



**Habitat**  
for Humanity®  
Choptank

# VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

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# **INTRODUCTION**

## **WELCOME**

*Thank you for your interest in volunteering with Habitat for Humanity Choptank! We are delighted that you have taken this opportunity to learn more about how you can support us as we partner with low income homebuyers to provide simple, decent, and affordable housing.*

*Habitat Choptank is a volunteer driven organization; it relies on volunteers in order to operate. From working on construction sites, in the office, at the ReStore, or serving on committees or on the Board of Directors, volunteers greatly impact every aspect of our organization. Whatever your skill or interest, there is a place for you in our volunteer program.*

*This handbook will provide volunteers with general information about Habitat for Humanity International and our affiliate, policies and procedures specific to Habitat Choptank, as well as available volunteer opportunities. You are encouraged to familiarize yourself with the contents of this handbook, for it will answer many questions concerning our organization and outline how volunteers can contribute.*

## **MISSION**

Habitat for Humanity Choptank works in partnership with God and all people to transform communities and the lives of qualifying families in Dorchester and Talbot counties by building simple, decent, and affordable homes.

## **HABITAT FOR HUMANITY CHOPTANK**

Since its founding in 1992, Habitat Choptank has made homeownership a reality for 78 homebuyers. Relying on volunteers, financial donations, and material contributions, each Habitat home is the result of a unique partnership among a deserving homebuyer, dedicated volunteers,

community partners, and inspired donors. While Habitat for Humanity affiliates are known for their construction of simple, decent and affordable homes, Habitat Choptank has grown to include the construction of sustainable energy efficient homes. As a nonprofit organization, Habitat Choptank works in partnership with low-income homebuyers to help them build a better future through homeownership.

The need for affordable housing in the Choptank region is persistent and growing. Currently, 1300 households in Talbot and Dorchester counties are on the waiting list for rental housing assistance. The local system only has the capacity to serve 785 families. Additionally, in the United States on average only 1 in 4 families requiring housing assistance actually receives it. The Mid-Shore region of Maryland's Eastern Shore is often thought of as an area populated with graying affluent retirees; however, Talbot and Dorchester counties are also home to many medium to low-income working families. These medium to low-income homebuyers may qualify as Habitat Choptank partner homebuyers. According to the United States Census Bureau, in 2010, the average monthly mortgage cost for Talbot and Dorchester counties was \$1651, and the average monthly rent was \$808. The current monthly mortgage payment for a standard three-bedroom Habitat Choptank home is equal to 30 % of the homebuyer's gross annual income.

## **CORE TENETS**

Habitat Choptank is a named affiliate of Habitat for Humanity International and operates under the auspices of the Affiliate Covenant which includes six core tenets.

**CHRISTIAN IDENTITY:** An affiliate is an organization based on Christian principles committed to witness to the love and teachings of Jesus Christ, and will partner with people regardless of faith.

**HOMEOWNERSHIP:** An affiliate is committed to homeownership through the use of available resources including volunteers and an affordable mortgage.

**HOMEOWNER SELECTION:** An affiliate intends to sell homes to low-income homebuyers in need who have the ability to repay a mortgage and are willing to partner with Habitat for Humanity. Need will be evaluated in the context of the affiliate's service area's median income.

**INTEGRITY:** An affiliate will operate as a nonprofit with the highest integrity in a non-discriminatory manner in accordance with applicable laws.

**SWEAT EQUITY:** An affiliate will require sweat equity of partner homebuyers with whom the affiliate will build safe, decent and affordable housing.

**TITHE:** An affiliate will participate in the tithing program to Habitat for Humanity International, giving 10% of unrestricted funds for each home sold.

## **A HOMEOWNER STORY**

Habitat Choptank provides opportunities for homebuyers to improve their future through homeownership, like Allen and Tracy Lake, owners of a Habitat Choptank home in Cambridge, Maryland.

*When the Lakes applied to Habitat Choptank, they were living in an apartment that was so poorly insulated their utility bills were often double their rent and they were thousands of dollars in debt. Mr. Lake says, "We rented a two bedroom place with a living room, kitchen, and bathroom. It was infested with rats. A good friend encouraged us to apply to Habitat." Today, the Lakes live in an energy efficient home they can afford. Their monthly payments including their repayment of principal, the escrow for property taxes, and home owners insurance, is less than \$450 month. Purchasing their home in June 2010, Allen and Tracy received the first time home buyers tax credit. With*

*this benefit and using the skills they learned through Habitat Choptank's home owner education seminars, the Lakes have achieved a level of financial security that just a few years ago they never thought possible. In fact, Mr. Lake says the couple was able to put away \$6,000 in their checking account and \$3,000 in savings, stating "when a bill comes in, we just pay it, and when the phone rings, we can answer it because we know it is not a debt collector." When friends tell him that he and his wife have come a long way, he says "sometimes, I still can't believe it!"*

## **HABITAT FOR HUMANITY INTERNATIONAL**

Habitat for Humanity International is a nonprofit, nondenominational Christian housing ministry. Habitat for Humanity welcomes all people to build and repair simple, decent, affordable houses in partnership with those who lack adequate shelter.

Habitat for Humanity affiliates work locally in communities around the world to select and support homeowners, organize volunteers and coordinate house building and repair. Homeowners are selected based on their need for housing, their ability to repay a mortgage and their willingness to work in partnership with Habitat. Habitat for Humanity does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity or any other characteristic.

Habitat for Humanity is able to make housing affordable to low-income homeowners because the houses are sold with an affordable mortgage. Individuals, corporations, faith groups, and other donors provide vital financial support, and homeowners and volunteers build or repair under trained supervision.

