



MEDIA RELEASE

May 19, 2026

Meaning of Home delivers record results for Habitat for Humanity in Canada

National student writing contest engages more than 19,000 youth and raises \$440,000

Toronto, ON – Thousands of students across Canada are helping build a stronger future through words. Habitat for Humanity Canada’s annual [Meaning of Home](#) writing contest drew more than 19,000 student entries this year, setting a new participation record and raising \$440,000 in support of local Habitat organizations nationwide. Students were invited to reflect creatively on the question, “*What does home mean to you?*”

Through their submissions, students in Grades 4, 5 and 6 explored the meaning of home while learning about the affordable housing crisis in their communities. Every eligible submission sparked a \$10 donation to the student’s local Habitat for Humanity, directly supporting the construction of safe, decent and affordable housing for families.

Across Canada, three grand prize winners and nine runners-up were selected for their outstanding submissions. Each grand prize winner earned a \$30,000 grant for their local Habitat for Humanity, while runners-up received \$10,000 grants for their local Habitat, helping extend the impact even further. Together, their heartfelt entries reflect a shared understanding of home as a place of safety, belonging and possibility.

The Grade 4 grand prize winner is Julia S. from Halifax, for her entry [My New Home](#). Julia’s \$30,000 grant will benefit Habitat for Humanity Nova Scotia.

The Grade 5 grand prize winner is Harlow M. from Inverness, N.S., for her entry [Beautifully Messy](#). Harlow’s grant will benefit Habitat for Humanity Nova Scotia.

The Grade 6 grand prize winner is Ella L. from Edmonton, for her entry [Home](#). Ella’s grant will benefit Habitat for Humanity Edmonton.

Grade 4 runners-up

Imran U. of Calgary, for his entry [What Home Means to Me](#), benefiting Habitat for Humanity Southern Alberta

Vsevolod P. of St. Catherines, Ont., for his entry [My Home](#), benefiting Habitat for Humanity Niagara

Estelle S. of Toronto, for her entry [What Home Means to Me](#), benefiting Habitat for Humanity Greater Toronto Area

Grade 5 runners-up

Willow P. of Nobleford, Alta., for her entry [What Home Means](#), benefiting Habitat for Humanity Southern Alberta

Jeremy S. of Brossard, Que., for his entry [Le sens de chez moi](#), benefiting Habitat for Humanity Québec

Amarachi K. of Fredericton, for her entry [Where My Heart Feels Safe](#), benefiting Habitat for Humanity New Brunswick

Grade 6 runners-up

Akthem A. of Mississauga, Ont., for his entry [My Everything](#) benefiting Habitat for Humanity Halton-Mississauga-Dufferin

Asif A. of Dartmouth, N.S., for his entry [Moza is Home](#), benefiting Habitat for Humanity Nova Scotia

Artem S. of Winnipeg, for his entry [Meaning of Artem's Home](#), benefiting Habitat for Humanity Manitoba

“The Meaning of Home contest shows the power of young people to create real change,” says Pedro Barata, President & CEO of Habitat for Humanity Canada. “By sharing what home means to them, students are helping address the affordable housing crisis in their communities and supporting families in need of a safe and decent place to live. It’s a powerful reminder of why our work matters and why we remain committed to expanding access to affordable housing.”

“When young people reflect on what home means to them, it reminds us why affordable housing matters so deeply,” says Helen Seibel, Vice President and Head of Community and Employee Giving, BMO. “That’s why we’re proud to support Habitat for Humanity through the Meaning of Home contest, which helps students learn about housing challenges in their communities while directing meaningful funding to Habitat partners building safe, affordable homes and stronger communities across Canada.”

Since the Meaning of Home contest began in 2007, over 156,000 students have shared what home means to them, raising more than \$3.4 million to help more families in need of homes build stronger lives through housing. The Meaning of Home contest would not be possible without the generous support of title sponsor BMO, founding sponsor Sagen^R and award sponsors Metrie and Stantec.

To read all the winning entries, please visit <https://www.meaningofhome.ca/page/winners2026>

BMO

BMO Gives. Good grows here.

Helping communities thrive by supporting the organizations that sustain them and encouraging employee giving and volunteerism is at the heart of BMO's Purpose, to Boldly Grow the Good in business and life.

In 2025, we directed more than \$124 million to drive progress for communities, which included \$115.7 million in philanthropic contributions to hundreds of charities and nonprofit organizations across North America.

Our colleagues spent over 65,000+ hours volunteering in the community and contributed more than \$40.3 million in donations through employee-driven giving in our annual campaigns.

For more information, please visit [BMO Gives](#).

About Habitat for Humanity Canada

Founded in 1985, Habitat for Humanity Canada is a national charity that includes local Habitat organizations working in every province and the North. Through innovative home construction, repair, and financing, skills training and advocacy, we bring people together to build homes, communities and hope. Habitat for Humanity Canada is a member of Habitat for Humanity International, a leading global non-profit working in more than 60 countries. To learn more, visit [habitat.ca](https://www.habitat.ca) and follow @HabitatCanada.

For more information:

Whitney Rodricks
Senior Manager, Communications
Habitat for Humanity Canada
C: 416-475-3487
E: wrodricks@habitat.ca