

## Home Expo Proceeds to Benefit Habitat for Humanity® of Mariposa County

The Yosemite Gateway Association of REALTORS® (YGAOR) is holding its first Mountain Area Home Expo Saturday, April 18. The home expo is a free event and will be at the Old True Value Building in the Von's Shopping Center from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. with local vendors and educational sessions.

The YGAOR Affiliate Committee has been working on this expo for more than six months. During the planning process, it was important for the committee to identify an organization to receive a portion of the event proceeds, and they selected Habitat for Humanity® of Mariposa County.

I was fortunate to be able to join six members of the committee when they met with three officers of Habitat for Humanity® of Mariposa County: Delores Hahn, president; Beth Tomsick, vice president; and Jovan Trujillo, treasurer. I learned at the meeting that there are 58 counties in California. Of those counties, 53 have joined Habitat for Humanity® as an affiliate: an independent, locally-run, nonprofit organization. Mariposa is celebrating their first year as an affiliate.

Madera County does not have a Habitat for Humanity®; although, some YGAOR affiliates and REALTORS® are exploring the possibility of setting up a Habitat for Humanity® in Madera County. If you'd like to participate in establishing a Habitat for Humanity® in Madera County, please send an email to [beverly@oakhurstrealestate.net](mailto:beverly@oakhurstrealestate.net) or call 559-760-7600 so we can add you to the list of potential charter members. Habitat for Humanity® of Mariposa County has offered their assistance in mentoring us if we decide to move forward with this very worthwhile endeavor.

Habitat for Humanity® of Mariposa County will be at the home expo with information about the organization, how one can apply to be considered for a home through Habitat, and how people can assist families with *partnership housing*. Partnership housing, according to Habitat, is based on the idea that those in need of adequate shelter work side by side with volunteers to build simple, decent houses. The first partnership house was completed in 1969 in Georgia.

Hahn said, "Habitat is a hand up not a hand out." In addition to a down payment and the monthly mortgage payments, homeowners invest hundreds of hours of their own labor—sweat equity—into building their Habitat house and the houses of others. The family selected to receive a home from Habitat must volunteer a minimum of 350 hours and at least 100 hours on their own home. Many families choose to volunteer more hours than the required minimum, added Hahn.

The local selection committee chooses homeowners based on their level of need, their willingness to become partners in the program, and their ability to repay the no-interest loan. The homeowners' monthly mortgage payments are then used to build more houses. Indeed, since Habitat for Humanity® International was founded in 1976, they have built and rehabilitated more than 300,000 houses and provided shelter for more than 1.5 million people in over 90 countries. In fact, last year, Habitat was named the 14th largest homebuilder in the United States. What is amazing about this statistic is that volunteer labor builds and rehabilitates all the homes for Habitat.

Habitat for Humanity® of Mariposa County can use more volunteers. They are in need of someone to work in the office on the first and third Thursdays of the month and they have several other volunteer opportunities. Their regular meetings are open to all. Their next meeting is next Tuesday, April 7, at 6 p.m. at Mariposa Lutheran Church. Hahn said, "Attending these meetings is a great way to keep up with what is going on and to choose a place you wish to help." To learn more about the Habitat for Humanity® of Mariposa County, visit [www.mariposahabitat.org](http://www.mariposahabitat.org).

**Beverly Scott, President**

**Yosemite Gateway Association of REALTORS®**

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