Founded in 1976 by Millard Fuller and his wife Linda, Habitat for Humanity has helped build or repair over 800,000 houses and served over four million people around the world. Millard Fuller stated that "for a community to be whole and healthy, it must be based on people's love and

concern for each other.” This belief was shared by former President Jimmy Carter who first partnered with Habitat for Humanity in 1984 and has become Habitat’s most famous spokesperson.

Today, Habitat for Humanity is the sixth largest homebuilder in the United States and is the only non-publicly traded company in the top 10 ranking. More than 1,500 affiliates in the United States and 550 international affiliates coordinate Habitat building projects in over 3,000 communities around the world.

## **MYTHS AND FACTS ABOUT HABITAT FOR HUMANITY**

Many volunteers often have misconceptions about Habitat for Humanity’s practices.

**MYTH:** Habitat for Humanity gives houses away to poor people.

**FACT:** Habitat for Humanity offers homeownership opportunities to low-income homebuyers who currently live in substandard housing, defined as housing that is overcrowded, in disrepair, insect and rodent infested, or too costly for their family’s income level. In Dorchester and Talbot counties this includes applicants that have an annual income of between 35%-65% of area median income, currently \$27,090 - \$50,310 for a family of four. Habitat for Humanity homeowners pay settlement costs, a monthly mortgage, and property taxes. Additionally, they must contribute 300 to 400 hours of sweat equity on the construction of Habitat for Humanity homes and pay off any outstanding debt before purchasing a Habitat for Humanity home.

**MYTH:** Habitat for Humanity houses reduce a neighborhood’s property values.

**FACT:** Housing studies show that affordable housing has no adverse effect on neighborhood property values. In fact, Habitat for Humanity houses have proven to increase property values and local government tax income.



MYTH: Habitat for Humanity homes are only for minorities.  
FACT: Habitat for Humanity follows equal housing opportunity laws and builds houses in partnership with those in need regardless of race, religion or any other characteristic. Prospective homeowners must meet three criteria: need; ability to repay the mortgage; and a willingness to partner with Habitat for Humanity.

MYTH: Habitat for Humanity homeowners must be on Welfare, the Food Supplement Program, Disability, Unemployment, or other government aid.

FACT: While some Habitat for Humanity homeowners receive aid, most are low-income working people who have sufficient income to assume the responsibilities of home ownership. Typically, their annual income is less than half of the area median income.

MYTH: You have to be Christian to become a Habitat for Humanity homeowner.

FACT: Habitat for Humanity homeowners are chosen without regard to race, religion or ethnic group, in keeping with United States law and with Habitat for Humanity's abiding belief that God's love extends to everyone. Habitat for Humanity also welcomes volunteers from all faiths, or no faith, who actively embrace the goal of eliminating poverty housing.

MYTH: Habitat for Humanity International dictates policy and practices for every local Habitat for Humanity affiliate.

FACT: Local Habitat for Humanity affiliates are independent, nonprofit organizations that operate in a specific service area within the framework of the Habitat Affiliate Covenant. Each affiliate is responsible for its own governance and fundraising.

MYTH: Habitat for Humanity was founded by former President Jimmy Carter.

FACT: Habitat for Humanity was started in Americus, Georgia, by Millard Fuller and his wife Linda. Former President Carter and his wife Rosalynn have been longtime

Habitat for Humanity supporters and volunteers who help bring national attention to the organization's work. Each year, they lead the Jimmy Carter Work Project to help build houses and raise awareness of the need for affordable housing worldwide.

## **VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES**

### **NATURE OF VOLUNTEERING**

*Volunteerism is essential to Habitat Choptank's program. We greatly appreciate your interest and support! All volunteers are asked to adhere to Habitat Choptank's policies and procedures. Please take the time to read and understand these guidelines.*

*A volunteer is defined as a person who performs a service willingly and without pay. Volunteering offers many benefits including skill development, career exploration, personal growth, socialization, and the ability to have an impact on the community.*

*This handbook is not an employment or volunteer contract and is not intended to create contractual obligation of any kind. Neither you nor Habitat Choptank is bound to continue the volunteer relationship if either you or Habitat Choptank chooses, at will, to end the relationship at any time.*

### **COMPANION MANUALS**

This handbook provides general policies, procedures, and brief descriptions of all available volunteer opportunities with Habitat Choptank. After a volunteer has selected a specific volunteer opportunity, a companion manual will be made available and will provide a position description and instructions and requirements specific to the chosen activity.

### **HANDBOOK REVISIONS AND AVAILABILITY**

In order to retain necessary flexibility in volunteer management, Habitat Choptank reserves the right to amend any of the policies and procedures described in this handbook. Revisions to this handbook will occur on an annual basis at minimum. Updated digital and paper copy versions of this handbook will be available as soon as the revisions are completed.

This handbook will be available digitally online at the Habitat Choptank website under the volunteer tab. Paper copies will be available at volunteer orientations.

## **ORIENTATIONS**

Habitat Choptank asks that all new volunteers attend a Volunteer Orientation. These general Volunteer Orientations are held once a month at the Habitat Choptank office in Trappe. They are available at two times on the same day, either at 8:30 AM or 5:30 PM. Volunteers can choose which time best fits their schedule and need only attend once. Please call the Habitat Choptank office to learn the monthly date of the Volunteer Orientation and to also reserve a spot.

Habitat Choptank is committed to providing Volunteer Orientations before volunteers begin work of any kind, and is flexible in the delivery of the orientation. General Volunteer Orientations for large groups may be done offsite at a place of business, common public meeting place, or even on site before volunteer activities begin. Please call the Habitat Choptank office to set up this type of Volunteer Orientation.

