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### **Single mother becomes first-time homeowner through Habitat for Humanity**

**FREDERICK, September 13, 2018** – Rebecca Lookingbill, a single mother of two children, is about to become a homeowner for the first time through Habitat for Humanity of Frederick County's home build program. Lookingbill has worked alongside staff and volunteers of the local Habitat for Humanity affiliate since May, helping construct her new home, at 733 Park Avenue in Brunswick, to provide a brighter future for her children.

Lookingbill, a lifelong resident of Frederick County applied to Habitat's program in early 2018. In her application, she told the organization that despite making a good income at her job of 12+ years, raising her credit, and having qualified for a home loan, she had been unable to find any homes in the local market that she could afford. Additionally, saving for a down payment had been next to impossible given the expenses of being the sole provider for her two children, Justin, age six, and Jaylyn, age twelve. Six years prior, while pregnant with her son, Lookingbill discovered their father was in the throes of addiction, so she separated. To help make ends meet, she has lived in her parents' small house, sharing a bedroom with her son, ever since. The extreme difficulty in making ends meet is a reality faced by 39% of Frederick County residents as evidenced by the United Way's most recent ALICE report. Housing prices continue to rise and have priced out many local residents who are seeking strength, stability and self-reliance through homeownership. It is this population that Habitat helps through home ownership programs.

In Lookingbill's case, the hard work she put in to raise her credit and become financially stable paid off as it made her an ideal candidate for Habitat's home build program. In this program, future homeowners put in 'sweat equity,' helping construct their new home, then purchase it at a subsidized price through a low-down payment, low-interest rate loan. The program is ideal for local residents like Lookingbill who make a good income and have decent credit, but struggle under the extremely high costs of the local housing market. Habitat's method of providing affordable homeownership has helped dozens of local homeowners purchase a safe and secure place throughout the organization's 25-year history. Habitat offers this type of affordability by keeping build costs low through volunteer labor and in-kind donations and services, and fundraising to cover building expenses. Lookingbill's home is the first of Habitat's new Build Sponsorship program which gives local companies the opportunity to provide funds directly to a particular project, while their employees participate in volunteer build days. M&T Bank and Leidos Biomedical Research both provided sponsorships for Lookingbill's home.

In her original application, Lookingbill wrote, "I would love nothing more than to own a home and be able to show my children that all of our struggles and all of the sacrifices I have made for them have been worth it. I want them to grow up and be proud of me, knowing that I did this for them." Now, less than a year later, she is about to become the owner of the home she helped build on Park Avenue. She reports that her kids spent the summer dreaming how to decorate their rooms and what it will be like when they move in. "Jaylyn talks about drinking hot cocoa on the front porch once the weather cools. Justin is most excited about decorating for the holidays. I am just excited to get settled in and just see the joy on the kids' faces. That we finally did it. We finally have our own home." Lookingbill will receive the keys to her new home on October 16 at 4:00pm during Habitat's Home Dedication Ceremony.

**About Habitat for Humanity of Frederick County:**

No matter who we are or where we come from, we all deserve a decent life. We deserve to feel strength and stability day after day. We deserve to know we have power to take care of ourselves and build our own futures. At Habitat for Humanity of Frederick County, this is what unites us. Through shelter, we empower. Our vision is a world where everyone has a decent place to live. Because we are all humans and every one of us deserves the opportunity for a better future.

**Mission:** Seeking to put God's love into action, Habitat for Humanity brings people together to build homes, communities and hope.