

# You build firm foundations



Photo by Blue Earth Pictures

Vera knows first-hand the benefits of growing up in a Habitat for Humanity home. Vera, her mother Melo, and her sister Symphonie immigrated to the U.S. from Togo in 2003 when the girls were very young.

The family's early years in Minnesota were tough. Melo enrolled her girls in *Head Start*, attended English language classes, and worked as a housekeeper. The growing family lived in a crowded two-bedroom apartment.

But Melo persevered. She attended Minneapolis Community & Technical College (MCTC) and started working at Head Start, all while focusing on her dream of buying her family a home. An instructor at MCTC suggested that Melo apply to the Habitat homeownership program. After working for several years to meet program qualifications, her application was approved in 2010.

Supporters like you stepped in to build that firm foundation alongside Melo, making her dream of homeownership a reality.

Twin Cities  
 **Habitat for Humanity**<sup>®</sup>

# Habitat

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## HERALD

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Vera and her family moved into their Habitat home in 2011 and life began to change for them immediately. One of the spaces that Melo created in their new house was called the Peace Corner.

Vera explained it: "When we were younger, we would love to read and that was a place where we would sit and where nobody could talk to us, just like our own personal space to read, to sit, to reflect, just be on our own. Just to be at peace with yourself."

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"Thank you so much; you're making dreams come true."

**Vera**  
*daughter of Habitat  
homeowner Melo*



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Vera believes the peace and freedom of having her own space were critical to her mother’s educational accomplishments, and her own. “She has had more time and more space to study for her degrees. And it just pushes her even harder to see how far she has come, and that’s what pushes me also, is to see how far my mom came. If she can do it, I most definitely can too.”

In 2018 when she was in high school, Vera started a hair extension and braiding business from home. She says she was inspired by a visit to Africa and the entrepreneurial spirit of the people she met in the markets there.

Vera began taking courses at MCTC as a high school senior and was in her second year there, pursuing an associate degree in business, when COVID hit. “With that degree I aspire—I want to own a lot of businesses,” she said. “I want to be a serial entrepreneur.”

In September, Vera moved into her own apartment. After completing her coursework online during the shutdown, Vera decided to take a semester off from school and concentrate on growing her small business. She recently rented a salon suite and opened Vera Lux Collection. Business has been good and she’s excited about her future.

“My mom, she is very proud of herself and proud of us, because that’s one of the main reasons why she brought us here from Africa—to be successful. And Habitat has really helped us with that, to be successful within our own lives.”



Photo by Blue Earth Pictures

**Your support helps dreams come true. Melo (right) bought a Habitat home for her family. Then her daughter, Vera (top right), launched her hair business out of that home.**



Photo by Bruce Silcox

Think about the generational impact of your gifts. Your generosity today ripples through families for years to come. **Thank you.**



Photo by Bruce Silcox



Your support fuels the *At Home Fund*, Twin Cities Habitat’s response to the pandemic. Your gifts protect homeowners and expand homeownership. Local families are so grateful for your generosity.

Since April 1, 2020:

- **139 Habitat homeowners received mortgage relief** while struggling to make ends meet.
- **55 families bought homes** with Habitat—homes with plenty of space to learn, work, and grow.
- **22 families received home repairs** through Habitat’s *A Brush with Kindness* home repair program.

Learn more about the *At Home Fund* at [tchabitat.org/at-home](https://tchabitat.org/at-home)

**HARD HAT & Black Tie**

SAVE THE DATE  
**Saturday, April 24, 2021**

It’s the best virtual party in town! Mark your calendar for a gala evening of fabulous auction items, sparkling entertainment, and more!

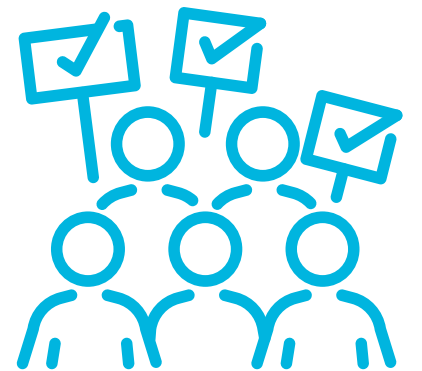
[tchabitat.org/gala2021](https://tchabitat.org/gala2021)

Raise Your Voice

The Minnesota legislative session is just starting, and your voice is needed to advocate for affordable housing.