Upon the selection of a volunteer opportunity with Habitat Choptank and the receipt of a companion manual, volunteers will attend any additional specific orientation required for the chosen activity. This includes on site orientations with more specific information for the chosen volunteer opportunity, for example, ReStore Volunteers attend a ReStore Orientation, Construction Volunteers receive instruction at the construction site, and Office

Volunteers will receive instruction in the Habitat Choptank office.

## **APPLICATION AND WAIVER**

Habitat Choptank requires that all volunteers complete an application that serves as documentation of interest and skills and that provides contact information and other official data. Volunteers are also required to sign an Acknowledgement of Receipt and Understanding of the contents of this Volunteer Handbook in their application, as well as an Acknowledgement of Receipt and Understanding of any companion manual.

Habitat Choptank also requires that all volunteers complete and sign a Volunteer Release and Waiver of Liability before the start of any volunteer activity. Minors age 17 and younger must have this waiver signed by their parents or legal guardians.

The Volunteer Application and Release and Waiver of Liability must be updated every year. Even if a volunteer has filled out and signed these documents previously, they must be current and completed once annually as required by Habitat Choptank's insurance provider. Habitat Choptank will let volunteers know when to complete the Volunteer Application and Release and Waiver of Liability yearly update.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION UPDATES**

It is important to notify Habitat Choptank with any changes in personal information. Emergency contact information and other important personal data should be kept current. Please call or email the Habitat Choptank office to make updates as necessary.

## **SCHEDULING**

Volunteers are scheduled either on an individual or group basis. They may volunteer as often or as little as they choose. Each volunteer opportunity has specific hours and length of time commitment. All individual and group volunteers are asked to call the Habitat Choptank office at least one week in advance to secure a volunteer position. Youth Program volunteer opportunities must also be arranged in advance with Habitat Choptank.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

All volunteers are required to arrange for their own transportation to the scheduled volunteer site. Habitat Choptank does not provide transportation for volunteers.

## **PUNCTUALITY AND ATTENDANCE**

In order to ensure smooth operation, Habitat Choptank asks that volunteers arrive on time and extend common courtesy in informing the organization of absences. Volunteers are essential to Habitat Choptank's operation; Habitat Choptank depends on volunteers and is at a loss when they are absent. Additionally, activities may be put on hold or not able to be completed if volunteers are late or absent. To cancel or reschedule a day of service, please contact the Habitat Choptank office in a timely manner.

## **CANCELLATIONS**

Habitat Choptank will let volunteers know as soon as possible of any changes in scheduling or cancellations due

to weather. This information can be found by checking online for a Facebook status update.

## **LOGGING HOURS**

Volunteers will sign in and out each time they volunteer with Habitat Choptank. There are sign in sheets for each volunteer opportunity at the activity location. Tracking volunteer hours is significant for volunteer appreciation, receiving grant money, and insurance coverage requirements, and is also helpful for volunteers to track their own personal service hours.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

It is Habitat Choptank's aim to create an environment that supports a diversity of people and their ideas as well as supports Habitat Choptank's mission. Habitat Choptank is committed to high standards in every aspect of its operation. Volunteers are expected to follow a code of conduct that will protect the interests and safety of all other volunteers, homebuyer families, and staff, and the wellbeing of the neighborhoods and communities where Habitat Choptank works. It is Habitat Choptank's policy that any conduct that interferes with or adversely effects work is sufficient grounds for correctional action. Such action can range from warnings to immediate discharge. Depending on the conduct, disciplinary steps may be enforced by the following methods: verbal warning, written warning, suspension, termination.

Factors that may be considered in determining the appropriate action include: the seriousness of the conduct, the volunteer's record, the volunteer's ability to correct their conduct, action taken with respect to similar conduct by other volunteers, and any other mitigating or influential factors. Though it is not possible to list all of the forms of conduct that are unacceptable when volunteering, the following list provides some examples that may result in correctional action. Depending on the specifics of the situation and the severity of the conduct, any of the disciplinary steps may be bypassed and the volunteer may

be terminated without prior warnings or suspensions. Examples of unacceptable conduct include:

- Theft or inappropriate removal or possession of Habitat Choptank property.
- Falsification of documents.
- Volunteering under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Possession, distribution, sale, transfer, or use of alcohol or illegal drugs on Habitat Choptank property or while volunteering.
- Fighting or threatening violence in the workplace.
- Failure to resolve a conflict in an appropriate manner.
- Negligence or improper conduct leading to damage of Habitat Choptank property or another person's property.
- Failure to follow a supervisor's reasonable instructions.
- Violation of safety rules.
- Smoking on Habitat Choptank property.
- Sexual or other harassment or discrimination.
- Possession of dangerous or unauthorized materials, such as explosives or firearms, on Habitat Choptank property or while volunteering.
- Inappropriate or disrespectful conduct or behavior which brings discredit upon Habitat Choptank's mission and goals.
- Any action that compromises the safety or that results in the injury of Habitat Choptank's employees and volunteers.
- Inappropriate attire.

## **DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT**

Habitat Choptank is firmly committed to providing a positive work environment free of discrimination and bias. Each volunteer is personally responsible for maintaining such a work environment. Habitat Choptank prohibits any harassment in the form of actions, jokes, or comments based on an individual's sex, sexual orientation, race, ethnic background, age, religion, physical condition or appearance, disability, marital or economic status, or other

legally protected characteristic. Any conduct or action, whether overt or subtle, which creates an offensive or hostile work environment is prohibited and will be grounds for immediate correctional action.

