

Habitat for Humanity breaks ground on semi-detached home

By Julie Slack
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

Two families were all smiles recently as they thought about their future in a brand new home they had previously only dreamed of owning.

Habitat for Humanity Halton broke ground on what will become a semi-detached house on Bronte Street South that two Halton families will call home sometime next year.

Beverly and her three children of Oakville and Burlington couple Nisam and Maida and their two daughters used shovels alongside politicians, Habitat officials and sponsors to officially break ground on the project.

The two-storey home that was on the property was demolished recently so that construction could begin on a new semi-detached home for the families. It's the second such Habitat home in Milton — the first one was constructed last year.

Beverly said she's excited about the thought of living in Milton next year, and the opportunities it will provide her family. She said it's a dream come true.

Nisam echoed those sentiments, while his teenaged daughters giggled with excitement about the idea.

Both families shied away from cameras and



Habitat For Humanity held a ground-breaking ceremony recently to kick off the construction of a semi-detached home on Bronte Street South that will house two families next year. From left are partner family Maida and Nisam, home sponsor Whirlpool's Greg Skinner and Megan Walsh, and partner family Beverly. *Julie Slack / Canadian Champion*

the publicity the event drew, but expressed their appreciation and thanks to everyone. Mayor Gord Krantz said Milton might have been slow to get off the mark when it comes to Habitat builds — some Halton municipalities have several in each community — but he promised to make up for that.

"I think you know about the turtle," he laughed, referring to the fable of 'The Tortoise and the Hare.' "The turtle will win the race." Meanwhile, Gary Power of Whirlpool, which sponsored the Milton builds, said it's wonderful to be able to help people in the community achieve a better life.

Whirlpool employees have spent the last several weeks helping to deconstruct and salvage the former dwelling and prepare the land for construction. Whirlpool, which has a Milton distribution centre, supplies the fridges and stoves for Habitat builds across Canada.

Habitat for Humanity Halton board chair Hugh Hyndman said the non-profit organization, which has been building homes in the region since 2000, has set a goal of constructing 75 homes over the next five years and to provide housing for 20 families in the next year alone. Since the organization started, in response to a growing need for affordable housing in Halton, it has helped alleviate the cycle of poverty for 18 families with simple, decent houses. Homeowners are selected on a basis of need and their willingness to partner. They must have lived in Halton for a minimum of two years with income below the poverty line and reside in inadequate housing. Selected homeowners must be able to invest a minimum of 500 hours of labour, which Habitat calls "sweat equity," as their down payment, and they must be able to take on a 25-to-35-year interest-free mortgage to repay the original fair market value of their home.

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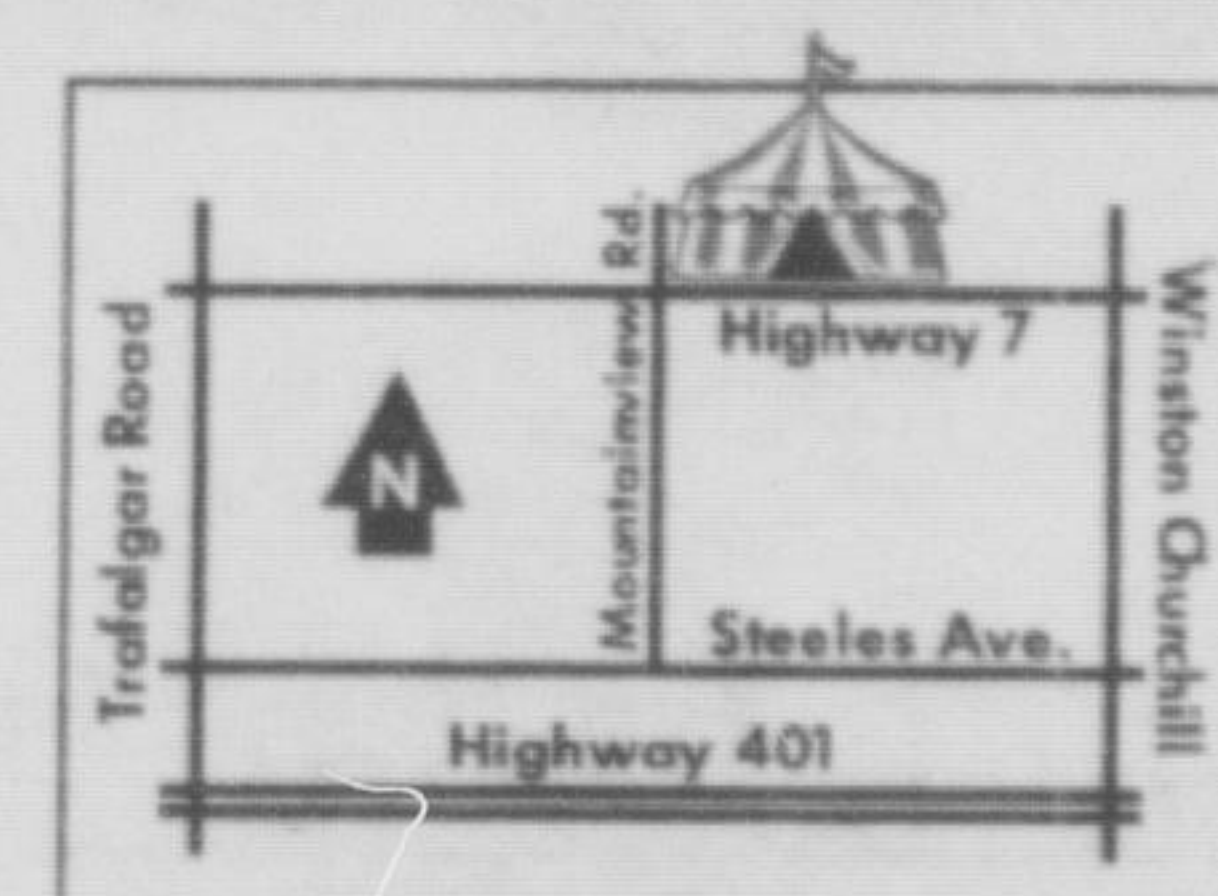
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