



SWEAT EQUITY POLICY

Montcalm County Habitat for Humanity (MCHFH) believes that one of the most vital elements of the Habitat ministry is the partnership between new homeowners and the local Habitat affiliate. The most important connection between partner families and Habitat is sweat equity. "Sweat equity" refers to the actual hands-on physical involvement of partner families.

Sweat-equity hours are in no way part of or in place of any down payment or monetary contribution toward the home or the affiliate. The contribution of this labor shall be without payment of any wages or fiscal reimbursement even if the family, for whatever reason, forfeits eligibility to purchase a home from Habitat. Should you have or claim to have any physical limitations with regards to performing "sweat equity" in participating the building of your home Habitat will require that you sign and have notarized a Medical Release form that will be sent to your physician(s) to determine your limitations.

Sweat equity is designed to meet three important goals. They are:

1. **Sweat Equity Builds Partnership:** The goal of sweat equity is to provide opportunities for meaningful interaction between partner families, affiliate representatives and Habitat volunteers. Habitat for Humanity is not only about building houses; our mission extends to uplifting families and building communities. The best way for partner families and volunteers to get to know one another is to work alongside each other.
2. **Sweat Equity Builds a Sense of Pride:** Habitat for Humanity is not a charity or a give-away program. We offer a hand up rather than a handout. Habitat for Humanity works with, rather than for, families in need to build their own homes and a brighter future.
3. **Sweat Equity Builds Skills and Knowledge:** The sweat-equity program is designed to offer new homeowners a wide variety of opportunities to gain skills and knowledge that will help them successfully adapt to their new home. On the building site, partner family members will gain a real understanding of the construction of their home and maintenance issues they will face after occupancy. The homeowner education series offers valuable information to partner families.

Each adult, that is anyone who is age 17 or older and a resident of the home, in a partnering family must fulfill **250 hours of sweat equity** before moving into their new home. **All opportunities for sweat equity must be approved and scheduled by Montcalm County Habitat for Humanity.** The partner family and their support people will work on a schedule to complete the sweat equity requirement. Each partner family will be issued a book of tracking forms for logging sweat equity hours, and will be responsible for having the construction supervisor, support person, or other Habitat representative sign the forms each time sweat equity hours are completed. **It is important for partner families to keep these logs up to date and on hand; lost tracking documents or unrecorded hours will not count toward the total.**

At least 150 hours must be contributed by each adult in the approved family and of these hours 50 hours must be completed prior to breaking ground and the remaining 100 hours must be in the construction/remodeling of the home. Partner families are allowed to solicit the remaining 100 hours of

help from family members (excluding children), friends and colleagues. All hours exceeding the 100-hour limit will be considered volunteer hours.

All opportunities for sweat equity must be approved by Montcalm County Habitat for Humanity. In addition to the required participation in homeowners' and budget classes, other opportunities for sweat equity include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a) Work on the construction of your or any other Montcalm County Habitat home
- b) Do mailings and other clerical work at the Habitat office.
- c) Maintain vacant Habitat properties.
- d) Make necessary Habitat phone calls.
- e) Prepare and serve food to volunteers.
- f) Maintain a clean and safe work site.
- g) Clean and organize Habitat tools and equipment.
- h) Raise funds and do public-relations activities.
- i) Participate in Habitat special events.
- j) Participate in other community service activities or self-development activities.

For families with children under 17, opportunities may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a) Help maintain Habitat properties.
- b) Help during fundraising events.

The maximum number of hours that each child under age 17 can "earn" is five (5) hours.

I have read the sweat equity policy and I understand my obligations and will abide by the requirements therein. My signature is my commitment to the conditions of this sweat equity policy.

Selected Adult _____

Date _____

Selected Adult _____

Date _____

Family Support Representative

Date _____

Family Support Representative

Date _____

MCHFH Executive Director

Date _____

Revised and Approved by MCHFH Board of Directors February 15, 2007