



NEWS

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Contact:

Habitat for Humanity-Greater Columbus

Beverly Martin

(614) 580-6272

Beverly.Martin@MartinMarketingLLC.com

Columbus Native to Support Habitat with ½ Marathon Run on Oct. 18 Sonya Justus Uses Internet Technology to Organize Fundraiser while Training for Columbus Marathon

Columbus, Ohio – For many marathon runners, there is a personal challenge or goal that entices one to train for months to run the grueling distance of an endurance race. For one runner about to arrive in Columbus for the upcoming marathon, it was the approaching milestone of the age of 40 that set in motion her plans to run the half marathon in Columbus on October 18. But rather than run simply for her own self-challenge of proving her physical abilities to herself, Sonya Justus also decided to run to support a charity close to her heart. Justus, a Columbus native from a family of 14 children, including 3 sets of twins, is running to support Habitat for Humanity – Greater Columbus (HFHGC).

Using new Internet technologies for online giving, Justus set up a fundraising page through Firstgiving.com and has raised over \$1,000 for HFHGC in conjunction with her half marathon. Justus is the first Habitat supporter to utilize the Firstgiving link on the recently redesigned HFHGC web site to create a personal fundraising campaign to support the organization.

Justus' affinity for Habitat came in 2004 when she served on the board of Habitat in Martha's Vineyard, MA. She was touched by the organization, and through the years she has kept it, and her hometown of Columbus, close to her heart. Justus currently lives in Portland, ME where she works as a Physician's Assistant in the Health Services Department at Bowdoin College. Her family and extended family all still call Columbus home and will be cheering her on as she treks the half marathon on Oct. 18 through the streets of Columbus. Justus was to run the race with her twin sister, but her sister broke her foot during training, so Justus will be running it alone, but buoyed by the support of family and friends.

"I truly appreciate the interdenominational approach of Habitat and the way they help people realize the pride and self worth associated with homeownership, especially for families that might not otherwise buy a home. The Firstgiving web site made it so easy and convenient for me to organize and manage a fundraising effort all by myself. With a few keystrokes, I shared my plan and goals with friends and family from allover and they have met the challenge to support me in this effort," said Sonya Justus. "I can't wait to get to Columbus to run and support Habitat."

Justus attended The Ohio State University and finished her Physician Assistant's (PA) degree at Kettering College in Dayton. In 2004, she moved to Martha's Vineyard for two years, then spent two years in England as part of a pilot program to introduce Physician Assistants into the UK National Healthcare System in the SW of UK, and she has been in Portland, ME since August 2008, spending the most recent summer working in an Adult Medicine Clinic as a PA for the Navajo Indians at Ft. Defiance

Indian Hospital in Ft. Defiance, AZ. She has been a sporadic runner for 10 years. This is her first half marathon.

E.J. Thomas, CEO of Habitat for Humanity – Greater Columbus is pleased to see social media and online fundraising utilized by individual supporters to raise funds for Habitat. “There was a time when the only way to raise money for your own personal charity of choice was to make phone calls to ask for money or to mail out lots of letters. Habitat’s recent web site redesign was done specifically to take advantage of newer technologies and methods for increasing individual involvement and broaden the base of support for the organization,” said Thomas. “Sonya is a role model and testament to how this can work to further our mission.”

The 2009 Nationwide Better Health Columbus ½ Marathon will be held on Sunday, Oct. 18. The event will start in tandem with the full marathon near the corner of Broad and Third streets and the 1/2 marathon athletes will run or walk with the full marathoners until they turn left onto Nationwide Blvd. to the finish at 13.1 miles. ½ Marathon runners will start with the rest of the field at 7:30 a.m.

About Habitat for Humanity. [Habitat for Humanity International](#) (HFHI), and [Habitat for Humanity-Greater Columbus](#) (HFHGC), is an ecumenical Christian housing ministry. Habitat affiliates work locally in communities around the world to select and support homeowners, organize volunteers and coordinate house building. Since its founding in 1976, Habitat has built more than 300,000 homes worldwide, providing shelter for more than 1 million people in nearly 90 countries. In the Greater Columbus community, Habitat has built more than 220 homes since 1987. The Greater Columbus Affiliate, through tithing to HFHI, has also helped to build more than 230 homes in developing countries throughout the world.

HFHGC is one of the only housing agencies in Franklin County targeting families who earn 30-60% of median income. HFHGC partner families are chosen after a careful review process during which Habitat assesses their need for housing; their ability to repay a zero-interest, no-profit mortgage and their willingness to partner with Habitat through sweat equity. All partner families are first-time homebuyers who earn 30-60% of the median income for Franklin County and currently live in substandard housing. Every partner family must perform a minimum of 200-250 hours of sweat equity, which includes working on their own house and those of other Habitat families, attending homeownership classes and providing Habitat program support. Every family also assumes a no-interest, no-profit mortgage with payments based on family income. Because HFHGC holds and services these mortgages, Habitat has a long-term relationship with the homeowners and the communities in which they live.

About Habitat’s ReStore. Also supporting HFHGC is [Habitat’s ReStore](#), a re-sale store that accepts and re-sells reusable home improvement materials to the general public. Revenue from sales directly offsets Habitat’s administrative costs and assists in both eliminating substandard housing and creating homeownership in Greater Columbus. Habitat’s ReStore is located at 3140 Westerville Road, 3 miles southwest of Easton; 2 miles south of Morse Road. The re-sale store is open to the public Monday-Saturday 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

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Habitat for Humanity-Greater Columbus, 3140 Westerville Road, Columbus, Ohio 43224
(614) HABITAT or www.habitat-columbus.org.

Habitat’s ReStore, 3140 Westerville Road, Columbus, Ohio 43224
(614) RESTORE or www.habitat-columbus.org/restore

We hope that you enjoy receiving news about Habitat for Humanity-Greater Columbus and Habitat’s ReStore. Should you wish to be removed from the Habitat mailing list, please send an email to beverly.martin@martinmarketingllc.com