



YORK COUNTY

## York's Habitat for Humanity now a United Way agency

Both nonprofits say the partnership will help them.

KATHY STEVENS *The York Dispatch*

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York Habitat for Humanity is now among 35 partner agencies of the United Way for York County, a move that enables the affordable housing nonprofit to obtain additional funding to help more families.

Officials from both nonprofits said Monday the link is mutually beneficial.

Habitat is stable, successful and in line with United Way's mission; and the affiliation with United Way boosts public perception of Habitat, a Habitat spokeswoman said.

"Habitat is a household name, but it is not always associated with a high level of professionalism," said Rosie Boileau, executive director of York Habitat. "The United Way put us into the category of a more professional organization in the public's eye."

The affiliation makes Habitat eligible for a portion of money United Way raises in its annual workplace campaign -- \$6.8 million last year.

"Only partner agencies can really receive funding from our community fund," said Bob Woods, executive director of United Way. "Once (partnership) occurs, it must apply for program funding through an allocation process that is not automatic."

Habitat could receive funding in fiscal year 2011-12 to help with costs associated with education courses including credit, finances, estate planning and home maintenance, but would not receive money for home purchase or construction, Woods said.

Habitat would have to submit a proposal that includes a budget and projected outcomes, competing with 77 programs under 34 partner agencies affiliated with United Way. Both Woods and Boileau say affiliations are essential, particularly during tough economic times when all nonprofits struggle.

Woods said unemployment has affected fundraising efforts because its campaigns are based in the workplace.

Agencies the United Way works with have reported difficulties stemming from the recession as well as the state budget impasse that delayed funding and forced many to borrow money to cover costs.

Boileau says Habitat is financially stable and that it ended last year in the black. The new affiliation, she says, could help Habitat increase assistance it provides low-income residents in

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purchasing homes.

Since its inception in 1985, York Habitat has built 97 houses that were sold below cost to enable more than 350 men, women and children live in their own homes.

"When donors give to Habitat, it's like an endowment that keeps giving," Boileau said. "Homeowners buy the homes and through repayment, more homes are built."

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