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**Habitat for Humanity of Seminole County & Greater Apopka and
Habitat for Humanity of Greater Orlando
celebrate Groundbreaking Ceremony for Juniper Bend & Arbor Bend communities in Apopka**

Apopka, FL, March 22, 2017 — On March 16, 2017 at 9:00 AM, Habitat for Humanity of Seminole County & Greater Apopka, Habitat for Humanity of Greater Orlando and more than 100 Apopka residents, elected officials, community leaders and volunteers came together to break ground on Juniper Bend, a 24-home community and Arbor Bend, a 34-home community in South Apopka. The completed neighborhood will bring 58, single-family homes to the community.

This rejuvenation in homeownership in Apopka is the result of a unique public/private partnership between Habitat for Humanity in Seminole County and Greater Apopka, Habitat for Humanity of Greater Orlando, Orange County government and Homes in Partnership, Inc.

The four organizations are collaborating to build 58 single-family homes and making affordable homeownership a dream come true in South Apopka. Located in an already established neighborhood, Juniper Bend & Arbor Bend will represent new beginnings in the community previously known as Hawthorne Village.

“This housing development may very well be the biggest thing that has ever happened in the South Apopka community from an economic development standpoint,” said Apopka Mayor Joe Kilsheimer, who spoke at the event. “Indeed, in my opinion, we are standing on the brink of a turning point for this community the likes of which we have never seen before.”

Nichole Griggs, an Apopka native and former resident of Hawthorne Village, is one of the first families selected to be a part of Habitat’s homeownership program. She shared her journey and excitement about being able to provide a home for her children. “Finding a place for us to live that I could afford has been a constant struggle,” said Nichole. “I am truly blessed to be able to provide my kids with a home in a community that has always been home for us.”

Orange County Mayor Teresa Jacobs talked about the county's investment in the project. "One of the greatest challenges for many families – both here and across the U.S. – is the lack of sufficient affordable housing and rental options," said Mayor Jacobs. "This affordable housing partnership in Apopka is just one example of Orange County's solid commitment to strategically expanding our housing options."

As construction proceeds over the next few years, qualified families will participate in financial workshops as well as the construction of their home. Once complete, Habitat for Humanity will sell the homes with an affordable mortgage, providing a hand up, not a hand out for Habitat homebuyers.

"Homeownership creates generational change for both the families and the community," said Penny Seater, Executive Director for Habitat for Humanity Seminole-Apopka. "A project of this size will have a significant impact for Apopka".

About Habitat for Humanity

Habitat for Humanity partners with people in the community to build or improve homes. Habitat homeowners help build their own homes alongside volunteers, and pay an affordable mortgage. The program assists Habitat homeowners to achieve the strength, stability and independence they need to build a better life for themselves and for their families.

Habitat Seminole-Apopka and Habitat Greater Orlando are 2 of approximately 2,100 local affiliates of Habitat for Humanity International. Support from sponsors, donors and volunteers directly benefit the Central Florida community. Habitat Seminole-Apopka has been working in the Apopka community for over 25 years and is pleased to take the lead on this new development of 58 single family homes.

To learn more about Habitat Seminole & Apopka or to make a donation, call (407) 696-5855 or visit <http://habitatseminoleapopka.org>. Follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/HabitatSeminoleApopka and on Twitter [@HabitatSeminole](https://twitter.com/HabitatSeminole).

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