

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Filing your state tax return? Help a family build a house, too.**

*Habitat for Humanity of Illinois appears on Schedule G*

Don't be surprised if paying taxes actually feels good this year. Simply by filing a tax return, an Illinois taxpayer can now help improve the lives of Illinois families trapped in shockingly unacceptable living conditions.

Starting this year, Habitat for Humanity of Illinois appears on the Schedule G state income tax form for voluntary charitable contributions, turning tax time into an unlikely fundraising opportunity for the non-profit home builder.

The result? The annual chore of taxes becomes a meaningful act of conscience. "These donations will make a real difference in the lives of Illinois families," says Bobbi Burgstone, executive director of Habitat for Humanity of Illinois. "This is an easy way for the people of Illinois to help lift families out of deplorable living conditions. Last year, we worked hard for the passage of legislation to be added to Schedule G, and we're very optimistic that citizens will respond very favorably to this."

Also called a tax check-off, Schedule G allows Illinois taxpayers to easily donate money to Habitat for Humanity of Illinois. The taxpayer simply attaches the schedule to their IL-1040 income tax form, or asks the tax preparer to do so. Taxpayers may state any amount \$1 or greater (no maximum) on their Schedule G form to be deducted from their refund or to be added to their tax due. Even one-dollar gifts quickly add up to make an immediate impact.

"Oh, the power of one dollar. There are more than 5 million Illinois tax returns filed. If \$1 were donated on every tax return, that would yield \$5,000,000. Don't think that your \$1 won't mean anything. What can \$1 do? It can do what \$5M can do. A sum like that can supply funding to provide affordable housing for as many as 140 well-deserving Illinois families in need of home to call their own," states Burgstone.

As a non-profit housing organization, Habitat for Humanity of Illinois partners with affiliates throughout the state, including Sangamon County, to build and repair houses. The homes are built in partnership with hardworking, limited-income families who are in desperate need of safe, decent, affordable housing.

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Habitat for Humanity is not a giveaway program. Partner families must currently be living in substandard housing, willing to put in 500 hours of “sweat equity” to construct the home alongside volunteers, and be able to repay a zero-interest loan to purchase the home. Homeowners’ incomes range from \$18,000 to \$50,000. No more than 30% of their income goes toward the mortgage. Foreclosure rate is less than 2%.

In addition to positively impacting families, these donations will benefit all citizens in Habitat communities by adding to the local real estate taxes rolls, freshening up neighborhoods, increasing state taxes through the purchase of building materials and then furnishings, reducing the burden on welfare programs, and seeing the emergence of more productive, engaged citizens.

“This is not money pulled from the State budget. Instead, the kindness of taxpayers will add support to Habitat’s efforts, designating their donations of any size,” said Sarah Mackey, executive director of Habitat for Humanity of Sangamon County. “A few minutes and few dollars donated by an Illinois taxpayer can change everything for a family in need. Homeownership is meaningful in providing families the hope and stability they need to succeed.”

Illinois Schedule G makes it easy for an Illinois taxpayer to contribute simply by filling out the quick form and submitting it with their state tax return IL-1040. Schedule G can be downloaded at [www.habitatillinois.org](http://www.habitatillinois.org) or picked up at a local library or from any professional tax preparer.

For more information on affordable housing, this tax check-off, or Habitat for Humanity of Illinois, visit [www.habitatillinois.org](http://www.habitatillinois.org).

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*Habitat for Humanity of Sangamon County is a community-driven nonprofit organization that develops working partnerships with local businesses, churches, community organizations and other individuals to build simple, decent and affordable housing for all people in need. Since its founding in 1989, Habitat for Humanity of Sangamon County has completed 82 houses in Sangamon County, served over 300 individuals in Sangamon County and served 73 international families.*