

Habitat for Humanity celebrates a lasting legacy?



By Chris McGowan

Organizations measure their success in different ways, but for the local branch of Habitat for Humanity, they don't have to look very far to see tangible results of their efforts.

Last Tuesday, York Region's Habitat for Humanity hosted a Legacy Event at the Newmarket location on Eagle Street, which is the Region's headquarters.

Habitat's York Region location was established in 2001.

"We are celebrating all the efforts we have accomplished over the last thirteen years with this Legacy Event," said Ashley Culp, Fundraising and Events Officer for Habitat.

During that time, fifteen houses were built by Habitat for low-income families with the efforts of dedicated volunteer help.

"There are hundreds and hundreds of volunteers," said Culp. "There is no trades experience required; everyone is welcome on our build sites".

Habitat for Humanity is a not-for-profit organization that organizes and partners with community corporations and individuals who provide volunteers and sponsorship. Altogether, they help build affordable housing, which helps promote home ownership and reduce poverty.

As of April 1, Habitat for Humanity York Region became a part of the Habitat for Humanity Greater Toronto area, along with Brampton and Caledon. The York Region location currently has twenty full-time staff and, with the all-encompassing expanded GTA Region, there are now one hundred full-time employees.

Along with the expansion and amalgamation come some new and aggressive goals for Habitat. They are expecting to build one hundred houses per year with fifty in Toronto, twenty-five in York Region and twenty-five in the Brampton and Caledon area.

"There will not be any downsizing," said Richard Solomon, Regional Vice President for Habitat's York Region Office. "Some staff may be performing different functions to avoid redundancy, but no downsizing."

The event was attended by volunteers from the GTA as well as York Region, Habitat staff, former Newmarket mayor and Neighbourhood Network ambassador Tom Taylor, East Gwillimbury Mayor Virginia Hackson, and Royal LePage's Mike

Springford.

If you want to help volunteer time and effort to help Habitat meet their home building goals, you can reach them through their website at Habitatgta.ca or call them at 905-868-8722 at the York Region location.

Habitat for Humanity is currently working on a build in Aurora with the developer, Daniels. Work is currently underway on the Habitat house located in their First Homes development near the southeast corner of Bayview Avenue and St. John's Sideroad.