Any volunteer who feels that he or she is a victim of sexual or discriminatory harassment is encouraged to let the harasser know that their behavior is inappropriate and unwelcome. Volunteers who feel they have been harassed must immediately report the event to the Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity Choptank.

## **CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

Habitat Choptank does recognize that conflicts, misunderstandings, and other problems can arise. These concerns develop between volunteers or between volunteers and staff. Although most misunderstandings can and should be solved easily, more formal provisions have been made in order to resolve difficult problems.

Any volunteer who feels a conflict arise should directly inform the person who is the source or cause of the problem that a problem does exist. Those involved should attempt to resolve the issue independently in an informal and courteous manner. If the volunteer does not wish to communicate directly with the person who is the source or cause of the issue, or if the volunteer fails to satisfactorily resolve the issue after discussing it with the other person, the volunteer should then report the issue to the Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity Choptank.

## **PERSONAL HEALTH AND DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE**

Volunteers are required to be medically capable of performing the required work, requiring sound physical, emotional, and mental ability.

Volunteers must be free from the presence of illegal drugs, alcohol, or other substances that diminish or impair their



ability to perform the volunteer activity. Any volunteer found under the influence of alcohol or drugs will be subject to termination of their role with Habitat Choptank. Volunteers are prohibited from possession, distribution, sale, transfer, or use of alcohol or illegal drugs on Habitat Choptank property or while volunteering. Any volunteer found participating in these actions will also be subject to termination of their role with Habitat Choptank. Volunteers with a drug, alcohol, or other substance abuse problem are urged to seek professional treatment.

## **SEXUAL OFFENDER AND CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK**

Habitat for Humanity Choptank values the safety of its partner homebuyers, volunteers, and staff, and the wellbeing of the neighborhoods and communities where it works. The organization will take prudent measures to protect its human and material resources. Habitat Choptank requires that sex offender and criminal background checks be completed for all members of the Board of Directors, staff, and all volunteers serving on the Homebuyer Selection and Partnership Committees.

Habitat Choptank reserves the right to recheck sexual offender and criminal background status at any time. Any person who does not consent to a sexual offender and criminal background check or withholds or falsifies information pertaining to a sexual offense or criminal record may be disqualified from service with Habitat Choptank.

A criminal background offense finding or listing on the sex offender registry may disqualify an applicant from service with Habitat Choptank. In determining eligibility, Habitat Choptank, in its sole discretion, may consider several factors, including without limitation, one or more of the following:

- Nature, duties, and responsibilities of the volunteer position.
- Nature of the conviction and whether children or other vulnerable persons were involved.

- Time elapsed since the offense.
- Age of the person when the illegal activity occurred.
- Extent to which the offense may affect the person's fitness or ability to perform the duties or responsibilities of the volunteer position.
- Number of convictions, if more than one.
- Whether partnering with the person would pose risk to the affiliate.
- Any evidence produced by the person, or produced on the person's behalf demonstrating rehabilitation and good conduct (Arizona, California, Illinois, Nevada, New Jersey and New York issue certificates of rehabilitation for convicts).
- Any other factor that the affiliate deems relevant to the decision.

Habitat Choptank may, on its sole discretion, determine an individual as ineligible for volunteer service. Habitat Choptank reserves the right to weigh disqualification criteria on a case-by-case basis and to make selection decisions in its sole discretion. The following list provides examples in which Habitat Choptank may make this determination; although it is not exhaustive and is for illustrative purposes only:

- Convicted of a crime of violence, including arson, kidnapping, or illegal use of weapons or explosives.
- Convicted of a crime of violence, including rape, sexual assault, or homicide.
- Convicted of felony child abuse or neglect, spousal abuse, or a crime against children including child pornography.

Criminal background checks will be completed using a consumer reporting agency. Sexual offender registry checks will be completed by using the National Sex Offender Public Registry <http://www.nsopr.gov>, searching all states in which the person has resided for the last ten years. Written consent will be obtained before checks are performed. Volunteers will give written consent on the Consent for Criminal Background Check form which will be provided. The checks will be completed prior to new

volunteers joining the Board, the Homebuyer Selection Committee or the Partnership Committee.

Findings from the checks will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by a three person review team made up of the Executive Director, Program Manager and a designated Board member. The details of findings from the screening checks will be treated confidentially and will not be shared outside of the review team. Based on any or all of the criteria outlined in this policy, Habitat Choptank may, in its sole discretion, decide that an existing volunteer will be dismissed or reassigned to a different position based on findings from a criminal background check. In so doing, Habitat Choptank may consider:

- The type and location of the volunteer activity.
- The co-workers and subordinates in the workplace.
- Work hours.
- Degree of supervision.
- Amount of access to technology.

If Habitat Choptank denies a person for volunteer service based on findings from a sexual offender and criminal background check, the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) requires the affiliate to provide oral, written, or electronic notice of the denial to the person as well as the following information:

- The name, address, and telephone number of the agency (including a toll-free telephone number established by the agency if the agency compiles and maintains files on consumers on a nationwide basis) that furnished the report to the affiliate.
- A statement that the consumer credit reporting agency did not make the decision to take the adverse action and is unable to provide the consumer with the specific reasons why the application was denied.
- A notice of the applicant's right to obtain a free copy of a consumer credit report from the consumer credit reporting agency, which notice must inform the applicant of the 60 day deadline for obtaining such a copy.

- A notice of the applicant's right to dispute with a consumer credit reporting agency the accuracy or completeness of any information in a consumer credit report furnished by the agency.

