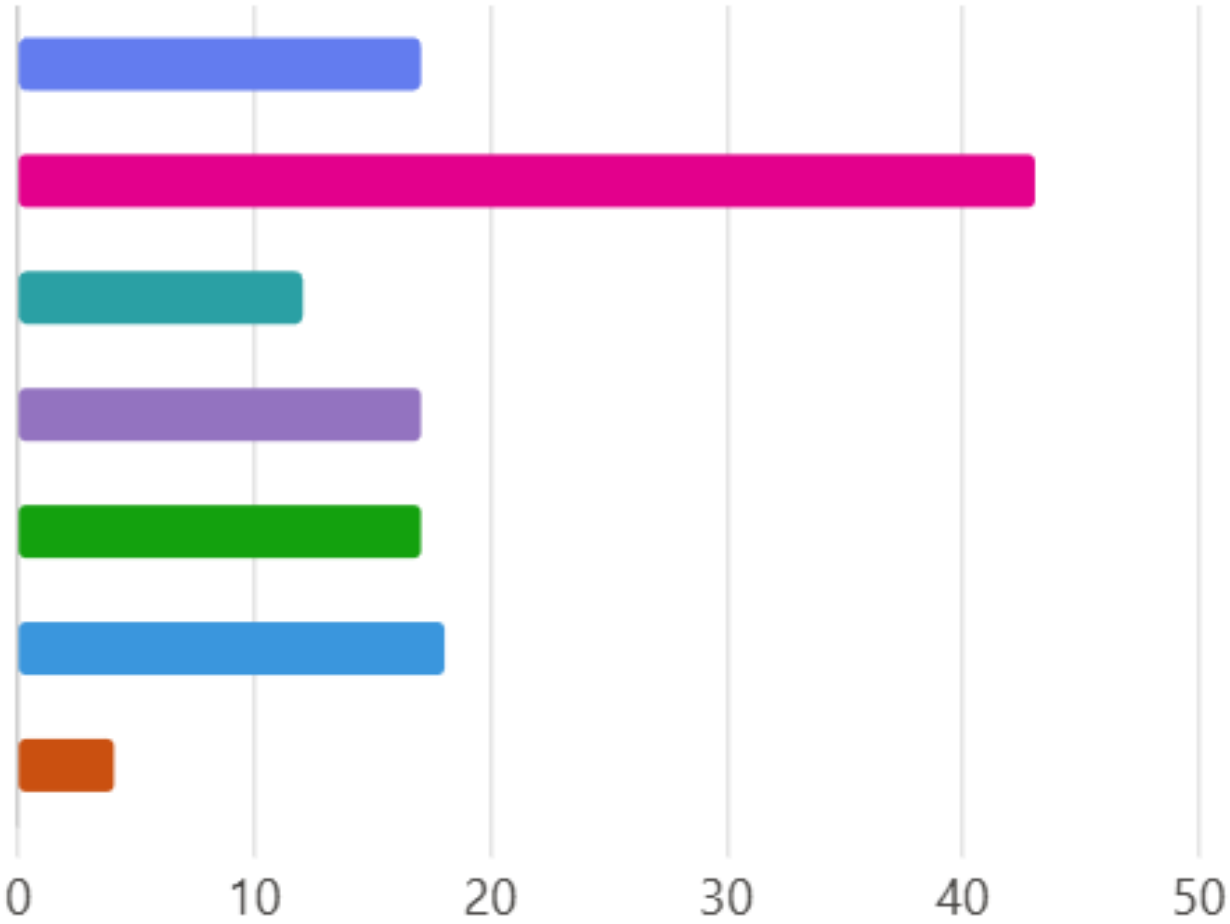


Provide proactive learning opportunities and support for homeowners building maintenance skills.

Homeowner Surveys

1. What is something that you wish you had known more about when you first purchased your home?

● Managing the finances	17
● Home maintenance	43
● HOA	12
● Insurance	17
● Creating a Will	17
● Working towards another financial goal	18
● Other	4



We would always welcome financial planning guidance! We aren't experts and love additional support in ways we can best reach our financial goals.

Classes on home maintenance. Right now I am paying for these classes.


Help with home maintenance - videos to help with maintenance, how to understand taxes going up, escrow, where to locate information in your documents after closing.

