Habitat Home Store Celebrates 20 Years of Service to The Community

Starting in a storefront in downtown Lenoir City, the Loudon County Habitat Home Store has literally grown up over the past 20 years. The small group of dedicated volunteers who started our affiliate was looking for ways to raise more money to build more houses. They knew that many other affiliates around the country were doing just that with a Home Store or Restore, where gently used clothing, household goods and/or surplus construction materials could be sold to the general public.

They did their research, saw what other affiliates were doing, and developed their own plan. On Saturday, December 9, 1995 that plan became a reality when they opened the doors for the Grand Opening of our first Home Store. Things went very well until March of 1999 when a whole city block, including our Home Store, burned to the ground. Everything was lost. But thanks to the generosity of the community, the Home Store was able to re-open within a few days at a temporary location in the former First Baptist Church building.

Not to be discouraged by the fire, those same volunteers regrouped, looked at what was available in the community and grew. Today, the Home Store continues to flourish, providing gently used clothing, furniture, housewares, appliances, linens, books and much more. Shoppers range from families who really can’t afford to shop elsewhere, to bargain hunters, to do-it-yourself crafters who repurpose the treasures they find into decorative household items and gifts.

Over the years hundreds of individuals from the community have spent their volunteer hours at the store running the register, bagging purchases, sorting through donations and “working the floor” at the Home Store. While the store is run primarily by volunteers, with a few paid staff, it also participates in a job training program for another store, and in August 1999, just 5 months from the date of the fire, the Home Store was reborn at 303 Simpson Rd E, just off Hwy 321. Although this location seemed to be far from downtown, it was a developing center of commerce with shopping, restaurants and motels. God put the store in the right place.

Since then, some 16 years later, literally thousands of individuals have donated goods to the store, have volunteered their time to work at the store, or have purchased merchandise from the store. Currently, store sales provide nearly enough funding to build 2 houses per year for low-income families in our community.

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Seniors Improve Job Skills At The Home Store

Most days, working alongside volunteers at the Home Store, you will find men and women who are enrolled in a senior skills training program administered by the East Tennessee Human Resources Agency (ETHRA). This program assists persons 55 and older with upgrading their job skills. Enrollees are placed in nonprofit host agencies where they are paid to work approximately 20 hours a week.

Faye really enjoys working at the Home Store. “I wish I could be here longer,” she said, indicating that her 4-year placement would end next June.

“We get to meet and work with the families that will be buying houses,” says Pat. “We make friends with them, and enjoy seeing them out in the community.”

“The best part,” says Wilbert, “is knowing that you are helping these families. It gives you a good feeling inside.”

“The ETHRA training program is a true blessing and a tremendous benefit to the Habitat Home Store,” said Sandi Bright-Greene, store manager.

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“Everything we do here at the Home Store goes back to the Habitat mission—to build simple, decent, affordable houses and end sub-standard housing here in Loudon County!” said Sandi Bright-Greene, store manager.

You can drop off donations during business hours: Tuesday-Friday 9-5 and Saturday 8-1. The Home Store is closed Sunday and Monday.

Pick-ups are available for large items such as furniture by calling the store at 865-988-7427 (option 1) to schedule.

***Coming Soon***

More Parking At The Home Store!

Loudon County Habitat recently purchased additional land adjacent to the Home Store which will be used to increase much needed parking.

“We’ve worked in partnership with our neighbor, Reed Wheelock, and the City to address concerns and be good neighbors,” said Shauna Oden, executive director.

“Parking is at a premium here most days,” explained to Sandi Bright-Greene, store manager. “Having more spaces will certainly relieve some of the congestion and make getting in and out of the store much easier.”
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While the store is run primarily by volunteers, with a few paid staff, it also participates in a job training program called the Job Training Program. The program provides participants with skills and experience in the job market, and helps them find employment.

The Home Store invites you to:
- Shop
- Volunteer
- Donate

ATTENTION CRAFTERS AND DIY-ERS

What are you making for the Holidays?

Send us a picture of what you have made as a decoration or a gift using something from the Home Store and get 10% off your next Home Store purchase.

Here’s how:
Email a photo of what you made to cindy@loudoncountyhabitat.org. We will post it on the Home Store’s Facebook page and at the store, then email you a 10% off coupon for use at the Home Store in Lenoir City.

The coupon must be used in one visit and is good on purchases up to $100.

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS

20% OFF
Habitat Home Store COUPON

Good through 12/22/15
Coupon good for one visit on purchases up to $100. May only be used at the Home Store 303 Simpson Rd E, Lenoir City, TN 37772 Hours: Tues. - Fri. 9-5, Sat. 8-1. Closed Sun. and Mon. 865-988-7427 (option 1)

Cut out and bring to the Home Store for discount.