

Simpson should back Communities of Hope

- By the editorial board

- Apr 11, 2021

Housing costs in Idaho Falls have become unsustainable for many working-class families in recent years. A local nonprofit has developed an ambitious plan to deal with it, but it will require the community to come together and for Idaho's congressional delegation to lend a hand.

It is a worthy cause.

Habitat for Humanity has operated in Idaho Falls for nearly three decades, building dozens of homes during that time. On average, that's a few housing units per year, which are financed through zero-interest mortgages, with recipient families paying an amount that's within their means and required to make up the rest through work and community service. They are a tremendous help to those lucky enough to get them, but the need has long vastly exceeded the number of available homes.

And the problem is getting worse.

More than two in five residents in Idaho Falls currently meet the criteria for the ALICE category. That stands for Asset-Limited, Income-Constrained, Employed. In other words, working people with low wages and, consequently, not a lot in the bank.

Meanwhile, housing costs in the area have skyrocketed. Housing prices rose 17% in 2019, 23% in 2020. Starter homes are now selling in excess of \$300,000, far outside the reach of many local families. Rents likewise have been going through the roof, with a two-bedroom apartment often going for more than \$1,100 per month.

A single parent working full time with two kids should be able to provide their children a decent place to live. For many, that's no longer possible here. Even many two-income households are priced out.

Habitat's new project, Communities of Hope, would be a fundamental shift in its existing model, one designed to address this sweeping problem in a systemic fashion, rather than helping a few families each year.

The project is ambitious, but those planning it are clear-eyed and experienced. Communities of Hope would be a full new subdivision of affordable housing, financed through zero-interest mortgages and sweat equity. It's a hand up, not a hand-out.

Over the years, it would give scores of local families a place to stay and a path toward financial stability.

A variety of types of housing are planned. Within the new subdivision, there would be tiny homes for individuals with very low incomes, often those on SSI or Social Security. There would also be attached condominiums and small, single-family detached houses for low-income families. Habitat foresees constructing scores of these housing units over 10 years once the basic infrastructure for the new subdivision is in place.

Habitat is also working with the city to seek approval for tiny homes to be constructed in back yards through voluntary agreements with homeowners. There are plans to seek partnerships with local churches, who would give land for "micro-mini homes," basic accommodations for quickly housing homeless individuals and connecting them to support services.

Private funding and volunteer work will be an integral part of getting the multimillion-dollar project rolling, so if you have extra money or time to give to Habitat, you should.

But particularly important now is aid from Idaho's congressional delegation.

Habitat is in the process of applying to Rep. Mike Simpson, seeking \$1 million in federal funds to help with buying land and extending utilities. It's a project that would do tremendous good for his constituents, and Simpson should fight for it.



9 April 2021

The Honorable Mike Simpson
2084 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Habitat for Humanity, Idaho Falls Area – Letter of Support

Dear Mr. Simpson,

On behalf of the City of Idaho Falls, please accept this letter of support for Habitat for Humanity, Idaho Falls Area as part of their application for Community Project Funding for the *Communities of Hope* project through the FY2022 Appropriations Request.

Habitat for Humanity, Idaho Falls Area has a proven record of success in Eastern Idaho. Since its inception in 1994, our local Habitat affiliate has helped over 60 families obtain a stable place to *live*, *grow*, and *prosper*. They are a crucial partner agency with United Way in addressing these core areas of community focus. Together with the United Way of Idaho Falls and Bonneville County (UWIFBC), they advocate for the education, health, and financial stability of every person in our community.

With more than 80 years of experience, Habitat is a strategic community leader, convener, and advocate with in-depth knowledge of the communities needing service, the challenges that affect them and the organizations having the most impact. They serve Bonneville, Clark, Fremont, Jefferson, Lemhi, Madison, and Teton counties in Eastern Idaho. They succeed by forging unique and sometimes unlikely partnerships, finding new solutions to old problems, mobilizing the best resources, and inspiring individuals to join the fight against our community's most daunting social challenges.

Notable to City of Idaho Falls leaders, Habitat for Humanity, Idaho Falls Area is offering solutions to the affordable housing crisis in eastern Idaho. Habitat's *Communities of Hope* workforce housing projects are intended to create a lasting stock of decent, affordable housing for low income working families in Eastern Idaho, and then link those families with critical support services, such as emergency food programs. In this way *Communities of Hope* can play a significant role in our collective effort to reduce homelessness and increase the availability of affordable housing stock in our region.

We enthusiastically support this project and encourage your support as well. Please reach out as needed for more information about our partnership with Habitat for Humanity, Idaho Falls Area.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca L. Noah Casper, Ph.D.
Mayor, City of Idaho Falls



EASTERN IDAHO COMMUNITY ACTION PARTNERSHIP

935 E. Lincoln Rd
P.O. Box 51098
Idaho Falls, Idaho 83405
(208) 522-5391
1-800-632-4813

Award for Excellence in Community Action

April 1, 2021

Congressman Mike Simpson
2084 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Simpson:

Re: Habitat for Humanity, Idaho Falls Area – Letter of support

On behalf of Eastern Idaho Community Action Partnership (EICAP), please accept this letter of support to Habitat for Humanity, Idaho Falls Area in their application for Community Project Funding through your FY2022 Appropriations Request for their Communities of Hope project.