I [unclear] [unclear]
[unclear] [unclear] [unclear] [unclear] [unclear]
[unclear] [unclear] [unclear] [unclear] [unclear]
[unclear] [unclear] [unclear] [unclear] [unclear]


Resources for the unexpected expenses that might assist low income families.

Other Feedback

Tracking Issues with CRM

 Post Purchase Tasks

Incomplete Post Purchase Tasks









New

Change Owner

Printable View

11 items • Sorted by Start Date • Filtered by All post purchase tasks - Status • Updated a few seconds ago

Search this list...

	<input type="checkbox"/> Post Pu... ▾	Contact ▾	Service File ▾	Start ... ▾ ▾	Due Date ▾	Status ▾	Primary Task Type ▾	Secondary Task Ty..
1	<input type="checkbox"/> PPT-0595	<div></div>	<div></div>	2/14/20...	2/21/20...	New	12 Month New Ho...	
2	<input type="checkbox"/> PPT-0596			2/14/20...	2/21/20...	New	12 Month New Ho...	
3	<input type="checkbox"/> PPT-0593			2/13/20...	2/20/20...	In Progress	Solar Visit	Maintenance
4	<input type="checkbox"/> PPT-0591			2/11/20...	2/21/20...	In Progress	Warranty Referral	
5	<input type="checkbox"/> PPT-0586			2/10/20...	2/12/20...	In Progress	Utilities	
6	<input type="checkbox"/> PPT-0580			2/7/2025	2/17/20...	New	Lending Referral Mo...	
7	<input type="checkbox"/> PPT-0577			2/6/2025	2/13/20...	In Progress	3 Month New Hom...	Welcome Box
8	<input type="checkbox"/> PPT-0566			1/28/20...	2/21/20...	In Progress	Maintenance	
9	<input type="checkbox"/> PPT-0522			1/9/2025	1/29/20...	In Progress	Financial Managem...	

What do we do with these voices? Build Something!

Intentional Outreach:

- Monthly Homeowner Newsletter
- New Homeowner Engagement Calls
- Volunteer and Learn Opportunities
 - Skill Build Days, Learn Together and Community Building
- Home Celebrations



Impact of Giving Voice During Post-Purchase


- Move from transactional interactions to relationship building.
- Getting ahead of concerns - speed bumps rather than road blocks.
- Creating something that is well received.
- Post-purchase support is built into our “product” people know it’s coming.
- Story sharing out of deeper relationships.
- Do something with the information you learn.
- Keep asking.



How We Give Voice... In Neighborhoods

Ali Parrish, Executive Director
Iowa Heartland Habitat for Humanity





**Giving voice to
neighborhood
residents is a
pathway to thriving
communities.**

Walnut Story

Strategies for Giving Voice In Neighborhoods

Engaging Residents in Decision-Making

- Neighborhood association meetings
- Surveys
- Alignment meetings
- Feedback nights
- Coalitions
- Example: Flourishing Neighborhood Index (FNI) results led to action teams.



Strategies for Giving Voice In Neighborhoods

Building Trust and Social Connections

- Fostering personal relationships
- Creating spaces for informal interactions
- Highlighting shared goals and successes
- Special considerations



Strategies for Giving Voice In Neighborhoods

Sharing Stories

- Social media
- Events
- Tours
- Advocacy
- Example: Story of hope in Church Row.



Challenges and Lessons Learned

Challenges:

- Initial mistrust or disengagement
- Balancing diverse opinions in decision-making and managing conflict
- Leadership resistant to change or suffering from burnout



Challenges and Lessons Learned

Lessons Learned:

