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Habitat for Humanity of Southeast Ohio Shares Success of American Rescue Plan Funding with Fairfield County Commissioners

LANCASTER, OH- The Fairfield County Commissioners are highlighting the successful use of American Rescue Plan (ARP) funding that expanded affordable housing opportunities for local families through Habitat for Humanity of Southeast Ohio.

In 2022, the Fairfield County Commissioners awarded Habitat for Humanity of Southeast Ohio \$610,000 in ARP funding to support the construction of seven homes through the organization's Build Your Own Home program. Habitat SEO leveraged the funding as partial support for each home, securing additional matching funds from community partners. Each home requires approximately \$140,000–\$160,000 to build.

“In Fairfield County, we were intentional about using federal recovery dollars in ways that create lasting community impact,” said Commissioner Fix. “This investment in Habitat SEO is a strong example of how ARP funding directly improved lives by helping families achieve safe, stable housing. This funding allowed Habitat SEO to double its building capacity, moving from one home per year to two. Just as importantly, it helped launch a valuable partnership with the Eastland-Fairfield Career & Technical Center that is preparing students for careers while meeting critical housing needs.”

Through the partnership, students in the Career Center's Construction Program build homes to approximately 80% completion at the Fairfield Career Center on Coonpath Road. The homes are then transported to their permanent locations and completed by volunteers. Two of the seven homes were constructed through this program, with plans to continue the partnership annually.

All seven families completed Habitat's Build Your Own Home program, which requires sweat equity hours, homeowner education, a down payment, and monthly mortgage payments on a zero-interest loan. The homes include five in Lancaster, one in Pleasantville, and one soon to be relocated to Fairfield Beach. The project served seven single mothers and 13 children ranging from ages 1 to 18.

Habitat Southeast Ohio plans to build four homes in 2026 and a minimum of two homes annually in Fairfield County moving forward.

For homeowner Toni Gardner, the impact is life-changing.

“I will never be able to explain how thankful I am for all the people who made this possible,” Gardner said. “For the first time in my life, I no longer feel like I’m just getting by or living in survival mode.”

Founded in 1800 (three years before Ohio became a State), Fairfield County was the 8th county formed in the Northwest Territory. Today, more than 900 employees serve, connect, and protect the more than 158,000 citizens of Fairfield County, providing high-quality services and outstanding customer service at exceptional value to taxpayers. Fairfield County fosters economic and fiscal sustainability and works to enhance the County's reputation as a high performing, learning, and caring organization. For more information about the county, its services and employment opportunities, please visit <https://www.co.fairfield.oh.us/>

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