

## Report and Review

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The \$150k grant awarded to Silver Key Senior Services and Pikes Peak Habitat for Humanity's Home Modification Program made affordable repairs available to senior homeowners to ensure that they can safely age in place. Originally \$100k was allotted to Pikes Peak Habitat for exterior repairs, and interior repairs were placed under Silver Key's domain; however, after starting, Silver Key delegated the interior work to Habitat and reapportioned \$35k to Habitat for a total of \$135k.

From July 2022 through April 2023, we saw 54 applicants. Four were not eligible, 11 withdrew for personal reasons, 20 were unreachable after inquiring about the program, and 19 repairs were successfully completed. A total of 33 individuals received assistance.

The average cost per repair was \$5,526 ranging from \$404 to \$13,191. Repairs included ramps, grab bars, railings, window repair, deck repair, ingress/egress modification for wheelchair accessibility, storm doors, concrete steps, roof repair, asbestos clean up, siding replacement, and more.

From Pikes Peak Habitat's winter 2023 newsletter:

*"The crux of what we do is empower and engage people using the tool of home repairs," says Leah Cowles, Habitat's home repair program manager. The partnership doesn't just make physical changes to a residence – it contributes to social, emotional and physical health as homeowners interact with Pikes Peak Habitat staff and volunteers. One homeowner "would often come outside and join in the discussions because she could hear the laughter and conversations happening," says Cowles. "She made a point to be out with the team as often as she could during the project and often commented to me that she thoroughly enjoyed the team being there. She loved to hear them laughing and talking while they worked."*

*Another homeowner who developed strong relationships with the repair team is Jill. Initial repairs on her home included adding railings outside the door and along the front sidewalk. As Jill interacted with the crew and realized they genuinely cared about her, she shared issues with her bathroom that had left her feeling vulnerable. After assessing her needs, the team repaired a broken door, installed grab bars, added a handheld shower head, and provided a stool and new curtain.*

Partnering with Habitat means a willingness to provide sweat equity – an investment of time and labor on the home alongside volunteers. Many seniors, unable to help physically, provided sweat equity or skills in different ways, such as making lunch for the volunteers or sharing their story with their community as a way to demonstrate their inherent significance and self-worth.

Paying it forward has become an integral part of this program as many homeowners, especially those living on a fixed income, are unable to pay for repair assistance. One homeowner decided to do 72 good deeds for her neighbors. Others have given plant clippings as gifts, read to children at schools, shared baked goods, or prayed for their neighbors. One homeowner created a phone tree so other seniors who live alone can reach out for help when they need it.

Our total number of repairs as of June 30, 2023 equals 44. This fiscal year (July 1, 2023-June 30, 2024), we have challenged ourselves with a goal of 69 repairs, and we've already completed 11. With the combined efforts of partners in our community, we hope to surpass this goal and successfully meet the needs of more seniors wanting to age in place.

Testimonials

Jill's home needed handrails installed on her sidewalk and grab bars in her shower with additional work to her bathroom door to create safe accessibility. "It is wonderful to work with kind-hearted people who are so skilled. I feel safe, free, and honored. Habitat for Humanity let me stay independent instead of being relegated to an assisted living facility."



Bill, a senior and veteran, has lived in his house for five years now. His home has deteriorated from several much-needed repairs, the most prevalent being the roof. During rainstorms, Bill is constantly running outside to empty the rain collected in buckets from various roof leaks. It was so bad that, at one point, he thought about living under a bridge rather than in his house. He was even considering suicide prior to Habitat offering repair work. The roof is now under repair with Habitat and a partnership with Owens Corning and a local company, Old World Roofing, to shore up his home. "If it weren't for Habitat, I wouldn't be here."

Bill (left) holds a quilt made by a local quilting club and presented by Habitat.

