

Macomb Habitat seeks funding, tradespeople to repair damaged home

- By Nicole Tuttle For MediaNews Group Dec 19, 2019



Macomb County Habitat for Humanity is seeking community assistance to help fund and repair a Habitat home that was vandalized. The home was originally constructed by Chippewa Valley Schools students. Pictured is a Chippewa Valley Schools student working on a Habitat home.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CHIPPEWA VALLEY SCHOOLS Dave Trumpie-Trumpie Photography



A Macomb County Habitat for Humanity home was vandalized while in temporary storage. Habitat is seeking community assistance in funds and skilled volunteers to repair the damage. The home was originally constructed by Chippewa Valley Schools students. Pictured is a Chippewa Valley Schools student working on a Habitat for Humanity home.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CHIPPEWA VALLEY SCHOOLS Dave Trumpie-Trumpie Photography



Macomb County Habitat for Humanity is seeking funds and skilled trades volunteers to assist in repairing a Habitat home damaged by vandals. The home was originally constructed by Chippewa Valley Schools students. Pictured is a Chippewa Valley Schools student working on a Habitat home.

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The Matt family is hoping to move into their home by at least by 2020 with the help of skilled tradespeople and donations from the public, despite the serious setback of vandalism that has plagued their Habitat for Humanity house.

Carol McQueen, the director of philanthropy for Macomb County Habitat for Humanity, said that Macomb Habitat works with municipalities in the county to secure land and possible U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funding. The county provided HUD directed funds through Clinton Township in support of the Matt project, as it has in the past with Habitat homes built by Chippewa Valley Schools students.



“We build homes for individuals who would not qualify for a mortgage the regular way but will qualify the Habitat way. Macomb Habitat for Humanity gives low-income, hard-working families a chance at home ownership, while bringing people together to build homes,” McQueen said.

Macomb Habitat and Chippewa Valley Schools have a 10-year partnership. Construction trades students from Chippewa Valley High School in Clinton Township and Dakota High School in Macomb Township come together at Dakota for the program. CVS construction trades is a one- or two-year program that provides basic and advanced instruction in residential construction.

“Feedback we receive is that our students always take a great sense of pride in doing something for someone who really needs, at that point in time, a little help in life,” Roberts said.

Construction trades students work to build Habitat homes as part of their coursework on school days. CVS construction trades instructor Adam Carr said that students complete Habitat homes from September to May.

“One home began in 2017, the other in 2018, students work two semesters to complete as much as they can during that time,” McQueen said. “The homes are then moved to basements and installed on lots in Clinton Township where volunteers and tradespeople complete the house.”

McQueen said that the completion date was originally in 2018. Unfortunately, the two homes were plagued with unexpected variables such as lot acquisition delays, lot upgrades, moving delays, vandalism, and reconstruction that caused cost overruns, according to McQueen. She estimated that the cost to finish and close on the two homes is \$50,000.

“Any cost overruns on these projects are being incurred by Macomb Habitat. All of the costs to repair both homes is donated funds or in kind donations, no government funds available,” McQueen said.

The homes were built at Dakota High School, located on 21 Mile Road, east of Heydenreich Road, completed as far as students were able within their school year. As the students needed to move ahead to the next home project and the sites were not yet ready, the homes were stored first at the CVS administration offices in Clinton Township and then at Baker College, Clinton Township campus, free of charge.

“The homes had to be moved from Dakota High School to the administrative offices of CVS so the next project could begin at Dakota, then once again to Baker College, where the unexpected happened, the houses were vandalized,” McQueen said.

The vandalism occurred in mid-May 2019. Vandals used knives to rip plastic around the homes open, then removed faucets, smashed windows, removed fixtures, and put holes in drywall, McQueen said.

Drywall damage to the Matt home was exacerbated by rain, which rendered even undamaged drywall unusable. McQueen said the house had to be gutted down to the studs.

“Clinton Township police apprehended the two teens, and the oldest of the teens is paying restitution,” McQueen said.

Lots planned for the two Clinton Township houses were deemed unbuildable, requiring more approvals and infrastructure work. Basements were not poured until the lots passed inspection.

“The cost to move the houses from Baker College to the lots was an additional expense. Once the homes were brought to the lots, a company was contracted to lift the homes onto the basements with a crane. Finding a company to do this work was challenging, expensive, and riddled with weather delays. The extra expenses, the cost overruns, the time delays, created the delays in finishing these homes,” McQueen said.

McQueen said that one of the homes is under construction but slated for completion in early January. This home is almost complete and received less damage than the Matt home, McQueen said.

Taylor Matt’s home was the first of the two homes funded and started, but the completion date has been rescheduled for mid-January. Matt applied to Macomb Habitat and qualified for the purchase of the home based on income, current living conditions, credit score, ability to save \$1,000 in down payments for the home, ability to complete “sweat equity” hours on the home and ability to meet the requirements of HUD.

Habitat is currently requesting assistance from the community to assist with the Matt home. Monetary donations can be made to macombhabitat.org through the donate button. The Ford Fund is matching online donations up \$10,000.

Teams of volunteers are needed as well as materials including, kitchen cabinets, laminate flooring, trim, light fixtures, electrical fixtures, for both interior and exterior and attic insulation. Skilled tradespeople are particularly needed to volunteer, especially in the areas of lot graders, concrete flat work, painters, carpenters, trim work, cabinet installation and flooring. For information regarding volunteer opportunities or in kind donations, contact 586-263-1540. Carr said that his students cannot complete the work over again due to timeline and transportation issues.

“Since this is a new group of students, they are not trained to do all the work yet. We have not covered electrical, plumbing, drywall in the curriculum yet,” Carr said.

However, Matt spoke to the construction trades students in October and there are school campaigns to help raise funds.

“She gave hope to students who may be coming from a similar place of struggle -- or know someone else in that situation – and helped students to enhance their sense of empathy and understanding the importance of persistence and resiliency,” CVS Director of Career and Technical Education Claire Brisson said.