



**Habitat**  
for Humanity®  
of Southern Santa  
Barbara County



Marco, Homeowner



Karen, Volunteer

## Habitat for Humanity of Southern Santa Barbara County Impact Report: 2018

It was a tough year in Santa Barbara County.

We've faced epic fires and flooding, and have suffered losses. Our community was displaced and critical housing inventory damaged—exacerbating the housing crisis for those struggling with housing costs.

In the wake of the Thomas fire and Montecito debris flow, Habitat Santa Barbara, the local arm of Habitat for Humanity, mobilized a housing rehab campaign like never before. **Nearly 2,000 volunteers removed 42,000 tons of mud and repaired more than 100 houses.**

While disaster needs prompted us to expand in scope, Habitat Santa Barbara continued to focus on our key objective for 2018: completing three new affordable homes on Sawyer Avenue in Carpinteria. The project houses 14 people, including eight children, who have lived in overcrowded housing and unsafe living conditions.

Habitat Santa Barbara partners with low-income families to build stability and self-reliance. Habitat homeowners invest “sweat equity” by helping to construct their new homes. With your support, they also pay an affordable mortgage—a hand up, not a handout.

In addition to new housing, we are committed to maintaining or improving existing homes and to neighborhood revitalization projects, such as disaster-recovery efforts in Montecito.

Marco, a Montecito resident and active community volunteer, was one grateful recipient of help. In the early morning of January 9, 2018, Marco's home was inundated with water and debris from a flash flood. Mud caked every room in his house, rendering it uninhabitable.

*“Walls, fences, and hedges from neighboring properties came down in the literal sense, as well as in a proverbial sense,”* he said.

While Marco is usually the one who comes running when a neighbor is in need, this time his own family was affected. The damage was too much to fix alone.

By working together, we accomplish more. As we reflect on the year, we are grateful for the support of donors and volunteers who helped with both disaster recovery and new housing for those in need. With the completion of the Sawyer Avenue Affordable Homes project, our organization adds a total of 22 Habitat homes to the county's inventory—much-needed shelter for 84 individuals, half of whom are children.

Habitat Santa Barbara is committed to making the dream of home ownership a reality for our low-income working individuals and families, thus breaking the cycle of poverty and building self-sufficiency.

Watch our video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WpXK-nrsivE&t=16s>

Habitat for Humanity of Southern Santa Barbara County is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to eliminating substandard housing locally through constructing, rehabilitating, and preserving homes; by advocating for fair and just housing policies; and by providing training and access to resources to help families improve their housing conditions. **Habitat for Humanity brings people together to build homes, communities and hope.**

Every investment yields a return. For every nail hammered, the life of a child is enhanced, for every foundation laid, a neighborhood is strengthened, and for every roof raised, a family is transformed. Each of Habitat's 22 Homeowner families have a story worth telling. Each has had their life positively impacted thanks to the generous donations of money, time and material that helped build their Habitat Home. Below are a sample of personal family stories.

- **The Zarate Family – Their affordable mortgage allows them to save monthly for their daughters' futures.**

In 2006, Habitat completed its first affordable housing development, three new town-homes on Via Lucero. The Zarate family – Bernardo, Maria, Wendy and Paulina – applied and were overjoyed to be selected as first-time homeowners. The family previously shared a small unconverted garage and constantly worried about increasing rents, being kicked-out by landlords, and where they would live month to month. Twelve years after moving into their Habitat Home, the family is flourishing. Bernardo now owns his own landscaping business and their oldest daughter, Wendy, graduated from high school in June 2018 and will be the first in her family to graduate from college. She plans to study Psychology and dreams of studying abroad and learning about different cultures. Bernardo and Maria made it a priority to save for college and focus on their daughters' educations. **No longer worrying about where they will live every month, they have been able to focus their time and attention making sure their daughters remain on a college-bound path and volunteering at their schools.** "Being a homeowner has given my family the opportunity to live in a better home. What a family wants is to move forward, and Habitat for Humanity has definitely helped us with that," Wendy says.

- **The Do Carmo Family – Their Habitat Home provides a permanent home to grow roots.**

In 2010, Habitat completed a four-home development on San Pascual Street. Raquel Do Carmo, a single mother to six-year-old Larrisa, applied and was selected to be a first-time homeowner. Raquel and Larissa previously lived at St. Vincent's, a temporary affordable housing shelter for women and children. At St. Vincent's, Raquel and Larissa had their own room but shared a bathroom and living space with four other families. Their allotted time at St. Vincent's was nearing completion and without Habitat, they weren't sure where they would have gone next. The high cost of rent in town was impossible for Raquel to meet on her income. Almost eight years after moving into their new home, the two are thriving. **The stability of a permanent home and affordable mortgage allowed Raquel to go back to school and finish her master's degree in 2014.** Larissa has found her passion in musical theater and joined the Santa Barbara Youth Ensemble Theater. She has proudly performed at the Lobero Theater and dreams of one day performing on Broadway. "When I first walked into my new home, I was in awe. It was kind of surreal-like a dream. I remember a few weeks into us living there, I told my mom out of nowhere that **I was happy and felt like I finally belonged somewhere; a feeling that has never left me,**" Larissa said, reflecting on moving from temporary housing to a permanent home.

## OUR IMPACT



**2,860**  
volunteers  
participated in  
individual, group  
or corporate  
opportunities  
in 2018



**84**  
low-income  
individuals  
housed locally  
since inception



**150**  
local homes  
rebuilt & repaired  
since inception

*Habitat for Humanity of  
Southern Santa Barbara  
County was established  
as a local affiliate in the  
year 2000.*