

Herkimer County Habitat for Humanity

Sweat Equity Policy

Introduction:

One of the central features of Habitat is the concept of “Sweat Equity.” By performing sweat equity, Habitat families make a hands-on, physical investment of themselves in the building of a Habitat house and in other Habitat projects. In addition, the prospective homeowner family can receive sweat equity credit by increasing their knowledge and skills that relate to homeownership, parenting, job advancement, degrees and certification.

Completion of Sweat Equity:

Each family is required to earn at least 500 hours of sweat equity. A family begins accumulating sweat equity hours during the application process. In order for the partner family to become familiar with Habitat, 25 hours of sweat equity will be completed during the application process. The family needs to complete the remaining 475 hours prior to moving in. The Habitat home may not be bought until the 500 hours requirement has been fulfilled.

Phase One:

Up to 25 hours will be credited for attending or participating in Habitat sponsored workshop, events and seminars (some which will be required), and helping at construction projects. Credit will also be given to families in the application process to develop their sweat equity plan. This plan can be a guide to achieving the overall 500 sweat hours and include a timetable for completion. (A minimum of 30 hours per month is recommended.) The 25 hours in phase one need to be completed within 12 weeks.

Phase Two: Completing the remaining 475 hours

Family partner needs and situations will vary. Therefore, sweat equity plans will be individualized. These plans are flexible but need to include the following aspects:

A. Work on Site

1. Family partners are expected to participate in all major work projects on their future Habitat home.
2. Recording of hours will be done by signing a site log. Family partners will also be expected to keep their own record of all their sweat equity hours.

B. Work off Site

Credit will be given, with advance approval, for increasing knowledge and skills in such areas as home repair and maintenance, parenting, budgeting, job advancement, degrees and/or certification.

C. Participation by Children

1. Family partners can receive credit toward sweat equity by establishing agreed-upon measureable goals related to positive child development achievements appropriate to the individual child and family situation (i.e., grades, attendance, self esteem, citizenship, participation in spiritual youth groups).

2. Older children of family partners can receive credit for working on site (16 years of age or older), working toward their GED, providing free child care for volunteers' children and other relatives who are helping at Habitat projects.

D. Participation in Habitat functions

Credit will be given for assisting in Habitat events and projects (i.e., writing thank you notes, fund raising, participation in information sessions, parades etc).

E. Engaging others to participate

Credit will be given if family partners can recruit other people to participate, particularly if they might have needed specialized skills. If there has been a prior relationship with a board member, a board member could be recruited to assist the family partner toward the sweat equity hours. Donated hours are not to exceed 175 hours.

Potential Sweat Equity Opportunities

Here are some possibilities that may give ideas for generating sweat equity or that have been incorporated in the body of the Sweat Equity Policy.

- Attend budgeting, maintenance or home improvement workshops.
- Habitat office work, homeowner association meetings, fund raisers, food prep, cleanup, etc.
- Work by friends, relatives, co-workers and fellow church members. This is limited to 175 hours of the total hours required and must be people recruited by the partner family. **PARTNER FAMILIES MAY NOT SOLICIT EQUITY HOURS ON THE JOB SITE.**
- As part of the individual sweat equity plan, credit will be worked out with children and family as it relates to grades, attendance at educational events, degreed programs and related activities.
- Work on home of other affiliate.
- Babysitter time while the adults are on the job site.
- Send thank you cards (provided by affiliate) to sponsors and volunteers.
- Give or assist in speaking engagements.

All sweat equity hours must be completed prior to closing and moving in.