Habitat for Humanity Idaho Falls Area has a proven record of success in Eastern Idaho. Since its inception in 1994, our local Habitat affiliate has helped over 60 families have a stable place to live, grow, and prosper. EICAP enjoys a strong collaborative relationship with our Habitat affiliate, working closely together to serve similar populations and to share resources and leverage our voices when advocating for our region's working poor and marginalized communities. We know the Board and Staff of Habitat for Humanity, Idaho Falls Area to be deeply committed to the issue of affordable housing.

Habitat for Humanity Idaho Falls Area is working hard to develop and expand solutions to the affordable housing crisis in eastern Idaho. Habitat's **Communities of Hope** workforce housing projects are intended to create a lasting stock of decent, affordable housing for low income working families in Eastern Idaho, and linking those families with the types of critical support services that EICAP offers through our various programs. Every day, EICAP staff sees the impact and challenges placed on local families because of the strain of finding and retaining decent, affordable housing and we are thrilled at the leadership role that our local Habitat for Humanity affiliate has taken in attempting to address this issue. We are proud to offer our support of this effort.



If you require more information about the Habitat for Humanity, Idaho Falls Area, or our partnership with them, please feel free to reach out to me via phone 208-522-5391 or email jdoman@eicap.org

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jay Doman', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Jay Doman
Chief Executive Officer



RESCUE

RECOVERY

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840 Park Ave
Idaho Falls ID, 83401

April 1, 2021

Congressman Mike Simpson
2084 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Simpson:

Re: Habitat for Humanity, Idaho Falls Area – Letter of support

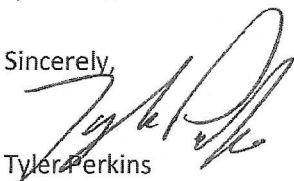
On behalf of the Idaho Falls Rescue Mission, please accept this letter of support for Habitat for Humanity, Idaho Falls Area in their application for Community Project Funding through your FY2022 Appropriations Request for their Communities of Hope project.

Habitat for Humanity Idaho Falls Area has a proven record of success in Eastern Idaho. Since its inception in 1994, our local Habitat affiliate has helped over 60 families have a stable place to live, grow, and prosper. The Idaho Falls Rescue Mission is a faith based nonprofit organization that exists to provide Help, Hope and a Future to the hungry, homeless, and hopeless in our community through the power and love of Jesus Christ. We encourage every person who walks through our doors to use the gifts, talents, and abilities that they have been given to impact our community. Habitat's faith-based mission and their requirement of sweat equity from their partner families align with our values and make them an important part of the panoply of nonprofit service providers working to address chronic homelessness and housing affordability in our region.

Habitat for Humanity Idaho Falls Area is working hard to develop and expand solutions to the affordable housing crisis in eastern Idaho. Habitat's **Communities of Hope** workforce housing projects are intended to create a lasting stock of decent, affordable housing for low income working families in Eastern Idaho, and linking those families with the types of critical support services such as our emergency food programs that are crucial to the wellbeing of those families. Because this is such a crucial part of our collective effort to reduce homelessness and increase the availability of affordable housing stock in our region, we enthusiastically support the goals of this project and encourage your support as well.

If you require more information about the Habitat for Humanity, Idaho Falls Area or our partnership with them, please feel free to reach out to me via tperkins@ifrescuemission.org or (208) 569-4398.

Sincerely,



Tyler Perkins
Executive Director
Idaho Falls Rescue Mission

Phone: 208-552-5575

Fax: 208-357-4254

www.ifrescuemission.org

April 1, 2021

Congressman Mike Simpson
2084 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515



Of Idaho Falls & Bonneville County
Serving Bonneville, Clark, Fremont, Jefferson,
Lemhi, Madison & Teton Counties

Dear Congressman Simpson,

Re: Habitat for Humanity, Idaho Falls Area – Letter of support

On behalf of the United Way of Idaho Falls and Bonneville County, please accept this letter of support for Habitat for Humanity, Idaho Falls Area in their application for Community Project Funding through your FY2022 Appropriations Request for their Communities of Hope project.

Habitat for Humanity, Idaho Falls area (HFHIF) affiliate has helped over 60 families in Eastern Idaho have a safe, quality affordable home to live, grow and prosper. Habitat for Humanity, Idaho Falls area has been a nonprofit partner of our United Way for several years. HFHIF is a crucial partner fighting one of our most challenging issues here in eastern Idaho – safe, quality, affordable housing.

