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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Habitat ReStore to open in Smyrna in time for Earth Day

Smyrna ReStore is expected to divert over 267 tons of materials from area landfills while offering used and new home items at greatly discounted prices

Murfreesboro, TN (March 27, 2017) – Rutherford County Area Habitat for Humanity (RCHFH) is excited to announce the Grand Opening and Ribbon-Cutting of their second Habitat ReStore in Rutherford County on Friday, April 21, in time to celebrate Earth Day, April 22, and the store’s commitment to recycling items that can be reused and repurposed. The new store is located in the Gillsville Family Shopping Center at 413 Nissan Blvd, Smyrna and will start accepting donations on Saturday, April 8 and Saturday, April 15, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. Regular store hours will be Tuesday – Saturday, 9 a.m. – 6 p.m. They will also offer pick-up services for large items.

“Our ReStores are a unique way for Habitat to cover the operational and administrative costs of the nonprofit so that all donations to Rutherford County Area Habitat for Humanity can go towards the Homeowner program and building houses for low-income families in need,” states Tom Fix, President, RCHFH Board of Directors.

“Having a second ReStore has a huge impact on our affiliate’s ability to increase our building capacity and provide more affordable housing opportunities for low-income families,” adds Terri Shultz, Executive Director of RCHFH.

The Habitat ReStore at the Murfreesboro location has operated for more than 15 years and estimates that they divert over 267 tons (588,634 lbs) of materials from area landfills every year. Many of those items are large furniture pieces, such as desks and entertainment centers, which

do not decompose easily. The Smyrna ReStore is expected to have the same impact on the environment.

“Every day is Earth Day,” states ReStore Manager Josh Chappell. “And we have an enthusiastic base of customers who are ready to give your used, unwanted or surplus items *new life* in their homes or businesses.”

The Rutherford County Landfill, a county-operated landfill for construction wastes and yard debris, and the Middle Point Landfill, which receives household waste from businesses and municipalities throughout Middle Tennessee, are both trying to keep up with demand in a fast-growing county. Middle Point is expected to reach capacity in no more than 8 years, according to the Rutherford County Solid Waste Advisory Council and leaders are in the process of looking for alternatives for solid waste disposal in Rutherford County. Habitat ReStores offer a convenient and impactful way to reduce those solid wastes while also providing affordable products at deep discounts for area bargain hunters. There are more than 800 Habitat ReStores in the U.S. and Canada and each play important parts in reducing solid waste disposal in their community.

The first Earth Day on April 22, 1970 is credited for encouraging millions of Americans to pay attention to the environment and do what they can to recycle and replenish the environment, both locally and globally. Today more than a billion people around the world participate in Earth Day activities, making it the largest civic observance in the world.

The Habitat ReStore sells and accepts donations of gently used furniture, home accessories, lighting, flooring, working appliances, lumber, windows and doors, cabinets, bathroom fixtures, home improvement materials and hardware. The store also stocks new items at discount prices including flooring, area rugs, lighting, doors, tools and other special purchases. Both the Murfreesboro and Smyrna ReStore will pick up large items from area residences and businesses and all donations are tax deductible as RCHF is a 501c3 organization.

The ReStore encourages people to clean their attics and basements of unwanted furniture and materials and to keep them in mind when doing re-decorating, home improvement projects or are downsizing. They also receive donations from area contractors who have surplus materials and apartment complexes and businesses who are renovating. They recently received desks and

office items from SVP Worldwide (Singer, Husqvarna Viking and Pfaff) when the company moved to a new location in LaVergne. Often these household and business items end up in the trash and greatly diminish the capacity of the area landfills.

“We love featuring ways to reuse and repurpose items that are donated to our ReStore,” adds Chappell. “We post DIY projects and videos on our social media and website and will start handing out flyers with project ideas and instructions at the ReStores, as well as tips for reducing clutter in the home.”

One popular repurposing project is how to use home entertainment centers that were originally designed for large box televisions and convert them to home office desks, storage cabinets, kitchen cupboards and even home wine bars. Chappell reports that the top items that people donate are: furniture, cabinets, doors, appliances, tile, lighting fixtures, plumbing fixtures and surplus home improvement materials. The new 10,000 square-foot Smyrna location offers easy access and great parking for both donating materials and shopping. The space will also house an office and training center for Dominion Financial Management, a Christian nonprofit organization that offers financial education and coaching, as well as a FoodWorks program to help families stretch their food dollars. (<http://dominionfinancial.org/>)

With the tremendous growth of Rutherford County and rise of property values, the mission of Habitat for Humanity to meet the demands for affordable housing is more important than ever. According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, it takes a minimum wage earner in Rutherford County 76 hours a week, 52 weeks a year, to make the money needed for the Fair Market Value of housing in Rutherford County. Those families pay an average of \$900-1000 dollars a month for rental housing, compared to a typical Habitat house *mortgage*, for a house they will *own*, of under \$500 a month!

Potential homeowners in the Habitat program complete 30-weeks of Financial and Homeowner Education, put in 300-400 hours of “sweat equity” working on the construction of homes or at the ReStore, and meet other qualifications and commitments. These families earn between 30%-60% of the area mean income and most of them pay 30% or more of their income on housing alone, usually \$800 - \$1000/month for this area. Through the Habitat program they receive a 0-interest mortgage to *buy* their home and their typical mortgage payments are less

than \$500/month – giving them a very affordable home and immediate savings. Applications for the Habitat program are accepted February 1 – March 31 every year and it takes over a year for applicants to complete the program.

Habitat for Humanity also has a *Cars for Homes* program where they accept working and non-working cars, trucks, boats, trailers, motorcycles, RVs, farm equipment, construction equipment, airplanes and more to be sold *as is*, sold for parts or crushed and recycled. Recycling vehicles keeps a huge amount of steel out of landfills – enough to build nearly 45,000 steel-framed homes every year. Proceeds go to the local Habitat for Humanity affiliate and donations are tax deductible. The Habitat ReStore can help you with your vehicle donation.

Both the Smyrna and Murfreesboro ReStore also offer opportunities for volunteers to work in the store and help with sorting and stocking. For those interested, please contact Megan Hutchings at the Habitat office. The new Smyrna ReStore is also looking for financial donations or equipment donations, including a box truck or a fork lift.

About Rutherford County Area Habitat for Humanity (RCHFH)

Rutherford County Area Habitat for Humanity, a non-profit, non-denominational Christian housing ministry, seeks to bring people together to build homes, communities, and hope. This is done through building quality, affordable, sustainable houses while partnering alongside low-income, qualified applicants. Homes are built by RCHFH construction staff, future homeowners, and community volunteers. After a home is completed, it is sold to the future homeowner at no profit with a zero interest loan. We build strength, stability, self-reliance *and* shelter.

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Interviews and photos/video are available.

Also available: statistics on area landfills and recycling efforts.

Rutherford County Area Habitat for Humanity “Speakers Bureau”: <http://rchfh.org/about.asp>

RCHFH’s new video, “*Strength, Stability, Self-Reliance and Shelter*” features four Habitat Homeowners and their journey through the Habitat program and homeownership:

<https://youtu.be/fIEA1tGN0sQ>