Patty is trying to remain in her home for as long as she can. She struggles with disabilities and some health problems that make the upkeep of her home challenging. Water seeped into her home when it rained, ruining the interior insulation, sheetrock, and framing. Patty shared, "The people who came were great! I enjoyed talking with them, and I learned a great deal. They worked very hard and the job was completed with great craftsmanship. This was such a positive experience. I hope you can continue to help seniors stay in their homes and keep them safe."



Before



After

With a new deck platform and hand railing (center and right photos), Willie and Sadie can now safely enjoy their patio and yard.



## Proposal

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With the requested \$150k, Pikes Peak Habitat for Humanity proposes to complete 30 repairs for as many senior homeowners so that they can safely age in place. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has identified housing as an important social determinant of health, highlighting the link between where people live and their health. Stable and affordable housing, free of physical hazards, leads to improved health outcomes and decreased health care costs. Habitat data shows that homeowners have 18% fewer ER visits and 20% more primary care visits. Removing physical hazards and improving safety leads to better health for seniors.

This fiscal year (July 1, 2023-June 30, 2024), we projected and budgeted for 69 repair projects, the majority of those homeowners being seniors. These include 24 repairs projected for the year under our CAPABLE program (details below), leaving 45 repairs to fund with other sources. In July and August, 11 repairs were completed (including two CAPABLE projects), and 21 more are in progress. The completed repairs plus those in progress amount to 46% of our goal. Our initial goal of 69 could potentially double by next June.

Unique to the Habitat program is the partnership with the homeowners as shown in the previous testimonies. Working together, Habitat makes sure that the repairs meet the Aging in Place conditions, and the homeowner is encouraged to pay in sweat equity—volunteering to help with their repairs as they are able to, providing lunch for the volunteers, or paying it forward within their community. An estimated 85%-90% of the repairs to date have been for seniors, including veterans. Seeing the need of these applicants so far, we know the demand for affordable repairs to support aging in place is overwhelming. Calls continue to come into Pikes Peak Habitat weekly, if not sometimes daily.

Pikes Peak Habitat has been approved as a CAPABLE organization, providing repairs under the Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing CAPABLE Program. The Community Aging in Place, Advancing Better Living for Elders (CAPABLE) program “is a client-directed home-based intervention to increase mobility, functionality, and capacity to ‘age in place’ for older adults.” Pikes Peak Habitat coordinates with occupational therapists and nurses to provide structural improvements such as grab bars or flooring repair so older adults can continue to live at home safely.

The CAPABLE program is a revenue-generating program: \$1,500 net \$100 per project. This program has been approved through August 2024 and will likely be renewed at that time. We have also secured funding so far from CHFA (\$20k) and Lowe’s (\$49k) with a request pending to The Home Depot Foundation via their national partnership with Habitat (amount TBD). Other needs and additional costs for which we are seeking funds include a repairs van (\$30k) with outfitting and tools (\$5k); student transportation to/from the repair site, paid to the school district (\$5k); and program marketing (\$5k).

Opportunities to make this program sustainable include:

- Shed program that invites students to learn to build sheds, ultimately using those skills in our Aging in Place Repair Program. Materials are purchased upfront, the sheds are built, and then sold at Pikes Peak Habitat’s ReStores at an estimated price tag of \$800-\$1200 each, generating revenue for more repairs. Pikes Peak Habitat is considering partnering with school district D-2 and Atlas Prep to offer this opportunity to their students.
- Pikes Peak Habitat wants to hire a general repair person to offer repair services on a sliding scale to homeowners who would like to hire Habitat for repair work but are not necessarily low-income. This revenue would support other projects where homeowners do not have the means to pay.
- Possible partnership with Springs Rescue Mission and former Habitat Construction Supervisor Trevor Bennett who is developing a rehabilitation training program there. Program participants could potentially help with Habitat repairs. The outcomes of this partnership are community collaboration, learned trade skills, and growing the pool of volunteers locally for Habitat.
- We are exploring funding opportunities with the City of Colorado Springs and other foundations.