

# Habitat For Humanity, Turning Dreams into Reality

by Jerry Garner

The dream of most Americans is to someday be a homeowner. Indeed, millions of people are homeowners and millions more purchase homes each year.

Unfortunately, there are millions of families across the country who, due to financial reasons, aren't able to fulfill their dreams of owning a place of their own. Recognizing this, Habitat For Humanity, Inc. was created.

Habitat For Humanity is a non-profit Christian housing ministry that works with low-income people in an effort to improve the conditions in which they're forced to live.

Millard Fuller, a wealthy southern businessman, started the concept of Habitat For Humanity in 1968. Fuller decided to give away his money to help build decent housing for the needy after going through personal problems in pursuit of the dollar.

In 1973, Fuller and his family moved to Zaire in central Africa. In the city of Mbandaka, a Fund For Humanity was established within the framework of the Church of Christ of Equator Region, and a program was launched to build 162 houses.

In 1976, 300 more homes were constructed in the village of Ntondo, in southern Zaire. Fuller returned to the U.S. in 1976, and shortly after Habitat For Humanity Inc. was formed, Fuller was appointed executive director.

The Christian organization provides the initial capital for low-income people through gifts and no-interest loans—to build or renovate simple, decent homes.

Houses are sold at no profit, with a no-interest mortgage repaid over a 15 to 25-year period. The house payments are recycled to build more houses through a local "Fund For Humanity."

The Habitat For Humanity, Portland Project, was established in 1981. Since then, the organization has renovated two older homes and has built a third one in Northeast Portland.

One recipient of the Portland project is Pam Slaughter and her two children, Jonathan, 3, and Ashley, 2½. When asked how it felt to own

a house of her own, Slaughter replied, "It's very exciting. I've been praying to own a house for myself and my two children for some time. It's very difficult for a single parent to find decent housing." Slaughter and her children will move into their new home in September.

Paul LaRue, volunteer director of the Portland project, said he got involved in the program because he wanted to "spend some time doing something practical to carry out the teaching of Christ."

LaRue, a former pastor at Sunnyside United Methodist Church, said it's up to Christians to help provide decent houses for God's people in need. LaRue said at present the federal government isn't doing all it can to provide decent and affordable homes for the needy.

Not only does Habitat For Humanity provide housing throughout the continental U.S. and abroad, the project has made housing available in the following countries: Zaire, Haiti, Guatemala and Uganda.

