

Thank you all for being here with us.

I have been a fan of Habitat for many years.

The saying “a hand up, not a hand out” is used often in the non-profit world, and it certainly applies to Habitat.

Nothing is given away for free here. There is “sweat equity.” Just ask the families who have worked hundreds of hours. They also attend classes and workshops to learn the tools that will help them succeed. And, they work hard building not only their own homes, but the homes of their neighbors.

When you work alongside other folks also in the program, you create an instant community. The benefits are immeasurable.

It always gives me great pleasure to celebrate Habitat dedications. I admire the families we celebrate here today because they took advantage of an opportunity presented to them and stayed true to their dream.

Through hard work, perseverance, and faith, they have reached their goal of home ownership.

Over and over again, I have seen how home ownership changes a family for the better. Children in their own homes thrive. They are proud to bring their friends to visit. They do better in school. Their self-esteem rises and with the sense of permanency that ownership gives them, they set their sights towards long term goals like college and beyond. In short, homeownership is a game changer.

As Mayor of Miami Dade County, I take great pride in our partnership with Habitat. You’ve built hundreds of homes on land made available by Miami-Dade through our infill program. Habitat takes a liability, and turns it into an opportunity.

Just last month, Mario presented Chairwoman Sosa and me symbolic check of nearly one million dollars representing the amount of taxes paid by Habitat families every year.

Although I always knew their impact was significant, seeing the check brought home the fact that working our partnership brings returns on our investment.

We see positive results all over. In Miami Gardens, Liberty city, Perrine, Overtown and all places in between – this is what a model private/public partnership should look like.

To the families we celebrate here today, I take my hat off to you for your perseverance and the love you show for your family.

I cannot think of a better gift to give your children than a sense of permanency. The example you have set for them will stay with them the rest of their lives, providing a lasting legacy that will reflect your sacrifices for many years to come.

Thank you for allowing me to share in this joy with you.

May love always fill your homes and may the end of this habitat journey signify the start of a new journey towards prosperity.

I am proud that you are members of this community, and for your help in making Miami Dade a place of infinite possibilities.

Thank you, and may God bless you, your families, and your new beautiful homes.

