



Habitat group rehabs 300th home in Sandtown

Habitat for Humanity and volunteers edge closer to goal of renovating all 350 homes in a 15-block area

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Edging closer to its goal, Sandtown Habitat for Humanity and its have finished rehabilitating their 300th home in the blighted West Baltimore neighborhood where the nonprofit group has been laboring for more than 20 years.

The latest dwelling to get a makeover was in the 1500 block of N. Mount St. Habitat staff, supporters and volunteers gathered Saturday to celebrate the occasion with the new owner.

Employees from MECU of Baltimore Inc. and T. Rowe Price have been helping to rebuild the once-dilapidated home since last year. It was the 10th rehab project for Price workers and the seventh for MECU's staff.

"Our community appreciates the employees who volunteer their time to work on our homes," Michael Barb, co-executive director of Sandtown Habitat, said in a statement. "It lets our community know that Baltimore and organizations see the importance of this neighborhood."

Sandtown Habitat is a nonprofit Christian housing organization founded in 1989 by New Song Community Church. Its goal is to restore all 350 in a 15-block area.

With a full-time staff of more than 15, plus and volunteers, the group rebuilds deteriorated homes for about \$100,000 each, roughly half what it would cost to do so commercially, according to the group's website. The family buying the home is required to invest at least 330 hours of "sweat equity" in the project.

The group sells the homes at cost to low-income families with no-interest mortgages, according to the website. Buyers'

generally ranges from \$12,000 to \$25,000, half or less of the area's median amount.

"Knowing that 300 homes have been completed and turned over to homeowners shows how this community is growing stronger every day," said Bert J. Hash Jr., president and CEO of MECU of Baltimore.

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