United Way of Idaho Falls and Bonneville County (UWIFBC) fights for the education, health and financial stability of every person in our community. With more than 80 years of experience, we are a strategic community leader, convener and advocate with in-depth knowledge of the communities we serve, the challenges that affect them and the organizations having the most impact. We serve Bonneville, Clark, Fremont, Jefferson, Lemhi, Madison, and Teton counties in Eastern Idaho. We win by living united. By forging unlikely partnerships, finding new solutions to old problems, mobilizing the best resources and inspiring individuals to join the fight against our community's most daunting social challenges.

Habitat's *Communities of Hope*, workforce housing projects are intended to create numerous safe, quality, homes for low-income families in Eastern Idaho. While also linking those families, individuals and seniors with critical support services. United Way as a committee member for this project, enthusiastically supports the goals of this project and encourage your support and partnership as well.

If your interested in more information about Habitat for Humanity, Idaho Falls Area or our partnership, please don't hesitate to reach out – cwiersema@unitedwayif.org

Sincerely,


Christine Wiersema
President & CEO

To make your donation online and learn more about our United Way visit unitedwayif.org.
PO Box 5114, 83405 • 330 Shoup Ave, Ste. 202, 83402 • Idaho Falls, Idaho



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208-524-0994

April 1, 2021

Congressman Mike Simpson
2084 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Simpson:

Re: Habitat for Humanity, Idaho Falls Area – Letter of support

On behalf of the Community Food Basket Idaho Falls (CFBIF), please accept this letter of support for Habitat for Humanity, Idaho Falls Area in their application for Community Project Funding through your FY2022 Appropriations Request for their Communities of Hope project.

Habitat for Humanity Idaho Falls Area has a proven record of success in Eastern Idaho. Since its inception in 1994, our local Habitat affiliate has helped over 60 families have a stable place to live, grow, and prosper. CFBIF works closely with our Habitat for Humanity affiliate, providing a fully stocked kitchen pantry and refrigerator and freezer for all new Habitat partner families when they first move in, and working closely with our partner to share information about our respective programs and resources with the families that we both serve. As an agency committed to solving the issue of food insecurity and chronic hunger, we are acutely aware of the intersecting nature of the issue of affordable housing with our own work.

Habitat for Humanity Idaho Falls Area is working hard to develop and expand solutions to the affordable housing crisis in eastern Idaho. Habitat's **Communities of Hope** workforce housing projects are intended to create a lasting stock of decent, affordable housing for low income working families in Eastern Idaho, and linking those families with the types of critical support services such as our emergency food programs that are crucial to the wellbeing of those families. At the CFBIF, we hear stories every day from the families that we serve about the challenges they face determining whether or how to pay rent and also put food on their children's plates. We are proud to offer our support of Habitat for Humanity's efforts to alleviate the challenge of affordable housing for as many families as possible.

If you require more information about the Habitat for Humanity, Idaho Falls Area or our partnership with them, please feel free to reach out to me via email or phone listed below.

Sincerely,

Ariel Jackson
Executive Director
Community Food Basket Idaho Falls
director@feedidahofalls.org
208-403-5772

www.CommunityFoodBasketIdahoFalls.org



1820 E. 17th Street Suite 150
Idaho Falls, ID 83404
PHONE: 208-529-4673
FAX: 208-529-4676

April 1, 2021

Congressman Mike Simpson
2084 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Habitat for Humanity, Idaho Falls Area – Letter of support

Dear Congressman Simpson,

On behalf of CLUB, Inc., please accept this letter of support for Habitat for Humanity, Idaho Falls Area in their application for Community Project Funding through your FY2022 Appropriations Request for their Communities of Hope project.

Habitat for Humanity Idaho Falls Area has a proven record of success in Eastern Idaho. Since its inception in 1994, our local Habitat affiliate has helped over 60 families have a stable place to live, grow, and prosper. CLUB, Inc. is a nonprofit agency providing housing to homeless individuals and families, and services to foster self-sufficiency and recovery. Our goal of assisting families in overcoming the underlying causes of homelessness is significantly advanced by Habitat for Humanity's mission of providing a pathway to home ownership for low-income working families.

Habitat for Humanity Idaho Falls Area is working hard to develop and expand solutions to the affordable housing crisis in eastern Idaho. Habitat's **Communities of Hope** workforce housing projects are intended to create a lasting stock of decent, affordable housing for low income working families in Eastern Idaho and linking those families with the types of critical support services such as our emergency food programs that are crucial to the wellbeing of those families. Because this is such a crucial part of our collective effort to reduce homelessness and increase the availability of affordable housing stock in our region, we enthusiastically support the goals of this project and encourage your support as well.

If you require more information about the Habitat for Humanity, Idaho Falls Area, or our partnership with them, please feel free to reach out to me via email at dskinner@clubinc.org or our office at 208-529-4673.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dena Skinner", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Dena Skinner
Executive Director
CLUB, Inc.