

Habitat's \$28M Investment in West Dallas Helps Build Bridge to the Future

The first weekend in March was an exciting time in West Dallas, with the entire city focusing on the community's future and celebrating the Margaret Hunt Hill Bridge. For longtime Habitat folks the new bridge feels like the successful culmination of 25 years of hard work on what has too often been characterized as the wrong side of the Trinity. In 1986, Dallas Habitat started our Dallas work with the purchase, renovation, and resale of a West Dallas home. Our very first Dallas mortgagee, the Smith family, paid off that home in 2003.



The bridge celebration reminds us that the Smiths, and the other 210 (and counting)

West Dallas Habitat homeowners – along with the 20 families who homes we’ve repaired in Los Altos – own their part in West Dallas’ newly re-imagined future. Habitat’s mission of providing homeownership opportunities and helping families stay in their homes not only provides safe shelter, but increases family financial stability and contributes to overall family wealth. Celebrating Bridge-o-Rama (wonderful job Randall White/West Dallas Chamber of Commerce!) gave us a weekend to recall the old housing projects, long abandoned lots, and boarded-up old dilapidated sites. More importantly, it gave us a chance to celebrate the Habitat homes that replaced the blight and to appreciate the value those new homes now have to the Smiths and all the other happy West Dallas investors (and those to come). Best of all, it was a perfect time to look forward to our ongoing work in the community. Here is a look back on our 25 years of work and \$28 million investment in West Dallas and a glimpse of work to come.

Los Altos (and a little La Bajada)



This winner of the Dream Dallas Home Design competition is among over 80 Habitat homes in the long-established 'Los Altos' neighborhood, east of Hampton and north of Singleton; and another 15 or so homes spill into the adjacent community, 'La Bajada'. With the help of The Rees-Jones Foundation and other generous donors, our Los Altos/La Bajada land acquisition strategy has included buying long vacant lots, acquiring and demolishing blighted, abandoned properties, and

purchasing and building out the very first City of Dallas Landbank lots. More Los Altos Habitat homes are coming this year. And Habitat is continuing our Fight the Blight campaign with ongoing acquisition of blighted and crime plagued property. The improved flood control from the completion of upgrades to the Pavaho Pump will open up other long vacant West Dallas lots to redevelopment too.

Dallas Habitat ReStore and offices

Habitat is an everyday part of the West Dallas community. In 2004, Dallas Habitat moved its ReStore, offices and warehouse to our current West Dallas location on Hampton at Singleton where over 50 employees and countless volunteers work every day. Our West Dallas facility is the main warehouse for all three of our ReStore locations. Our Hampton location also has sufficient meeting space to serve as a community resource, including hosting one of the most heavily used Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites in North Texas – a partnership project with United Way of Metropolitan Dallas, Communities Foundation of Texas, and the U.S. Internal Revenue Service. The West Dallas Chamber of Commerce offices at our facility, and we lease space to other nonprofit organizations.



Greenleaf Village I and II in Lakewest



In 2002, in a then rare public-private partnership, the Dallas Housing Authority, Dallas Habitat and KB Homes began work on a new 300-home mixed-income subdivision, Greenleaf Village. The subdivision was built on the site of one of the nation's largest low-rise public housing projects. Habitat's Greenleaf efforts kicked off with a 25-home



9-day blitz build in Phase I. Two-thirds of the Phase I homes were market rate homes built by KB Homes and quickly became part of the then fastest selling subdivision KB Homes had ever built. While the 70-home

Greenleaf Phase II opened in a sputtering homebuilding market, we still expect to build out Phase II next year.

Los Arboles, more West Dallas investment planned

Dallas Habitat is also excited about our new partnership with Vecinos Unidos, another longtime West Dallas nonprofit dedicated to affordable homeownership in the community. Vecinos Unidos built the 50-home Casa Rio subdivision nestled next to the Trinity levee in the old La Bajada community. Together, Vecinos Unidos and Dallas Habitat plan a new infill development adjacent to St. Mary's Catholic Church and School. We recently received a planning grant from the Enterprise Green Communities program for master planning for an **Enterprise Green** and LEED-ND (Neighborhood Development) community. Together Habitat and Vecinos Unidos look forward to creating a model, affordable, 'green' infill neighborhood in the coming years.

Vecinos Unidos, Habitat for Humanity, KB Homes, Builders of Hope and others have built and sold hundreds of new West Dallas homes to families who now will participate in West Dallas' resurgence; families who have always known the bridge went somewhere: home.

For more information about our work in West Dallas, please contact Dallas Habitat's Neighborhood Investment Department at ni@dallas-habitat.org or call 214-678-2300.