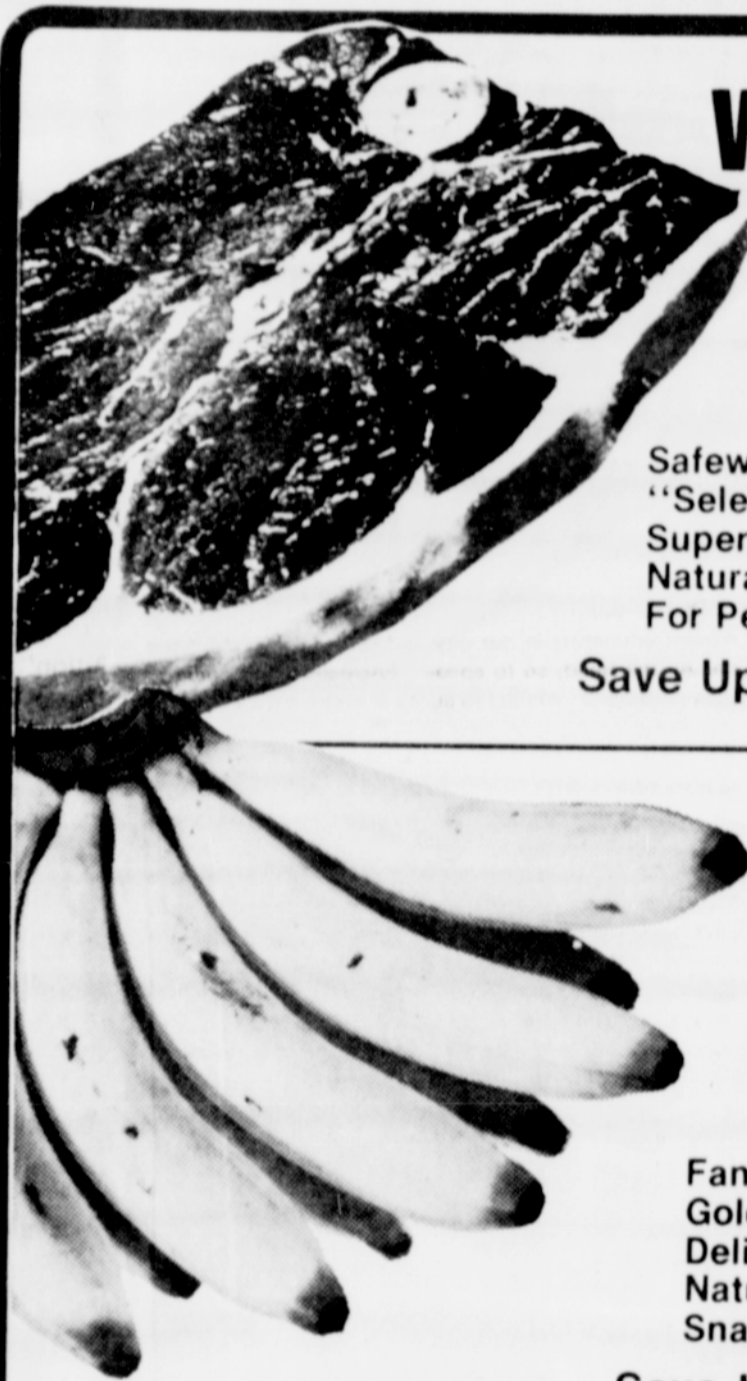


Audrey Sanders of Habitat For Humanity/Portland Project and Pam Slaughter discuss the program

that is making Pam's dream of owning a house of her own a reality.

Photo by Richard J. Brown

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## Black Artists' at PCC

by Jerry Garner

African-American visual artists encounter a host of problems in attempting to sell and promote their artwork. In an effort to address these problems, the Visual Arts Ombudsman Project will hold its first annual "Black Artists' Gathering", August 29th and 30th, at Portland Community College, Cascade Campus.

A forum entitled "Black Artists Crucified in Portland, Oregon" will be presented August 29th, from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m., to examine the shocking state of affairs of African-American visual artists and their art.

During the forum, a panel of four artists will identify special problems facing African-American artists who are submerged in a culture dominated by European-based concepts of beauty, form and ethic.

The forum will attempt to find solutions in an effort to make visual arts a viable asset to the African-American community and society in general by informing practicing artists, educators, parents and supporters of their role in changing the public's perception of African-American visual arts.

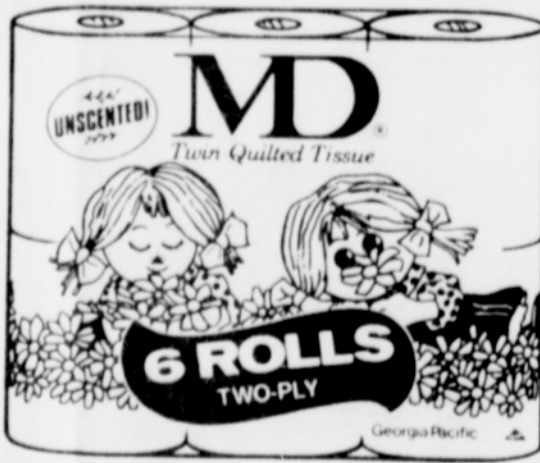
On August 30th, from 12 noon to 6 p.m., the public will be treated to an outdoor art exhibit and auction of valuable and beautiful works of art by local artists at bargain prices. Admission to both the forum and the auction is free.

Any African-American artist who has original artwork to sell or display should contact Isaac Shamsud-Din at 284-9865.

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