If a sexual offender and criminal background check is required for the position as volunteer seeks, all forms will be provided by Habitat Choptank, including the Consent for Criminal Background Check form and Criminal Status Matrix, as well as an individual copy of this sexual offender and criminal background check policy.

## **DRESS CODE**

Volunteers are expected to dress appropriately for the job they are performing. Dress code guidelines are available in the companion manuals and are specific to each volunteer activity.

## **SAFETY**

Habitat Choptank volunteers share the responsibility for establishing and maintaining a safe work environment and are expected to follow safety rules and to exercise caution in all activities. Safety rules differ for each volunteer opportunity, and specific safety information for a certain activity can be found in the companion manual for that volunteer opportunity. If a volunteer does not comply with Habitat Choptank's safety rules, there may be grounds for correctional action. Volunteers are also asked to report any unsafe conditions to a supervisor immediately. Any accident that results in injury of any kind must be reported to the Executive Director of Habitat Choptank immediately and an incident report must be filed.

## **PERFORMANCE AND EVALUATION**

Habitat Choptank aims for the volunteer experience to be safe, productive, and fun. To ensure proper and safe completion of volunteer activities and also to ensure that the volunteer is content and paired with the correct volunteer

activity, supervisors will occasionally offer informal constructive feedback on job performance and inquire about volunteer experiences and interests.

Habitat Choptank also appreciates feedback from volunteers. Volunteers are encouraged to complete the online feedback survey that is found on our website at the volunteer tab. This feedback helps to enhance Habitat Choptank's efforts in building its volunteer program. All who complete the feedback survey will be eligible to win a Habitat Choptank prize. Names will be drawn once each quarter and volunteers will be contacted if they win.

## **VOLUNTEER DEVELOPMENT**

In addition to providing an opportunity to make a difference in the community, volunteering offers many benefits including skill development, career exploration, personal growth, socialization, and the ability to have an impact on the community. Habitat Choptank fosters an efficient and professional work environment by encouraging volunteers to take advantage of job related educational opportunities. When possible, volunteers are encouraged to attend conferences, seminars, or other training programs. Habitat Choptank staff will make volunteers aware of any opportunities for volunteer development as needed.

## **RECOGNITION**

Habitat Choptank greatly values volunteers and holds a volunteer appreciation event once each year to recognize volunteers and their efforts. Additionally, cards, emails, and other methods of appreciation are ongoing to recognize volunteer efforts.

## **COMMUNITY SERVICE**

Habitat Choptank welcomes community service volunteers from schools, civic groups, community assistance programs, and those fulfilling court ordered community service hours. Upon request, Habitat Choptank will provide

a letter or other required form of documentation to the community service volunteer as proof of completed service.

Volunteers must provide the necessary documentation to fulfill the requirements of their program, and maintaining and filing this documentation is the responsibility of the volunteer. It is also the volunteer's responsibility to maintain an accurate time sheet by signing in and out at each volunteer activity. In addition, it is the volunteer's responsibility to ensure that time sheets are signed at the beginning and end of each service day by a Habitat Choptank staff member. Hours worked but not recorded or approved with signatures on the day of service cannot be counted.

For appropriate placement within our organization, Habitat Choptank reserves the right to know the offense related to the court ordered community service. In all other respects, court ordered community service volunteers will be treated equally and held accountable to the same standards as all other volunteers.

## **MEDIA**

Members of the media are occasionally present on Habitat Choptank properties and at Habitat Choptank special events. Please adhere to the following rules if you speak with members of the media:

- Keep all remarks limited to personal experiences.
- Volunteers at any level of the organization are not entitled, empowered, or expected to speak to the media on the behalf of Habitat Choptank.
- Volunteers are prohibited from conducting business, meeting with the media or other organizations, and any other type of outreach on behalf of Habitat Choptank without prior knowledge and approval from the Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity Choptank.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Habitat Choptank's confidentiality statement is stated in the Release and Waiver of Liability that all volunteers complete. Habitat Choptank is committed to protecting the rights of all of our stakeholders including our volunteers, homebuyers, donors, affiliates, and the faith communities in which we partner. Habitat volunteers may not divulge or make accessible confidential information belonging to or obtained through their affiliation with Habitat to any person, including relatives, friends, and business and professional associates, other than as authorized in the execution of duties. Volunteers must exercise good judgment and care to avoid improper disclosures of confidential information relating to the nature of our business including but not limited to: financial, donor, and Habitat homebuyer information.

## **TAX DEDUCTIONS**

On their taxes, volunteers cannot deduct their service hours or the hourly value of the services they perform. They may be able to deduct any financial or in-kind donations that they have made but should retain all receipts and consult their tax preparation professional or accountant if doing so. Upon request, Habitat Choptank will provide written receipts or other required documentation needed for tax preparation for qualifying donations. In addition, volunteers may be able to deduct mileage to and from volunteer activities at 14 cents per mile. Please contact the IRS, a tax preparation professional, or accountant if doing so.

## **RECYCLING**

Habitat Choptank is committed to sustainability and environmentally friendly practices. Both the office and the ReStore recycle, and Habitat Choptank makes every attempt to recycle material from jobsites. Volunteers are expected to participate in Habitat Choptank's recycling practices and encourage others to do the same. This includes using materials and resources wisely, and participating in the following:

- Separating garbage from recyclable materials.

- Contributing to the Cans for Homes program, where aluminum cans are collected for recycling resale and proceeds support Habitat Choptank's mission to build simple, decent, and affordable homes. The Cans for Home receptacle is currently located the ReStore.
- Placing glass, plastic, and paper in the appropriate recycling containers.
- Establishing and maintaining separate scrap piles for recycling on the job site and at the ReStore based on the type of materials such as cardboard packaging, untreated wood, plywood & OSB, metal scrap, plastics, insulation, etc.
- Assisting with the removal of materials to be recycled if needed.

