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Habitat for Humanity receives historic \$500,000 gift to build Weavers Grove

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. (July 16, 2021) – Habitat for Humanity of Orange County recently received a \$500,000 donation, the largest gift in the organization’s history.

The donation came from the F. M. Kirby Foundation and is one of \$7.7 million in grants given by the foundation over the first four months of 2021. While early grantmaking included many grants in support of COVID-19 relief, increased contributions were also made to nonprofit organizations in the arts and humanities, education, environment, health and medicine, human services, public policy, and religion. This gift is in addition to a \$50,000 grant to support Habitat’s ongoing work through its annual fund.

“The mission of this Foundation is to invest in opportunities that foster self-reliance or otherwise create strong, healthy communities,” stated Justin Kiczek, Executive Vice President. “Over the past year, in the face of incredible challenges, our grantee partners have led the way in finding new and bold ways to create stronger communities. The first four months of 2021 provided us several opportunities to make extraordinarily impactful investments.”

This donation will go towards the \$5 million capital campaign to build Weavers Grove. Weavers Grove is Habitat for Humanity of Orange County’s newest neighborhood, a mixed-income community located in Chapel Hill off of Weaver Dairy Road. This is Habitat’s bold answer to the affordable housing crisis in Chapel Hill and is the most ambitious project in the organization’s 36-year history. When complete, 236 single family homes, townhomes, duplexes, and condominiums will be on the land, with 100 of these homes purchased by Habitat homebuyers. The remaining market-rate homes will offer new opportunities for Chapel Hill homebuyers, at price ranges lower than today’s median home price. Habitat for Humanity expects that the innovative Weavers Grove community will be a national housing model that will inspire other Habitat affiliates to pursue mixed income developments.

"We are incredibly grateful for the F. M. Kirby Foundation's generous support for Weavers Grove," said Habitat President & CEO Jennifer Player. "This initiative will provide homeownership and wealth-building opportunities to 100 local families who currently live in substandard or overcrowded conditions or who drive long distances to their jobs in Chapel Hill. Through this gift, the F. M. Kirby Foundation is demonstrating their deep commitment to strengthening the fabric of our community."

Habitat for Humanity is leveraging multiple financial resources to create the Weavers Grove community in a critical location in Chapel Hill where families can live close to work, schools, and transportation. The total cost of the development is \$26 million. The funding model combines revenues from the sale of Habitat-owned lots to market-rate builders, annual fundraising allocations, government grants, financing sources, and philanthropy from organizations like the F. M. Kirby Foundation.

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About Habitat for Humanity of Orange County

Habitat for Humanity of Orange County has helped 300 families build and purchase new homes and 200 families repair existing homes in Orange County. Habitat homes are built through the use of volunteer labor and donations of money and materials. Qualified homebuyers complete 275 hours of sweat equity and purchase the home from Habitat through an affordable mortgage priced at less than 30% of family income. For more information, please visit www.orangehabitat.org.

About the F. M. Kirby Foundation

The F. M. Kirby Foundation is headquartered in Morristown, New Jersey. Endowed in 1931 by Fred Morgan Kirby, one of the founders of the F.W. Woolworth Company, it was designed to continue in perpetuity through generations of the family. Since its inception, the Foundation has awarded nearly \$745 million in grants. Five Kirby family members, currently spanning two generations, serve on the Board, as well as two non-family directors. For more information, please visit <https://fmkirbyfoundation.org/>.