

Article 6; Housing to Home: Affordable Homeownership Opportunities

When thinking about “Affordable Housing” the image that comes to mind may be of people who are “down and out”. But that is not what this crisis is about today. When the median rent in Newburyport is \$3000* a month and the median home price is \$1,200,000**, this crisis is about all of us. The cost of home is out of reach for far too many in our communities.

Most associate affordable housing with rentals, but equally at issue is affordable homeownership. Essex County Habitat for Humanity has created a path to affordable homeownership for seven first-time homebuyers and their families in Salisbury. These seven townhouses, which are nearing completion, will be home to 25 individuals who benefit from the stability they have helped build.

The homeowners work in our communities – in health care, plumbing, retail, and other fields needed for our community to thrive. They’ve been partners in building their homes, alongside Habitat volunteers and construction supervisors.

Affordable homeownership helps create stability and foster the American Dream. It allows families to save for their future – while paying an affordable mortgage, property taxes, and contributing to the local economy. Every home Habitat builds is deed-restricted, so that it will remain permanently affordable, and future families will be able to afford to purchase the home.

Habitat welcomes the opportunity to work in each of our local communities to create small-scale developments, like the one in Salisbury, to help families achieve their dream of homeownership. To be able to do so, we rely on partnerships with local officials, volunteers and donors. We urge local officials to take action on affordable housing and we ask you, as community members, to get involved, speak up, and show support. It matters – for all of us. To learn more about Essex County Habitat for Humanity developments, go to www.essexcountyhabitat.org.

My name is Meegan O’Neil, Executive Director of Essex County Habitat for Humanity, part of the Greater Newburyport Housing Choice Coalition.