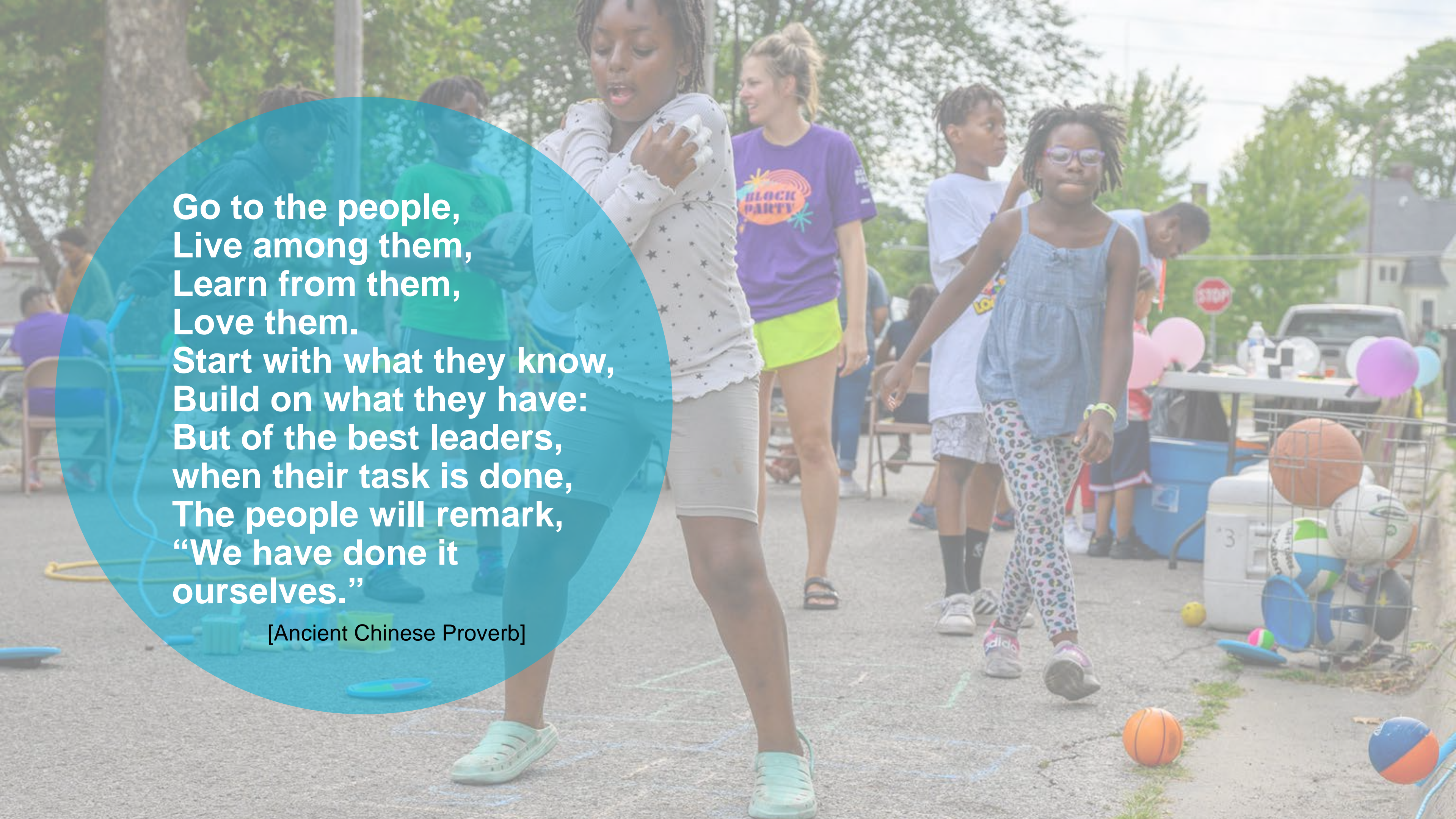
- Patience in building relationships
- Listen for at least 6 months
- Importance of follow-through and a consistent feedback loop
- Commit to meeting at times that work for resident leaders first, partners second



Impact of Giving Voice In Neighborhoods

- Neighbors are approached as partners, not projects.
- Residents take charge of their community's future.
- Voices influence policies, funding, and resources.
- Community-driven ideas are more effective and lasting.
- Open dialogue builds collaboration and stronger partnerships.
- Protects culture, prevents displacement, and ensures respectful development.
- Creates pathways to resources, education, and economic mobility.
- Builds neighbor connections and a sense of belonging.





**Go to the people,
Live among them,
Learn from them,
Love them.
Start with what they know,
Build on what they have:
But of the best leaders,
when their task is done,
The people will remark,
“We have done it
ourselves.”**

[Ancient Chinese Proverb]

Thank you!



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