



MEDIA RELEASE

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Habitat for Humanity Canada continues to diversify National Board of Directors

Toronto, ON, September 8, 2021 – Habitat for Humanity Canada is pleased to announce recent additions to the National Board of Directors.

Joining Habitat Canada's National Board of Directors as an External Director is Mehdi Nezarati, who brings close to 30 years of experience in high tech, software development and cloud platform management and operations. An entrepreneur at heart, Mehdi was a co-founder of Esna Technologies, a Canadian start-up which was acquired by Avaya Inc in 2015. He served at Avaya until July 2021 where he last held the position of Vice President of Cloud Operation and Platform and led the company's product and platform transformation to cloud-based software and services. He will replace Paul Mason, who stepped down from the national board recently due to a change in his employment responsibilities.

"I was drawn to serve on Habitat's board through my own experience as a newcomer to Canada in the early 1980's," said Nezarati. "At a young age, I realized the importance of having a secure home in a supportive community and how having that foundation has helped me and my family become a successful, Canadian immigrant story. I'm delighted to be appointed to the board and am looking forward to contributing my expertise in technology to the Habitat organization".

Habitat for Humanity is also proud to partner with Fora: Network for Change and participate in their Girls on Boards program that places trained, mentored, community-minded young women living in Canada, between the ages of 18-25, on non-profit governance boards. Brianna Nelson will join the national board as a Young Director, *ex officio*, for the next 12 months. Brianna is a community developer, youth engagement worker and an incoming Masters of Social Work Candidate. She has a passion for social justice and mental health and is committed to amplifying the voices and experiences of Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) within her work.

"As a young person and a woman of colour, I know all too well that there are numerous barriers preventing me from having a seat at the table," said Nelson. "Participating in Fora's Girls on Boards program has provided me with the confidence and skills to continue forward and challenge the status quo. I am excited about joining the board at Habitat for Humanity Canada as someone who has known about the brand for a long time and has lived experience navigating affordable housing in Ontario."

"It is my pleasure to welcome both Mehdi and Brianna to our national board of directors," said Julia Deans, President and CEO of Habitat for Humanity Canada. "Mehdi was a strong finalist in our board nomination process in the spring and we are thrilled to have someone with his background and experience join our national board at this time. Also important, is the unique perspective Brianna will bring as a young person, passionate about making change.

"Continuing to bring diverse voices to our board is a priority for Habitat Canada and our participation in Fora's Girls on Boards program further highlights our commitment to that goal. By better reflecting the families and communities we serve in the makeup of Habitat boards, we will increase our understanding of how to serve Habitat families and ensure that we are well-positioned to provide people living with low income in Canada and around the world with safe and affordable places to call home."

For a complete list of Habitat Canada's National Board of Directors, visit <https://www.habitat.ca/en/about/board>.

About Habitat for Humanity Canada

Founded in 1985, Habitat for Humanity Canada is a national charitable 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 50 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 non-profit working in more than 70 countries. For more information, please visit www.habitat.ca.

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