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## **WOMEN BUILD WEEK IN NEW RICHMOND, WI CELEBRATES NATIONAL WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH**

*70 volunteers are part of St. Croix Valley Habitat for Humanity's Women Build March 8-11*

Thursday, March 2, 2023- (Hudson, WI) St. Croix Valley Habitat for Humanity is celebrating Women Build Week, presented by Lowe's, as part of National Women's History Month, March 8-11. This year's SCVHFH Women Build Week will be held in New Richmond, Wisconsin. Women Build, which began in 1991, is a dedicated, week-long focus on women building, investing, and advocating for simple, decent, and affordable housing around the world.

"Lowe's of Oak Park Heights, Minnesota, is our presenting sponsor and is providing numerous in-kind and discounted materials for our 1135 Rich River Way home build and for our homebuyer Jessie Koskie and her family," said SCVHFH Executive Director Kristie Smith. "Lowe's has a long and generous history with Habitat to highlight our work with Women Build projects around the world. We're starting the week on March 8<sup>th</sup>, which is International Women's Day, a global celebration recognizing the economic, cultural, and political impacts women contribute." The 2023 theme of International Women's Day is to elevate and advance gender parity in technology and celebrate women forging innovation.

Single women own 10.7 million homes compared to 8.1 million single men, according to a Lending Tree report from 2021 U.S. Census Data. A typical homeowner who bought their home in 2011 accumulated an average of \$225,000 in housing wealth by 2021, according to a National Association of Realtors 2022 report. "Habitat has long recognized the critical role women play in bettering the future for families and communities. We know that home ownership is the single most valuable wealth generation tool for low-income families in this country," Smith said. A 2018 Joint Center for Housing Studies that polled women of all ages showed home ownership as a top priority (73%) over marriage (41%) and having children (39%).

St. Croix Valley completed its first Women Build project in 2010 in New Richmond, WI. Thrivent Financial Advisor Joan Bartz has been part of Women Builds since it started and had this to say about her experience that first year, "We had about ten ladies and we worked on putting the sheetrock on the ceiling. I remember it was a very cold day and we worked hard, but we left so empowered that we could accomplish so much. It was a good day! I love that Habitat lets everyone do everything. They don't just leave the "easy" jobs (like painting and sweeping) for the women. I have learned so many valuable skills over the years." Volunteer teams from multiple WESTconsin Credit Union, Mortgage Services and Realty locations, Lowe's Oak Park Heights, Hope

Lutheran River Falls, and Osceola Medical Center are just some of the groups who will join the weeklong project.

Nationally, Lowe's joined Habitat Women Build as a co-sponsor of the Jimmy Carter Work Project, which built 92 homes in Georgia and Alabama during Women Build Week in 2003. Since then, Lowe's has contributed more than \$40 million dollars and countless volunteers to help hundreds of homeowners during Women Build Week in more than 300 communities nationwide. More information about SCVHFH Women Build can be found at [scvhabitat.org/women-build](http://scvhabitat.org/women-build).

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### **About St. Croix Valley Habitat for Humanity**

**St. Croix Valley Habitat for Humanity helps families with safe, affordable housing.** In 1996, community members in River Falls, WI and surrounding communities recognized the critical need to bring people together to build housing, communities and hope and founded the local, nonprofit Habitat affiliate. In its tenure, SCV Habitat for Humanity has partnered with more than 71 families in Pierce and St, Croix Counties to help achieve the goal of home ownership. Visit [scvhabitat.org](http://scvhabitat.org) for homeowner and volunteer information and to support the mission to help families on the path to generational wealth.

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