## **SMOKING**

Habitat Choptank is committed to providing a safe and healthy work environment. Smoking is prohibited on all Habitat Choptank property. To prevent or minimize exposure of building occupants, indoor surfaces, and ventilation air distribution systems to environmental tobacco smoke, smoking outside of Habitat Choptank property will occur at least 25 feet away from entries, outdoor air intakes, and operable windows. In recognition of federal law, any volunteer under the age of 18 is prohibited from smoking at any time.

## **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

### **POSSIBILITIES**

*Habitat Choptank values your support and involvement! It is our hope that in volunteering, your efforts with Habitat Choptank will be enjoyable and fulfilling. There are many opportunities to utilize your individual talents. Volunteers are also able to serve in multiple capacities if they wish. We are committed to pairing each volunteer with an appropriate activity based on their individual interests and skills.*



*Below is a list of available volunteer opportunities with Habitat Choptank. Each includes a short general description as well as sample tasks or duties, recommended skills or interests, and an estimated length of time commitment. For more information and specific requirements for a certain opportunity, please see the companion manual specific to the chosen activity.*

## **BUILDING COMMITTEE**

The Building Committee is responsible for guiding the construction program at Habitat Choptank. The Building Committee is crucial to creating management systems to fulfill Habitat Choptank's unique needs as a nonprofit developer and contractor that utilizes volunteer labor. The committee addresses the quality control, site development, and oversees the building schedule and house plans.

The Building Committee seeks volunteers with professional experience in construction management, purchasing, building inspections, architecture, engineering, or other disciplines related to the building industry. The committee meets once a month necessitating a regular commitment. Joining the Building Committee will help to expand Habitat Choptank's building efforts.

## **CONSTRUCTION**

The most visible and most popular of Habitat Choptank's volunteer opportunities is construction. As Habitat Choptank is a home builder, the largest need is for Construction Volunteers. Construction Volunteers work on nearly every aspect of home building undertaking dozens of tasks such as flooring, painting, tiling, siding, insulating, framing, landscaping, renovating, and weatherization.

Hundreds of volunteers come together each year to help build homes nail by nail, and board by board. No construction experience is necessary and volunteers may participate as often or as little as they choose; the minimum

length of commitment is one shift on a single day. Habitat Choptank's mission to create opportunities for low income homebuyers to live in decent, affordable, and durable shelter is achieved with volunteers who help to build or renovate homes.

## **COOKIE CREW**

The Cookie Crew supports Habitat Choptank by providing cookies to construction volunteers on the jobsites or for other Habitat Choptank events. Cookie Crew Volunteers are asked to willingly donate cookies for a specific event or on one day for all of the construction volunteers working on the jobsite. Cookie Crew Volunteers are encouraged to personally prepare and deliver the cookies, or they may simply purchase and deliver the cookies. This donation of cookies is greatly appreciated and is a tax deductible donation. Joining the Cookie Crew is a significant way to support Habitat Choptank's staff and volunteers.

## **FAITH RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

The Faith Relations Committee is responsible for cultivating relationships with the faith community in the Habitat Choptank region. Members of the committee work to develop partnerships with local congregations and faith based organizations and Habitat Choptank. The committee also builds faith based coalitions which support Habitat Choptank's affordable housing ministry by organizing volunteers and providing financial contributions, donations, and sponsorships.

The Faith Relations Committee is comprised of members of local congregations of all faiths, clergy, and volunteers who find the faith based elements of Habitat Choptank's mission especially meaningful. The committee meets once a month necessitating a regular commitment. Becoming a member of the Faith Relations Committee will help to further Habitat Choptank's ministry.

## **HOMEBUYER SELECTION COMMITTEE**

The Homebuyer Selection Committee is responsible for identifying future Habitat Choptank homeowners. Members of the committee screen and interview potential partner homebuyers, provide help during the application process, and discuss the ability of the potential homeowners to be

able to partner with Habitat Choptank. This committee also works with local residents, neighborhood associations, and community and faith based organizations to create support for Habitat Choptank and to identify future partner homebuyers.

The Homebuyer Selection Committee is comprised of volunteers with a background in social work, human services, or mortgage banking, as well as volunteers with an interest or skills in interviewing and recruitment. Due to the nature of the committee and the direct contact with future partner homebuyers, Habitat Choptank requires that sex offender and criminal background checks be completed for all volunteers that wish to serve on the Homebuyer Selection Committee. The committee meets once a month necessitating a regular commitment. Joining the Homebuyer Selection Committee is a way to contribute to Habitat Choptank's mission by helping to identify future homeowners.

## **HOME REPAIR**

Habitat Choptank's Home Repair program serves low income homeowners in need of health and safety repairs, weatherization, or exterior improvements. In addition to Habitat Choptank's existing construction program that completes home rehabs and new construction, the Home Repair program is another service offered by Habitat Choptank in order to enable more families to improve their housing condition.

Volunteers are needed to complete the repair projects that will include many different tasks such as painting, repairing windows and doors, repairing siding or roofing, or improving accessibility. Volunteers are also needed to identify and assist qualifying applicants. No home repair experience is necessary and volunteers may participate as often or as little as they choose. Habitat Choptank's mission to create decent, affordable, and durable shelter is achieved by volunteers who help to repair homes.

