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**Now more than ever....
Help build it!**

A Letter from the Kittitas County Habitat for Humanity Board of Directors

In it for the long run.

"A world where everyone has a decent place to live".

That vision is more applicable now than ever before. Over the past 25 years, Kittitas County Habitat for Humanity (KCHFH) has built 19 homes in our beloved county. This was only really possible through the generous support of thousands of volunteers who have contributed their sweat, love, money and dedication for their fellow neighbors to address the issue of affordable housing. In addition, hundreds of companies have contributed both time and money.

Throughout our history, there were instrumental people who firmly set the foundation of Habitat for Humanity in Kittitas County. While it can be risky to call out names, for fear of leaving someone out, we must recognize people like Sherri Ott, Habitat's first employee and Executive Director of 10 years, helping to stabilize the organization during her tenure; Marc Kirkpatrick, a former board member who was critical in getting the Habitat store up and running and still donates his expertise to this day; Dick McManus, who wisely sought to expand and rename Habitat to include all of Kittitas County; Samantha Puntteney (Tidd) who established important community fundraising experiences; Jeremy Storrs, who oversaw several building of homes, working directly with our volunteers. Marlene Pfeiffer, former board member who is vigilant about finding buildable land opportunities for Habitat; Mike Boots who established a store community where customers found a second home; Susan Grindle at Hopesource for consistently finding ways to support the Habitat mission; Melissa Bergren, a loan officer with Academy Mortgage who helped Habitat homeowners navigate the complicated loan qualification process. This list should keep going and going and we've deliberately left out our generous donors in this letter for anonymity. The point is, a real community has been created beyond just the act of building houses. We must protect that.

For the last 18 months, Kittitas County Habitat for Humanity has faced some challenges; changes in key staff leadership, ability to find buildable land, and sustainable fundraising efforts, to name a few. What never wavered though was what we just highlighted - *the community's commitment to keep Kittitas County Habitat for Humanity going*. Current staff have been true champions during this time. Together we can.

As a board, we have an obligation to the community - current homeowners, future homeowners, volunteers, donors, staff, local leaders, previous Habitat contributors - to find the most viable plan for long term growth within Kittitas County. Approximately 15 months ago, we engaged in conversations with other Habitat affiliates around the state, exploring ideas on sustaining operations. During this time, we learned that in the last 3 years, over 100 smaller

affiliates like ours partnered with larger affiliates throughout the country. This eventually led to deeper conversations with the Habitat for Humanity -Seattle King County (SKC) board and staff.

As those conversations progressed, it became evident that a *strategic partnership* was surfacing as the best choice for our affiliate. Those conversations turned into formal due diligence. As a board, we identified critical items that would have to be in place in order for this to be viable, specifically maintaining the name Kittitas County Habitat for Humanity, ensuring donations stay in the county, the continuance of the store, hiring an area director, establishing a local advisory council, having board members serve on the Habitat for Humanity -Seattle King County Board and preserving existing staff.

Fortunately, Habitat for Humanity -Seattle King County understood and believed those to be critical to a successful partnership as well.

We recognize that there are some general legacy feelings about “King County” vs “Kittitas County” that will require a certain adjustment to thinking. We are confident that our shared Habitat vision and mission will override these misgivings. It was very clear to all of us, that the staff and board of King County are *just as passionate about helping families get into affordable homes as we are.*

If you have not had a chance, please take a moment to read the official press release and FAQ to further understand the context of this change.

As a formal board, writing this letter is our last official duty, thanking our community for all you have done to get us here. There are far too few words available to truly express the gratitude we have, so we simply say Thank you, Kittitas County. Thank you.

We are excited for the next 25 years as Kittitas County Habitat for Humanity grows, builds, and develops affordable housing options for our friends and neighbors in the county. We're in it for the long run.

Sincerely with Love, Care and Optimism,

The Kittitas County Habitat for Humanity Board of Directors

Jared Vallejo

Emily Jacobs

Roger Beck

Susan Ralston

Delano Palmer