

## FAMILY PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE

### Purpose

The Family Partnership Committee (FPC) establishes and sustains relationships with Partner Families from orientation, through construction of their houses, to closing and typically one to two years thereafter, as they gain equilibrium and self-sufficiency in the community.



Committee members must walk a delicate balance between giving needed assistance and fostering independence. Few prospective Partner Families will have any practice exercising control over their own personal affairs or acting as responsible members of a community.

For some the transition will be long and difficult. As Millard Fuller has written, "Our calling from God is to help truly needy families, and so very often these families have many problems, not all of which are related to shelter."



The primary goal of the Family Partnership Committee is to prepare Partner Families for successful home ownership, including active participation in the community to which they belong. Our vision is to create communion among people through mutual respect, cooperation, understanding and love. Habitat construction builds homes. Habitat Family Partnership builds relationships. Together they form the basis of community.

### Objectives

**1. To form personal working relationships between each Partner Family and their Advocate from the Family Partnership Committee.** While the Family Advocate has primary responsibility for contacting their assigned family, it should be the concern of all Habitat volunteers to establish relationships with Partner Families so that they might feel at home in the "Habitat Family".



**2. To acclimate Partner Families to Habitat's partnership ethic.** Habitat for Humanity is all about people freely choosing to help people in need. As a Christian organization, volunteers and donors are understood to be finding spiritual fulfillment as they reach out to others.

One of the cruelest effects of poverty is low self-esteem stemming from the belief that one has nothing of value to give to others. Habitat offers the poor the opportunity to give of their labor (sweat equity) and their money (house payments) to help make simple, decent housing a reality for God's people in need. This kind of partnership requires the maturity to understand that the rights of home ownership are purchased with personal responsibility and a commitment to the larger vision of community.

**3. To help Partner Families develop connections within their community.**

Each Partner Family will be provided with a listing of neighborhood resources. Families are to be encouraged to support their Homeowners Association in its' efforts to address issues of common interest such as childcare for working parents, neighborhood security and landscaping/beautification.



*Pictures, from top to bottom:* Volunteer on worksite meeting homeowner; Family Advocate translating a Homeowner's testimony at house dedication; Ladies at microphones: Homeowners making personal testimonies at their house dedications with their Family Advocates by their side; Members of the Family Partnership Committee

## **Volunteer Position: Family Advocate**

Reports to: Family Partnership Committee Chairperson

### **Purpose**

1. To establish a clear line of communication between MCHH and individual Partner Families (PF).
2. To educate, mentor, affirm and encourage PFs to develop personal responsibility & commitment to their community.

### **Duties**

1. To establish a personal relationship with the assigned PF, including regular communication with the PF in person, by letter and by phone (and email if available). While the time spent is one measure of partnership, of much greater importance is an attitude of Christian love and concern. Communications should be uniquely tailored to the specific needs of each family.
2. To aggressively search for opportunities to integrate the family into MCHH activities.
3. To mediate problem areas such as late house payments, property upkeep etc.
4. To attend the semi-monthly meetings of the FPC and training workshops.

### **Training**

1. Orientation to the philosophy of Habitat for Humanity and the policies of the FPC.
2. Workshops on various human relations and social services topics.

### **Qualifications**

1. Willingness to establish and maintain significant relationships with people having differing ideas, culture and values.
2. Patience
3. Willingness to listen.



Pictures: *left*, casual meeting of the committee during the holidays; *right*, Committee members visit the Sandtown (Baltimore) Habitat affiliate to brainstorm and learn from another urban affiliate.