

## **Preventing homelessness: Low-income Seattle homes to receive repairs**

*Habitat for Humanity receives \$500,000 from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation*

Habitat for Humanity Seattle-King County will receive a \$500,000 grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to help prevent homelessness by providing crucial home repairs to low-income residents in Rainier Valley.

The three-year award will fund Habitat's repairs to at least 30 unsafe homes that threaten housing security for low-income people in one of Seattle's poorest neighborhoods. One in five Rainier Valley residents lives below 30 percent of the area's median income, and the neighborhood's unemployment rate is 50 percent higher than the city average.

"Habitat promotes affordable homeownership as one solution to our region's escalating housing crisis, and that means repairing existing homes as well as building new ones," explains Steven Hill, chair of the board of Habitat for Humanity Seattle-King County. "We are grateful to the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for recognizing that our neighborhood revitalization program serves a critical need that prevents homelessness by enabling people to stay safe, healthy and secure in their own homes."

Lutricia Fields is one of 30 low-income homeowners who benefited from the program in the past year. Whenever it rained, the walls in her Rainier Valley house would grow damp and mushy as water seeped inside the leaky roof. Unable to work after a stroke that left her partially paralyzed and in a wheelchair, she worried that she couldn't afford the cost of repairing the roof, but also couldn't stay in the house under those conditions.

"I have no idea what I would have done if I hadn't found Habitat," Lutricia says. "I don't even like to think about it because it's too stressful. That roof could've ruined the house. And where would I go? Now, thanks to Habitat, when it rains I just smile and turn over in bed and go back to sleep. They were a godsend."

The repair program is part of Habitat's neighborhood revitalization program, which engages residents, community leaders and other nonprofits in making neighborhoods safer, more beautiful and more conducive to community building.

The Foundation grant will provide \$200,000 to Habitat this year, \$170,000 in 2019 and \$130,000 in 2020. An earlier grant to Habitat supported home repairs over several years in the Westway neighborhood in Federal Way.

To learn more about Habitat for Humanity Seattle-King County, visit [www.Habitatskc.org](http://www.Habitatskc.org) or contact Amy Farrier at [amy.farrier@habitatskc.org](mailto:amy.farrier@habitatskc.org), 206-456-6943.

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## **About Habitat for Humanity Seattle-King County**

In Seattle-King County and around the world, Habitat for Humanity brings people together as volunteers, homeowners, donors and community members to create strength, stability and self-reliance through shelter. Here in our community, Habitat for Humanity constructs affordable homes, revitalizes neighborhoods, repairs homes for low-income people and seniors, operates discount home improvement stores in Southcenter and Bellevue, and mobilizes more than 4,300 volunteers a year. Learn more at [www.Habitatskc.org](http://www.Habitatskc.org).