

Habitat for Humanity plans to build six homes in town



By Mike Pickford

Habitat for Humanity Wellington Dufferin Guelph is doing its part to help reduce poverty in the region, announcing this week that it has purchased a property on Broadway in town that it hopes to turn into six affordable homes for local families.

The purchase and planned construction is a part of an extensive project the organization hopes to see through in Dufferin County over the next few years, says Habitat WDG CEO Steve Howard. Development on this first property is expected to begin later this year.

“There is an urgent need for affordable homes in our community, as about 10 per cent of Dufferin County is living in poverty and one in every nine households are living in conditions that are unsuitable, unsafe and unaffordable,” Mr. Howard said. “Through our build on Broadway and our future build efforts, we will work to solve this problem, and we hope that our community will join us on our journey to do so.”

Based on a partnership that includes a family, the community, volunteers and the private sector, Habitat for Humanity brings communities together to help build strength, stability and independence through affordable home ownership, says the organization's mission statement. While the perception may be that Habitat for Humanity houses people free of charge, that simply isn't the case. According to Mr. Howard, Habitat homeowners pay for their homes through an affordable mortgage that is never more than 30 percent of their income.

Site planning on the Broadway lot will be led by a volunteer committee of local industry experts and Habitat staff, who will work closely with both Town of Orangeville and County of Dufferin planning officials.

While the focus right now is firmly on the Broadway build, Mr. Howard noted Habitat WDG is currently assessing two other properties that could potentially allow for further construction in the community.

“This is just the beginning,” Mr. Howard said. “We hope to build as many as 30 affordable homes in Dufferin County over the next few years, and we look forward to developing partnerships with other social agencies in addressing the need for affordable housing.” Habitat WDG has been building homes for the past 18 years. It says every home built by the organization creates a social return on investment of approximately \$175,000 for the local community. In a release to media, Habitat officials state that research has shown that Habitat families are happier, healthier and rely less on food banks and other social services.

“Habitat WDG is committed to building a world where everyone has a safe and affordable place to call home, and our experience in Dufferin County has proven that our community shares this vision,” Mr. Howard added. “As we move forward with this multi-unit build, we are asking that businesses, organizations and individuals do what they can to help us build.”

To learn more about how you can help fund the build, and for progress updates, visit habitatwdg.ca/orangeville. To donate, visit habitatwdg.ca/donate.