



## MEDIA RELEASE

January 11, 2021

### What does home mean to you?

*Habitat for Humanity Canada kicks off annual Meaning of Home writing contest*

**TORONTO, ON**, Jan 11, 2021 - Over the past year our homes have transformed into offices, schools and, for the lucky few, places of refuge. This year more than ever, Habitat for Humanity Canada wants to know, what does home mean to you? The annual Meaning of Home writing contest that encourages students in grades 4, 5 and 6 to share what home means to them through a poem or short essay is back and open for submissions at [meaningofhome.ca](http://meaningofhome.ca). The contest runs from January 4 to February 19, 2021 and three grand prize winners, one from each grade, will receive a \$30,000 grant to be directed to the local Habitat home build of their choice.

Founded by Sagen™<sup>1</sup> in 2007, the Meaning of Home contest™ has raised over \$1.7 million to help build decent and affordable housing in communities across Canada. Last year, over 10,000 Grade 4, 5 and 6 students from across Canada shared what home means to them. In 2021, Habitat for Humanity Canada is hoping to reach a new record-breaking number of submissions. Three grand prize winners, one from each grade, will receive a \$30,000 grant to direct to the local Habitat home build of their choice. Nine runners-up, three from each grade, will also receive a \$10,000 grant towards a local Habitat build. Every student entry earns a \$10 donation towards their local Habitat for Humanity, ensuring that communities benefit from each student's participation.

"The Meaning of Home contest provides youth an opportunity to learn about the importance of affordable housing by asking them to reflect on what home means to them," says Julia Deans, President and CEO of Habitat for Humanity Canada. "Instilling the importance of access to safe and decent housing early on will prepare them to be future advocates on this most critical issue."

Habitat for Humanity Canada's model of affordable housing helps families in need of housing buy their own home. Habitat homeowners volunteer up to 500 hours and pay an affordable mortgage geared to their income, helping them build a strong foundation and the financial stability to help plan for their children's futures.

"In 2020, Sagen was proud to celebrate 20 years of affiliation with Habitat for Humanity Canada—The Meaning of Home writing contest in particular is an initiative near and dear to us," said Stuart Levings, President and CEO of Sagen. "We've watched the program grow year over year, engaging over 68,000 students in Canada, and, as a founding sponsor of this contest, we've raised over \$1.7 million to create affordable housing in communities across Canada."

Teachers or parents who are interested in having their Grade 4, 5 or 6 students participate can access an educational module online at [meaningofhome.ca](http://meaningofhome.ca) that includes writing tips and information on affordable housing issues in Canada. Winners of the 2021 Meaning of Home contest will be announced in June, 2021.

The Meaning of Home contest would not be possible without the generous support of Founding Sponsor Sagen and Awards Sponsors Revera Living Inc. and Swiffer. Thanks to their investments, students have an opportunity to give back to their communities in an engaging and meaningful way.

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<sup>1</sup> Sagen™ is a trademark owned by Genworth MI Canada Inc.

### **About Sagen™ (formerly Genworth Canada)**

As a sponsor since 2000, Sagen has donated over \$5 million in support of Habitat Canada and has helped thousands of Canadian families realize their dreams of affordable homeownership. While Sagen's financial support provides crucial funding for their homeownership program, its support of Habitat Canada extends far beyond financial support. Throughout the sponsorship, Sagen employees from all levels of the organization, including President and CEO Stuart Levings and his executive team, have lent their leadership experience, industry knowledge and time to help launch many of Habitats' signature programs, including the Sagen Homebuilding Grants, Global Village Volunteer Program in Canada and the Meaning of Home Contest. These programs, along with Sagen's support and involvement in them has significantly increased their ability to raise funds, recruit volunteers and ultimately, support more families and build stronger communities. Find out more at [www.sagen.ca](http://www.sagen.ca)

### **About Habitat for Humanity Canada**

Founded in 1985, Habitat for Humanity Canada is a national, charitable organization working towards a world where everyone has a decent and affordable place to call home. Habitat Canada brings communities together to help families build strength, stability and independence through affordable homeownership. With the help of volunteers, Habitat homeowners and 53 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](http://www.habitat.ca)

#### **Related links:**

[www.meaningofhome.ca](http://www.meaningofhome.ca)

[www.habitat.ca](http://www.habitat.ca)

[www.sagen.ca](http://www.sagen.ca)

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