

SWEAT EQUITY POLICY

Sweat equity is a vital element of the local Habitat affiliate's mandate to provide simple, decent, affordable housing *in partnership* with families in need. The phrase "sweat equity" refers to the actual hands-on involvement of homeowners in the work necessary to achieve the Habitat goal of eliminating substandard housing and in providing a hand up, not a hand out, to families in need of decent affordable homes. *Sharing the spirit of Habitat within a community* can only be achieved by families in need working side by side with volunteers from all walks of life to build these homes year after year.

Joining the Habitat community is a commitment that starts with the goal of building a home for you and your family, but it continues with your own volunteering on future builds and within the local Habitat affiliate's organization for many years to come.

The most important part of your sweat equity is the participation in the construction of your own family's home. This includes pre-build construction activities and post-build clean up. Homeowners, like other volunteers, have an opportunity to gain new skills and confidence as part of the construction team. These skills will certainly be useful in the maintenance of your new home.

Sweat equity may also take the form of working on the construction of other Habitat homes, Habitat office, fundraising, providing childcare, public relations, etc. Time required by homeowners to attend orientation and training sessions will also be included. Your local affiliate will help to identify opportunities where sweat equity can be worked but families are encouraged to present the affiliate with ideas as well!

In order to further the goal of building a Habitat community, the following sweat equity guidelines are to be followed:

- _ Sweat Equity is volunteer work done by the Partner Family as a requirement for partnership with Cabot Habitat for Humanity. Sweat Equity has no cash value.
- _ The Partner Family commits to the sweat equity requirements in signing the Agreement upon selection.
- _ Partner Families must perform 500 hours of Sweat Equity toward their new home.
- _ The required Sweat Equity hours must be completed before the Partner Family can move into their home. In exceptional circumstances, Cabot Habitat will consider a deferral of a small percentage of Sweat Equity hours.

- The Partner Family is expected to do as much of the Sweat Equity themselves as possible. However, the Partner Family may enlist up to five relatives and/or friends to make a Partner Family Team to contribute up to 20% of the required Sweat Equity hours.
- Sweat Equity hours contributed by friends and/or relatives will qualify when done at the family's build site as well as at earlier builds. It is imperative that your designated Family Nurturer or another member of the *Family Partnering Committee* be informed of who the Partner Family has enlisted to help contribute to their Sweat Equity hours.
- Since only persons aged 16 years and older are allowed on a build site, Sweat Equity hours for children (aged 14-16 years) of the Partner Family may be counted if they are earned at an activity approved, in advance, by the Volunteer Co-ordinator.
- The Partner Family is responsible to record all Sweat Equity hours on a daily basis. All entries must be initialed by the Family Nurturer or another designated member of the *Family Partnering Committee* in the Family Log Book.
- Appropriate jobs will be assigned based on the abilities/skills of the Partner Family Team, as assessed by the Family Nurturer and Construction Supervisor, to ensure family members are active and involved during the build.
- A minimum of 400 hours of the Sweat Equity total hours must be worked at the Partner Family's own house project.
- A maximum of 100 hours may be worked at the local Habitat office.
- Cabot Habitat will provide a specific Partner Family Log Book to record your Sweat Equity hours and the book will contain the following:
 - Logo and address of Cabot Habitat on the front cover
 - Personalized front label
 - Listing of names/phone numbers for the Project Build Chair, House Captain(s), Volunteer Co-ordinator, Site Support Co-ordinator, Partner Family Nurturer, Family Partnering Chair and any other appropriate names/numbers.
 - Book will be divided into three sections (and with the outlined headings) as follows:
 1. Family/Friends (Name/Date/Number of Hours/Type of Work Completed/Signatures of Nurturer and Date)
 2. Comments from Family/Friends
 3. Construction Crew Names/Addresses (Type of Work, etc).

Note: It is recommended that you leave a couple of pages nailed on the wall in the basement and a sign asking people to let you know who they are and how they helped in building your home!

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Who can contribute to Sweat Equity hours?

A: Each homeowner is encouraged to identify a "Sweat Equity Team". Team members can be up to five family member or friends. Each Team member must complete a Habitat registration form identifying skills and areas of interest and a Waiver of Liability Form.

Team members may work on builds taking place before the Partner Family's build and these hours will be counted towards the total Sweat Equity hours for the Partner Family. Keep in mind that at least 400 of the total hours must be worked on the construction of the Partner Family's new home.

Q: Are Team members required to have special skills?

A: Partner Families are strongly encouraged to identify some Team members who have special skills or experience related to construction, since skilled workers are tremendous assets in home construction. However, there are many tasks to be accomplished which do not require construction-related skills.

Q: How are Sweat Equity hours recorded?

A: Cabot Habitat uses an honour system to record Sweat Equity hours. Each Partner Family will be provided with a logbook in which to record your Team hours. Each Team member should be listed separately. A Family Nurturer has been identified for each family. Your Habitat Nurturer will help with your questions about your Sweat Equity commitment and will sign off on your hours every two weeks before the build.

Your Advisor will also be on-site during the week of the build and will provide support and assistance where required, but their hours are not credited to the Partner Family.

Q: How will opportunities to contribute Sweat Equity hours be identified?

A: Volunteer activity will be co-ordinated through the Habitat office and/or the Volunteer Co-ordinator. You will be provided with a list of activities and dates where volunteers will be needed.

You may also want to take the initiative in identifying opportunities yourself. Some ideas to consider:

- assist with increasing community awareness about Habitat by identifying an opportunity to speak to a church group or organization in your community.
- some families have organized small-scale fundraising activities, such as garage sales or flea markets.

Habitat is open to any suggestion you may have and will try to provide the support you need. Please discuss your ideas or questions with your Nurturer.

Q: Do the 500 Sweat Equity hours have to be done before the Partner Family moves in?

A: It is the goal of family partnering to have the 500 hours completed by the time the Partner Family takes possession. In exceptional circumstances, Cabot Habitat will consider deferring a small percentage of the hours to be worked after the Partner Family moves in.

Keep in mind that partnering with Cabot Habitat is a commitment to the greater Habitat community and we hope to see Partner Family Teams on future builds.