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For Immediate Release

Habitat Announces 2016 Rock the Block® Neighborhoods Neenah and Menasha to see Neighborhood Revitalization in the New Year

Menasha, Wis. - Greater Fox Cities Area Habitat for Humanity is expanding its neighborhood revitalization program, bringing Rock the Block® to a neighborhood in Neenah this spring, followed by Menasha later this year.

Neighborhood revitalization targets vulnerable areas, brings a variety of housing solutions to improve property values, home ownership rates and neighborhood pride. Housing solutions include new construction, whole house rehabs and home repairs. The most visible component of Habitat's neighborhood revitalization program is Rock the Block®, a multi-day event where residents work together alongside volunteers, other community organizations and the municipality in which we're working, to perform exterior home repairs for low income homeowners and community projects to beautify the area surrounding these homes.

"We are focusing our efforts on the neighborhoods that need it the most. We evaluate neighborhoods based on the condition of its residential properties, home ownership rates, proximity to community resources and municipality involvement. After discussions with multiple municipalities, our team will first focus on Neenah in the spring with commitment to a yet to be determined neighborhood in Menasha this fall," says John Weyenberg, Fox Cities Habitat for Humanity's executive director.

During the first week in May, Habitat will Rock the Block® in Neenah's Downtown West neighborhood, which runs from Main Street to the North and Winneconne to the South. The side boundaries run from South Commercial Street to the railroad tracks to the west.

"Partnering with Neenah is a great opportunity to build off of their current redevelopment plans in the area," says Weyenberg. The city recently approved a 5-story, \$6 million office building that will be located on the northeast corner of the neighborhood beginning construction in 2016.

"Coming together for something greater, getting involved and taking care of your fellow neighbor is an integral part of what Neenah is about," says Dean Kaufert, mayor for the City of Neenah. "We've seen the impact that

Rock the Block® has made in Appleton and we're excited to see what it can do for the residents in our community."

Building on Success

Ryan Roth, Habitat's Community Development manager, is looking forward to building upon the success of Habitat's first Rock the Block® event last Fall, when the organization worked in the neighborhood surrounding Nienhaus Square (the former Pierce Manufacturing site). "We completed 31 repair and improvement projects through the help of over 500 volunteers and many community organizations. Since then, five homeowners began more extensive repair work through Habitat's Home Repair program, with another handful of neighbors completing home improvement projects on their own" Roth says.

Since it's founding in 1993, Greater Fox Cities Area Habitat for Humanity has served more than 700 families through their wide range of local housing solutions. Habitat's mission is to increase access to safe, decent and affordable housing and to create opportunities for low-income families to develop equity and independence through home ownership. Fox Cities Habitat is an innovative leader in diverse housing solutions by empowering families and inspiring community-wide action to break the cycle of poverty.

For information on Habitat's neighborhood revitalization efforts and Rock the Block®, contact Vaya Kiel, communications specialist, by calling (920) 378-8643, via email at VayaK@FoxCitiesHabitat.org or head to our website at FoxCitiesHabitat.org.