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habitat500.org

Pedaling to Build a Cycle of Hope

Local **Aitkin** rider cycling in 30th Habitat 500 Bike Ride to benefit Habitat for Humanity

Aitkin, MN, March 2022– Since 1993, the Habitat 500 Bike Ride has sent cyclists across Minnesota and the surrounding Midwest annually to raise funds and awareness for Habitat for Humanity. After two years of Bike @ Home events, the 30th anniversary Ride will offer both Bike @ Home and hybrid options for participation, with riders from all over the state and country gathering in Fergus Falls, MN from July 14–17, 2022 for a build day and three days of biking. Riders, volunteers, and staff look forward to joining as a community, both online and in person, all while fundraising for Habitat’s work in their local communities!

Since Habitat Minnesota began coordinating the Ride in 2002, the Habitat 500 has **raised over \$5.6 million** for Habitat for Humanity. In 2021, the Ride raised over \$231,000 with more than 150 participants cycling. Funding supports the efforts of Habitat for Humanity across the state, as it works alongside partner organizations, volunteers, future homeowners, and donors toward a world where everyone has a safe, stable, and affordable place to live. Riders register, ready to pedal and fundraise for a cause that impacts new homeowners now and for generations to come. Local **Aitkin** resident **Hallie Houseman** will be riding their third Habitat 500 this year to support Habitat for Humanity. **“I’m so excited to return to the Habitat 500 this year,”** shared Houseman. **“After taking a couple years off, I’m eager to return to the community and raise some money for Habitat!”**

“We know that if you have the stability of good housing, you do better in school, you stay healthier; it starts you on that path that we want every family and every child to have that opportunity,” said Jonathan Reckford, CEO of Habitat for Humanity International. In fact, 90% of Habitat homeowners surveyed by Wilder Research said they felt better about their children’s future. Over half of homeowners with children said their children’s grades improved after moving into their Habitat home.

The Habitat 500 Bike Ride brings together a love of biking with an appreciation for sharing strength and stability in the community. **“The biking part is a challenge for me,”** shared Houseman, **“but the other riders and support staff are so encouraging! And it’s really about the cause—my local Habitat in Aitkin needs fundraising support for building two new homes this coming year.”**

The impact of stable housing reaches beyond each family; it improves entire communities. “It is the key component in building generational and community wealth and creating thriving communities that support strong economies,” said Emma Kasiga, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) employee and Habitat Minnesota board member. On July 14, riders and volunteers also have the opportunity for hands-on building at a Habitat for Humanity build site in

Fergus Falls. Longtime rider Lilah Aas shared, “I remember a few years ago this little girl was there with her mom and siblings and said, ‘Do you wanna see my bedroom?’ Of course, the house was nothing but studs, but she takes me over to it and says, ‘It’s gonna be pink!’ As a teacher all my life for my career, knowing the importance of having a good safe home. It’s just beyond belief what a difference that makes in the way a kid grows up. That’s a huge impact!”

The Habitat 500 and its community of supporters will celebrate 30 years supporting the mission of Habitat for Humanity!

*For more information on how to get involved, please visit [habitat500.org](https://www.habitat500.org). To support **Hallie** donate online here: <https://p2p.onecause.com/habitat500/hallie-houseman>*

About Aitkin Habitat for Humanity

Aitkin Habitat builds homes in Aitkin County, MN. For more information, visit [AitkinHabitat.org](https://www.AitkinHabitat.org).