Sign up for action alerts so you know when you can make a difference. Actions include attending a virtual *Habitat on the Hill*, signing petitions, emailing your legislators, and more!

[tchabitat.org/advocate](https://tchabitat.org/advocate)





# A Life of Service

Everyone loved Ken’s stories. He had many. He remembered the Korean War and the time a bullet from a sniper whizzed by his ear. He remembered coming home from Korea and noticing Paula at a picnic and pestering his brother to set him up with her.

Ken and Paula married and spent decades together, raising two sons and two daughters in their Arden Hills home. When it got cramped, Ken got his extended family to help raise the roof and add bedrooms for his kids. The project sparked something in Ken. When he retired in 1996, Ken got involved with Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity.

“I just wanted to do something where I wasn’t going to lose my mind or my body,” said Ken.

He became a dedicated member of a Habitat Regular Crew and worked on 200 homes, most of them with Site Supervisor Lynda Bouley. That’s 200 local families living in safe, stable homes—thanks in part to Ken.

Ken was a pro drywall mudder, earning a golden drywall knife that says “Ken Tate Master Mudder” when he retired from Habitat volunteering in 2016. And he was an excellent storyteller—it quickly became his permanent job to start every volunteer day off with a good story.

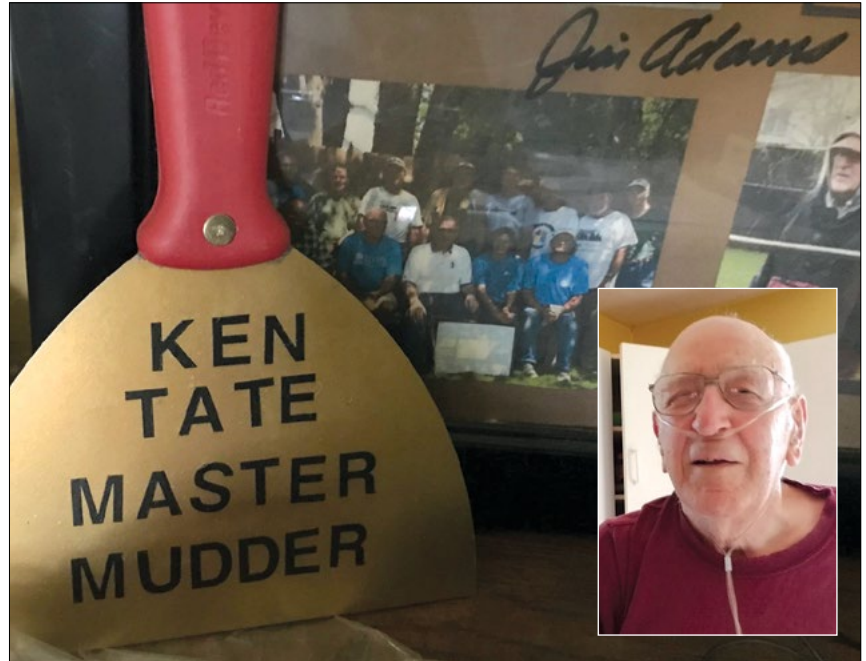


Photo courtesy of the Tate Family

After Habitat, Ken volunteered with hospice patients, sharing stories and accompanying folks at the end of life. He entered hospice himself last summer, choosing to stay in the home he and Paula have lived in and loved since 1960. Ken passed away on November 4, 2020.

We’re so grateful for Ken’s decades of dedicated service and we cherish his stories and memories. And we’re grateful for the thousands of other volunteers who make life better for our neighbors. Thank you.

**Ken Tate was a dedicated Habitat volunteer who touched many lives with his stories and generosity.**



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[restore.tchabitat.org](https://restore.tchabitat.org)

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