

Habitat for Humanity

Mr. Speaker, we know that no single government can effectively address housing issues in the Northwest Territories on their own, therefore in order to be successful, our government continues to build partnerships with Indigenous governments, community governments, private companies, the Government of Canada, and non-governmental organizations, or NGOs.

One of our partnerships with a prominent non governmental organization is with Habitat for Humanity. Habitat for Humanity is a global organization that works towards stable, affordable housing with the help of sweat equity.

Mr. Speaker, Housing NWT's partnership with them began in 2013 and has so far resulted in six completed houses located in the communities of Hay River, Dettah and Yellowknife. Three more are currently under construction in Yellowknife, and a plan for an additional four over the remainder of our current arrangement which ideally will be in other NWT communities.

In addition to financial support, Housing NWT is donating a residential lot to the NGO, with a plan to build two duplexes on it. As Habitat for Humanity expands beyond Yellowknife, Housing NWT staff have supported them by working with partners to identify land and possible partners for in-kind donations since the NGO relies heavily on support from the business community. Housing NWT has contributed \$450,000 to Habitat builds to date and will continue to support the other builds that are being planned.

Mr. Speaker, the most recent Habitat for Humanity project was completed in Hay River where a deserving family moved into their new home earlier this month.

I had hoped I could officially welcome them to their new home in June as part of a key ceremony, however due to the wildfire situation this is now delayed. Therefore, today I am happy to congratulate this family on their new home and hope to be able to participate in a rescheduled key ceremony once the date is chosen. Additional ceremonies will be held for clients when the three homes under construction are completed. These key ceremonies are exciting opportunities and mark a huge milestone for the clients to take ownership of a brand-new home.

In order to be eligible for a Habitat for Humanity home, families must be in need of core housing, are paying 30% or more of their household income on current housing and are able to make affordable housing payments based on their income.

Habitat for Humanity works closely with each family to ensure they are ready for home ownership and provides guidance and referrals on budgeting, home maintenance, and other related housing subjects. Housing NWT also provides homeowner education courses to help set families up for success.

Mr. Speaker, Habitat for Humanity relies on other partnerships including annual funding from the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation and Yellowknife Elks Lodge No. 314 as well as land donations from community governments. Donations of land are especially important because they make these projects affordable. Without this key factor, the cost of each build would be too high to help house those most in need.

Habitat for Humanity is currently seeking applications from families for the two new homes that are under construction in Yellowknife with applications closing on Friday. I hope that families continue to take advantage of this program as they work towards home ownership.

Mr. Speaker, Housing NWT's partnership with Habitat for Humanity is of critical importance and is one of the many different and effective ways our government is addressing housing needs in our territory. We will continue to increase the wellbeing of residents and communities by providing fair access to quality housing supports for those most in need. Together, we look forward to helping more families achieve home ownership in the years to come.

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.