## **HOS COMMITTEE**

The Homeowner Support Committee or HoS provides assistance and guidance to existing Habitat Choptank homeowners. HoS is responsible for creating a semi-annual homeowner newsletter, completing annual homeowner check-ins, and organizing an annual homeowner build on a Habitat Choptank construction site. In addition they provide other professional services to homeowners, as well as participating in the Habitat Advantage program. Habitat Advantage is a program that gives Habitat Choptank homeowners individualized and confidential financial coaching. The program builds on Habitat Choptank's homeowner education seminars for partner homebuyers by helping to promote greater financial literacy and future financial planning for first time and often first generation homebuyers.

HoS is comprised of volunteers with interest or experience in social work, human services, or financial planning. It is recommended that volunteers for HoS have strong social skills. The time commitment for HoS is flexible. Joining HoS is a way to contribute to Habitat Choptank's mission by supporting the success of Habitat Choptank's homeowners.

## **LUNCH BUNCH**

The Lunch Bunch supports Habitat Choptank by providing food for Habitat Choptank events and lunch to the construction volunteers on the jobsite. Lunch Bunch Volunteers are asked to willingly donate lunch for all of the construction volunteers working on the jobsite on one day or to provide refreshments for Habitat Choptank events. Lunch Bunch Volunteers may personally prepare and deliver food or may simply purchase it for delivery. This donation of food is greatly appreciated and is a tax deductible donation. Joining the Lunch Bunch is a significant way to contribute to Habitat Choptank's mission by supporting its staff and volunteers.

## **MORTGAGE SERVICING COMMITTEE**

The Mortgage Servicing Committee manages Habitat Choptank's homeowner mortgages. The committee reviews mortgage related settlement costs, oversees monthly mortgage payments and escrow analysis, assists in the collection of past due accounts, and manages foreclosures when necessary.

The Mortgage Servicing Committee is composed of volunteers with professional experience as accountants, mortgage bankers, creditors, lawyers, or other disciplines related to the finance industry. The committee meets once a month necessitating a regular commitment. Joining the Mortgage Servicing Committee is a way to contribute to Habitat Choptank's mission by helping to oversee the success of the organization and its homeowners.

## **NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION COMMITTEE**

The Neighborhood Revitalization Committee is responsible for assuring the goals of Habitat Choptank's NR program are consistent with the vision, mission, values, and needs of the organization. As part of their duties, committee members help develop community partnerships, conduct program outreach and educational events, keep current with community needs and interests, and serve as ambassadors of the NR program within the community.

The Neighborhood Revitalization Committee is composed of volunteers with an understanding of the communities that the NR program serves, as well as those with good relationships with other community partners. The committee meets on a monthly or as-needed basis.

## **OFFICE**

Office Volunteers are needed to perform a wide range of administrative tasks in support of Habitat Choptank's business responsibilities. Duties include reception such as answering the phone and greeting visitors, filing, data entry, organization, and occasionally preparing bulk mailings.

Office Volunteers work with Habitat Choptank staff to fulfill regular business and office duties.

Office Volunteers have an interest or experience in office operations or business. Volunteers may participate as often or as little as they choose based on their schedule. Volunteering in the Habitat Choptank office is a way to contribute to Habitat Choptank's daily affiliate operations.

## **PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE**

The Partnership Committee is responsible for assisting and guiding partner homebuyers through the process of becoming homeowners. The committee is responsible for the mentoring and education of future homeowners, including topics such as budgeting, home repair and maintenance, utilizing community resources, and any other financial, legal, and personal duties required to become a successful homeowner. Members of the committee plan and facilitate the homeowner education classes which partner homebuyers attend in order to fulfill their partnership requirement.

The Partnership Committee is comprised of volunteers with interest or experience in teaching, social work, or human services. It is recommended that volunteers for the Partnership Committee have strong social skills. Due to the nature of the committee and the direct contact with partner families and homeowners, Habitat Choptank requires that sex offender and criminal background checks be completed for all volunteers that wish to serve on the Partnership Committee. The committee meets once a month necessitating a regular commitment. Joining the Partnership Committee is a way to contribute to Habitat Choptank's mission by helping qualifying homebuyers to achieve their goal of home ownership.

## **PRE-DEMOLITION SALVAGE**

The Habitat Choptank ReStore is frequently contacted by property owners who wish to donate materials from a

building that will be demolished. Items such as doors, cabinetry, flooring, lumber, plants, appliances, and lighting fixtures are salvaged and sold at the ReStore.

Volunteers are needed to help salvage materials on these usually short term Pre-Demolition Salvage projects. No deconstruction experience is necessary and volunteers may participate as often or as little as they choose; the minimum length of commitment is one shift on a single day. Habitat Choptank's mission is supported by volunteers who help to salvage materials that are sold at the ReStore to raise funds to continue building homes and serving families.

## **PHILANTHROPY COMMITTEE**

The Resource Development Committee works with Habitat Choptank staff in developing fundraising plans, implementing strategies and tasks to generate funds, and soliciting financial support.

The Resource Development Committee is composed of volunteers with interest or experience in fundraising, public relations, and marketing. The committee meets once a month necessitating a regular commitment. Joining the Resource Development Committee is a way to help ensure Habitat Choptank's success and long term stability, and to help make it possible for the affiliate to serve an increased number of homebuyers.

## **RESTORE**

ReStores are outlets that accept donated goods for resale. Items sold by the Habitat Choptank ReStore are donated by local retailers, contractors, and individuals, and include home improvement items such as furniture, home accessories, building materials, and appliances. These donated goods are sold at a fraction of their retail price. The ReStore provides an environmentally and socially responsible way to divert reusable materials from the waste stream and simultaneously raise funds for the construction of Habitat Choptank homes.



