



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Habitat for Humanity of Marion County Celebrates Completed Home and Welcomes Newest Habitat Homeowners in time for the Holidays

Marion County – Cheryl Walker and her family are thrilled to be first-time homeowners. The Walker family will receive the keys to their new Habitat home at a House Blessing dedication ceremony on Tuesday, December 20, 2022, at 9:00 a.m. The dedication will be taking place at 43 Larch Radial, Ocala, Florida 34480. The Walker family will be the 11th local family to purchase an affordable home through Habitat for Humanity of Marion County in 2022. This opportunity would not have been possible without the countless donors to Habitat and contributions from many volunteers and supporters who helped build the home. Habitat invites members of our community to join us in celebrating the Walker family as they take the final step in becoming new Habitat homeowners just in time for the holidays.

“My experience with the Habitat program has been beyond just the home itself. The greatest joy has been the support and encouragement from the Habitat team. They have been an extended family to me even in personal situations, always available with a listening ear and heart,” said Cheryl Walker. “The other family partners out at the construction sites have become friends to me. We sweat, laugh, and share testimonies with each other. Habitat has been beautiful in every aspect of my life, and I’ve realized that people actually have love and care in their hearts genuinely, want to see you succeed, and are there to help make dreams of homeownership possible. I will forever be grateful for Habitat.”

Like all Habitat homeowners, Cheryl was required to complete 250 hours of “sweat equity”, as part of the program, but she has gone above and beyond volunteering in our program adding up over 285 hours! She was involved in working on the construction of her home as well as the homes of others. She also participated in educational programs designed to strengthen the entire family helping to ensure success as a new homeowner. She will continue to make monthly payments on a low-cost, affordable mortgage, which in turn will go toward building more affordable Habitat homes.

Dave Layman, President & CEO of Habitat for Humanity of Marion County said, “We are grateful to work with wonderful families like the Walkers. We know children of homeowners compared to children of

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renters are 116% more likely to graduate from college and are 59% more likely to own a home within 10 years of moving from their parent's home. Homeownership also results in a better quality of life and the equity in the home creates generational wealth, which is why Habitat works so diligently to help families achieve homeownership."

Habitat for Humanity homes are built using financial gifts to cover the purchase of materials and services of trades and thousands of hours of volunteer time. On average, Habitat for Humanity of Marion County engages over 2100 volunteers annually who contribute nearly 8900 hours of their time to build homes, communities, and hope. Our homes would not be possible without the generous donations from our community and the tireless efforts of our volunteers.

For more information about this build, please contact Tori Arens at 352-351-4663.

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Founded in 1990, Habitat for Humanity of Marion County is the local affiliate of Habitat for Humanity International. We envision a world where everyone has a decent place to live and we work towards that vision by building decent, affordable housing in Marion County together with low-income families who are currently living in substandard or overcrowded conditions to give them the strength, stability, and self-reliance to own their own home. To accomplish these goals, we invite the people of our community to build houses together in partnership with families in need of affordable housing. Through volunteer labor and donations of money and materials, Habitat for Humanity of Marion County has built or rehabbed over 250 homes in the local community. Habitat houses are sold to homeowner families financed with mortgages they can afford. For more information visit <https://www.habitatocala.org/>.