

## PRESS RELEASE



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## \$375,000 in Gifts Stun Willamette West Habitat for Humanity

*8<sup>th</sup> annual Build a Home Frame a Future event a success!*

**Hillsboro, OR** (July 7, 2015)

All events have a life cycle, but eight years in Willamette West Habitat for Humanity's **Build a Home Frame a Future** fundraiser, presented by LOCAL Plumbing, shows no sign of slowing down. This year, when the donation envelopes from the 575 attendees were opened, Willamette West Habitat for Humanity staff were stunned to see the total for the day: \$375,000!

It was a number that left staff at first speechless, then grinning wildly as they realized that six families could escape their sub-standard living conditions and purchase homes build using those funds.

**Build a Home Frame a Future**, held annually in May, has raised over \$1.7 million in its eight years. *"Every year we are amazed and humbled by the generosity of our guests,"* said executive director Mark Forker. *"This year was no different. People come from all over the Metro area to start their day inspired by our families. They get to meet those whose lives are forever changed because of their gift. It's a powerful, emotional day."*

Guests were impressed by the three teens who spoke, each of whom are now living in Habitat homes. They were excited to share stories of how their lives have changed since their parents became homeowners, so they overcame any fear of public speaking and took to the podium.

One spoke of living in Kosovo, in the refugee camps, and having to wait in line for food each day. Today she is a freshman at Beaverton's Health & Science School which offers dual credit courses. When she graduates from high school, she'll have also earned an Associate Degree and will start college as a junior.

Another spoke about how she use to go to friend's houses after school because they had more food than she did. Since her parents purchased their energy-efficient Habitat home they have more money for things like food and heat. In fact, when she told the audience one of her great joys was wearing shorts in her house during the winter because *'I thought only rich people could afford heat'*, there was silence in the room as everyone thought for a moment exactly what that statement meant.

There were two couples in the audience that day who say quietly in the background, but whose presence was strongly felt. The Smith family challenged attendees to make a gift of at least \$150, which they would match up to a total of \$25,000. 175 guests took them up on their challenge and the Smith's happily wrote that check for \$25,000. Also at breakfast was a quiet couple who have befriended Willamette West Habitat in the past with generous gifts from their family foundation. This year was no different, except the pledge they made after hearing the girls speak was \$180,000!

The final guest speaker for the day was Clive Rainey, known as Habitat for Humanity's first volunteer. He's a bit sheepish about the Volunteer Number One title, saying someone had to be first and he was just in the right place at the right time. *"The real honor"*, says Clive, *"will be the last volunteer – the person that drives the last nail, in that last house, and can say job done. Everyone now has a decent place to live"*. That day has not arrived in Washington County yet, but with the continued involvement of thousands of volunteers building houses, paid for by thousands of generous donors who give what they can, be it \$2 or \$180,000, that day will come.

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### **About Willamette West Habitat for Humanity**

Willamette West Habitat for Humanity helps hardworking families in Washington & Clackamas Counties achieve home ownership. To qualify for a Habitat home, families must have a steady income, be in need of decent shelter and be willing to contribute 500 hours of their own labor building their Habitat house. All homes are sold at no profit, with no down payment, and financed with a 0% interest mortgage. Since 1988, Willamette West has served 103 families locally. To learn more, visit [www.HabitatWest.org](http://www.HabitatWest.org) or follow us at [www.facebook.com/habitatwest](http://www.facebook.com/habitatwest).