

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

Nonprofit debuts its first modular homes

Megan Sims - msims@cleveland.com

Greater Cleveland Habitat for Humanity begins its effort addressing Cleveland's affordable housing shortage.

New modular homes are helping address the need for more affordable housing in Cleveland.

Greater Cleveland Habitat for Humanity has begun the process of creating 19 modular homes throughout the city. The first two homes were debuted Thursday morning near the corner of West 83rd Street and Madison Avenue in the city's Detroit-Shoreway neighborhood.

A modular home is built at an offsite factory. It is then transported in different parts and put together at the construction site, usually using cranes, and placed on a foundation. That's different from traditional mobile homes, which are transported in one piece.

The homes Habitat is debuting are each 1,350 square feet and have three bedrooms — which includes a master suite with a walk-in closet — two bathrooms and full basements. Other features include a modern kitchen, a mud room/laundry room, wide doorways and a front porch.

There will be four modular homes on West 83rd Street.

John Litten, president and CEO of Greater Cleveland Habitat, said this project cost more than \$2 million, but more importantly, it was a way to make homeownership more attainable for those in need.

“Cleveland has a lot of housing needs, especially on the affordable housing front,” he told cleveland.com and The Plain Dealer. “So this is a way for us to get those houses online faster than we ever have before.”

Though these homes will be considered affordable housing, they will not be rentals.

“They’ll be homeowners on day one,” Litten added.

There is an application process, and people who make 30%-80% of the area's median income, have the ability to pay a zero-interest mortgage and need affordable, and safe housing can apply.

Though there is no monetary down payment, Litten said that the only down payment required is service.

Those approved will be required to complete 200 to 300 hours of community service, which could include volunteering with Habitat on future homes, restoring homes or attending educational workshops on topics about financial literacy, fixing drywall and more.

Cuyahoga County Executive Chris Ronayne, who attended the event, called the project "a wonderful contribution to our community," and said he hoped to see more affordable housing throughout the county.

"This is my neighborhood too. To see our lots that have been vacant, then filled to create a really walkable, urban friendly neighborhood; today, we're just beginning here in the city of Cleveland and throughout Cuyahoga County," he told [cleveland.com](#) and [The Plain Dealer](#).

"A lot of our first-ring suburbs have shown a great interest and some have already started building modular homes in their neighborhoods," Ronayne said. "It's a complete community when people with all different incomes can reside on the street."

Habitat will build more modular homes in the Woodland and Collinwood neighborhoods as part of its larger 400 Home Initiative, a \$33 million initiative to build, restore and repair homes throughout Cuyahoga and Lorain counties.

As for the homes on West 83rd Street, Litten said families will be moved in by Christmas. And those interested in applying for Habitat's homeownership program can find more information on its website.