



MEDIA RELEASE

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Habitat home is the first house to be built on Tobique First Nation in 13 years

Fredericton, N.B. - A collaborative effort between Tobique First Nation and Habitat for Humanity Fredericton, the two groups are working together to demonstrate that Habitat's model of affordable homeownership can have a significant impact on the critical housing issues affecting Indigenous communities across Canada.

With all the hard work completed, today was a celebration for new Habitat homeowners Amanda and Phil and their two children, as they invited the community into their new home. It also happens to be the first house built in 13 years on Tobique First Nation, and a house that Amanda and Phil helped build and will pay for themselves.

While a good news story for Tobique First Nation, there are critical housing issues on reserves across Canada that need to be addressed. According to the Canada Housing and Mortgage Corporation, in 2011 (the last time a federal census was completed) half of Indigenous families on-reserve lived in housing that required major repairs, and a third lived in housing where, in addition to repairs, families were overcrowded or precariously housed, spending in excess of 30 per cent of their income on housing.

This is a familiar story for Tobique First Nation's Chief Ross Perley, who has seen housing issues exacerbated by the inability to build new homes.

"Not having the ability to build for the past 13 years has caused homelessness and overcrowding compounded over three generations of young adults", said Chief Ross Perley. "That's why this partnership is such a great opportunity for our community. This Habitat home has given our people hope in the community that someday they can own a house too."

Amanda, born and raised in Tobique First Nation, had moved away from home to study and work, but with two young children she wanted them to live closer to her family, in the community where she was raised. Amanda and Phil's new Habitat home is around the corner from her mother, and their youngest son, who had been struggling while in school in Fredericton, is now thriving at the local school on this small reserve of almost 2500 people.

"Tobique First Nation and Habitat for Humanity understand that affordable homeownership is an important way to empower families – owning your own home helps people build long-term financial benefits and better futures for themselves, their children and the community," said Perry Kendall, Habitat Fredericton's executive director.

For every dollar invested in a Habitat home, four dollars' worth of benefits return to the community. Habitat homes provide stability; children do better in school and are more likely to pursue a post-secondary education – families and communities end up stronger and healthier. Habitat for Humanity Canada's [National Housing Strategy submission](#) recommends that the federal government's upcoming budget invest in Habitat's affordable homeownership model to help families across the country access safe and decent housing.

About Habitat for Humanity Fredericton

A member of Habitat for Humanity Canada, Habitat for Humanity Fredericton Area Inc. is a non-profit charitable organization working towards a world where everyone has a safe and decent place to live. Habitat is making a difference – one house, one family and one volunteer at a time. Our territory covers the Fredericton area, western and northern New Brunswick. To learn more, visit us online at <http://habitatfredericton.com>.

About Habitat for Humanity Canada

Founded in 1985, Habitat for Humanity Canada is a national, nonprofit organization working toward a world where everyone has a decent and affordable place to call home. Habitat for Humanity brings communities together to help families build strength, stability and independence through affordable homeownership. With the help of volunteers, Habitat homeowners and 56 local Habitats working in every province and territory, we provide a solid foundation for better, healthier lives in Canada and around the world. Habitat for Humanity Canada is a member of Habitat for Humanity International, which was established in 1976 and has grown to become a leading global nonprofit working in more than 70 countries. For more information, please visit www.habitat.ca.

About Tobique First Nation

Tobique First Nation is one of six Wolastoqiyik or Maliseet Nation reserves in New Brunswick, Canada. Tobique is the largest of the Wolastoqiyik and Maliseet Nation reserves in NB with a population of approximately 2500. The Tobique Reserve is located on the north side of the Tobique River. The reserve comprises two lots (The Brother's # 18, 4 ha; Tobique # 20, 2724 ha). The Tobique Reserve, established in 1801 with nearly 20,000 acres, was granted after a petition to the government by band members. Over the years, the reserve was reduced by surrenders to squatters and a major surrender in 1892. Roughly two-thirds of members of the Tobique First Nation reside on the reserve lands. For more information, please visit www.tobiquefirstnation.ca.

For more information:

Meghan Reddick
Habitat for Humanity Canada
E: mreddick@habitat.ca
T: 1-800-667-5137 x385
C: 647-980-9157

Perry Kendall
CEO, Habitat for Humanity Fredericton
C: 506-461-6529
E: perry@habitatfredericton.com