

Women's Services teams up with Habitat for Humanity



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Representatives from Habitat for Humanity Brant-Norfolk and the Haldimand & Norfolk Women's Services met on Friday to celebrate the official announcement of their community partnership. The piece of wood they signed will be used in the building of Habitat's new home on the back of the women shelter's property. From left is Joe Scrocco, Steven Roorda, Jane Scheel, and Michael Main. (ASHLEY TAYLOR/SIMCOE REFORMER)

Haldimand & Norfolk Women's Services and Habitat for Humanity Brant-Norfolk have partnered to create more housing in Simcoe.

Jane Scheel, executive director of Haldimand & Norfolk Women's Services, was approached in the summer about interest in purchasing the property beside the women's shelter in Simcoe. The property contains a 26-year-old bungalow that is only accessible through the same driveway as the shelter.

Scheel was interested in the idea, but knew the house would require significant renovations, updated electrical, plumbing, and insulation. These renovations were financially out of reach for the Women's Services.

Dan Brooks, CEO of Habitat for Humanity Brant-Norfolk, and Scheel discussed the location and a community partnership, which led to Women's Services selling a parcel of their land to Habitat for a reduced price of \$20,000.

"We are very excited about this partnership and the opportunities it will provide for families in our community. I want to acknowledge Haldimand & Norfolk Women's Services Board of Directors for their forward thinking and recognition of the future benefits to both organizations," Scheel said in a press release.

In the agreement, Habitat will build a single family home on the back of the property that will be able to house a family through its affordable homeownership program. In exchange for the reduced price on the land, Habitat is going to provide up to \$40,000 worth of renovations to the home purchased by Women's Services.

"This is a terrific example of community collaboration and thinking outside the box. It also carries personal meaning for me," Brooks said in a press release. "I'm acutely aware of the impact violence can have on children within the home and beyond the front door. Any occasion to prevent family violence or support healing from trauma is a path I am willing to explore."

Habitat now has official ownership of the vacant lot, and Women's Services has ownership of the bungalow. Renovations are expected to be completed in January 2020, with the options of it being additional program space or a rental property and revenue source to support the delivery of services and programs for women and children in the community.

Additional funds for the projects are being sought through the Habitat Build sponsorship program. Community Build days will be announced. To register call 519-759-8600 ext. 527.

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