**Habitat for Humanity Vancouver Response to May 20th, 2021 CBC Story**

Yesterday CBC Vancouver reported on a legal dispute between Habitat for Humanity Greater Vancouver (Habitat Vancouver) and two of our partner families who entered into the Habitat for Humanity program in 2015. Our aim at Habitat Vancouver is to always act in the best interests of the families we serve, and we very much regret that we have not yet been able to resolve this situation.

We acknowledge that it has taken longer than expected for the families involved to be offered mortgages on their homes. As with all Habitat families, they entered into a tenancy agreement while they completed the requirements of the Habitat program, which include 500 volunteer hours. During this time, they made affordable monthly payments geared to their income and continued to accrue equity in their home. These payments are applied to the eventual mortgage as well as property tax and other associated costs.

This process can take up to 2 years, after which time families in good standing are offered an interest-free mortgage at current market value for the home. This allows families who would normally not be eligible for a mortgage to have an affordable path to home ownership.

Unfortunately, in this case that process was delayed due to internal restructuring at Habitat Vancouver, as we reviewed how to continue to make our program more affordable to families, as housing prices in the region continued to increase dramatically. Instead of being offered a mortgage in 2017 as would have normally been the case, the families involved were not able to be offered mortgages on their homes until early 2021.

It’s important to note that the interest-free mortgages the families have been offered were based on their home’s value in 2017 ($590k), not the estimated 2021 market value (~$800k+). While we very much hoped to provide the mortgages earlier, the families have been provided with a home for six years with low monthly payments geared to their income, they have continued to build equity in their homes from the time of occupancy and they continue to be offered interest-free mortgages based on the 2017 value of the home.

We remain hopeful that it will be possible to resolve this matter. We deeply regret this situation, and members of our Board of Directors and senior staff are working with the families in question in a good faith effort to try to resolve the matter. Habitat for Humanity Greater Vancouver (Habitat Vancouver) continues to be committed to providing safe and affordable housing to families living with low to mid income.