ReStore Volunteers are needed to pick up or accept donations organize and inventory the materials and goods for resale, greet and assist customers, manage checkout, and assist in the office. ReStore Volunteers have an interest or experience in retail or sales, warehousing, or the home improvement industry. Additionally volunteers are recommended to have great organizational and social skills. Volunteers may participate as often or as little as they choose based on their schedule. Volunteering at the ReStore is a significant way to support Habitat Choptank's mission by helping to raise funds to continue building homes and serving homebuyers.

## **RESTORE COMMITTEE**

The ReStore Committee oversees the operations of the Habitat Choptank ReStore. Members of this committee work with the ReStore Manager to assess and direct the business affairs of the ReStore, foster partnerships with community organizations and businesses, and also plan ReStore special events.

The ReStore Committee is comprised of volunteers with interest or experience in business, management, sales, or finance. The committee meets once each quarter, necessitating a regular commitment. Joining the ReStore Committee is a way to support Habitat Choptank's mission through the success of the Habitat Choptank ReStore.

## **SITE SELECTION COMMITTEE**

The Site Selection Committee's responsibilities include land acquisition, land planning, and identifying and solving environmental and community impact issues. The committee is crucial in the ongoing and challenging effort to locate affordable land for Habitat Choptank homes in Talbot and Dorchester counties. The committee also works with potential sellers and regulatory agencies.

The Site Selection Committee is comprised of volunteers with interest or experience in architecture, construction, real estate, planning, zoning, or development. The committee meets once a month necessitating a regular commitment. Joining the Site Selection Committee is a way to contribute to Habitat Choptank's mission by helping to maintain a land bank of buildable properties.

## **TOOL TENDERS**

The Tool Tenders support Habitat Choptank's construction efforts by organizing and conducting a monthly inventory of the tool trailers on the construction sites. Throughout the construction process, Habitat Choptank's tool trailers, equipment, and tools receive substantial use and require attention to be kept in useful working order. Tool Tender Volunteers are encouraged to have strong organizational skills and knowledge of construction tools and equipment. Joining the Tool Tenders is a significant way to support Habitat Choptank's construction efforts.

## **VOICE**

Volunteers in Community Education or VoICE are representatives of Habitat Choptank that attend various community events on behalf of the affiliate. They set up booths or informational sessions at events in the area to recruit and publicize for Habitat Choptank. VoICE Volunteers continually recruit new volunteers, donors, and potential homeowners.

VOICE is comprised of volunteers with interest or experience in fundraising, marketing, recruitment, or business. It is recommended that VoICE volunteers have strong social skills and the time commitment is flexible. Joining VoICE and educating the community about Habitat Choptank helps to build Habitat Choptank's program and serve more homebuyers.

## **DONORS**

Becoming a donor is another way to support Habitat Choptank. As a nonprofit organization, Habitat Choptank relies on the generous contributions from individuals, corporations, faith based congregations, civic groups, and all other individuals in order to further the mission of eliminating poverty housing. Habitat Choptank's volunteers provide savings on labor; however other expenses for operations, materials, and land used to build homes are costly. Please consider making a financial contribution or in-kind donation to Habitat Choptank and encourage others to do so as well. Your support empowers hardworking low income homebuyers to build a better future through homeownership.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

### HABITAT FOR HUMANITY CHOPTANK STAFF

*Executive Director, JoAnn Hansen, [director@habitatchoptank.org](mailto:director@habitatchoptank.org)*

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*ReStore Asst. Manager, Katrina Batson, [asstmanager@habitatchoptank.org](mailto:asstmanager@habitatchoptank.org)*

*ReStore Donations Manager, Keith Myers, [kmyers@habitatchoptank.org](mailto:kmyers@habitatchoptank.org)*

*ReStore Donations Coordinator, Linda Fairbanks, [restore@habitatchoptank.org](mailto:restore@habitatchoptank.org)*

*ReStore Floor Supervisor, Lew Fritz, [lfritz@habitatchoptank.org](mailto:lfritz@habitatchoptank.org)*

*Volunteer Coordinator, Nora Skiver, [volunteers@habitatchoptank.org](mailto:volunteers@habitatchoptank.org)*

## HOURS OF OPERATION AND OBSERVED HOLIDAYS

**Habitat Choptank Office** business hours: Monday – Friday  
8:30 AM – 5:00 PM.

**ReStore** - not open to the public: Monday- phones are manned

**ReStore** open to the public: Tuesday 10:00 AM- 4:00 PM  
Wednesday-10:00 AM – 6:00 PM, and Thursday-Saturday 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM.

**Construction sites:** Monday – Saturday 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM, Mondays and Fridays are reserved and may be scheduled by contacting the Habitat Choptank office.

**Observed Holidays:** Habitat Choptank Office, ReStore, and construction sites may observe these holidays, dates may vary yearly:

- New Year's Day January 1<sup>st</sup>
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day July 4<sup>th</sup>
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving and the following day
- Christmas Day December 25<sup>th</sup> and either the day before or the following day



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Website: [www.HabitatChoptank.org](http://www.HabitatChoptank.org)

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[www.facebook.com/HabitatforHumanityChoptank](http://www.facebook.com/HabitatforHumanityChoptank)



**ReStore**

Store: 8610 Commerce Drive, Easton, MD 21601  
Phone: 410 820 6186

Website: [www.HabitatChoptank.org/ReStore](http://www.HabitatChoptank.org/ReStore)

Email: [ReStore@HabitatChoptank.org](mailto:ReStore@HabitatChoptank.org)

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