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NINE OUT OF TEN CANADIANS BELIEVE WE NEED AFFORDABLE HOUSING SOLUTIONS

TORONTO, ON – A majority of Canadians have made it clear: we are not paying enough attention to affordable housing needs and solutions, according to a new Habitat for Humanity Affordable Housing Survey.

“Ten years ago, affordable housing was a hidden issue – it affected so many people and yet no one was talking about it,” says Mark Rodgers, Habitat for Humanity Canada’s President and CEO. “It’s clear from the results of this survey that people understand how important having access to decent and affordable housing is – but they feel that not enough is being done to solve the problem. At Habitat we’ll continue to partner with communities, governments, as well as the not-for-profit and private sectors to provide long-term solutions to affordable housing issues for working families, while urging the government to include affordable homeownership as part of the solution as it develops a national housing strategy for all Canadians.”

On behalf of Habitat for Humanity, PSB surveyed 1,000 people in the United States and Canada, examining the perceptions, challenges and benefits of affordable housing in both countries. The survey was conducted ahead of Habitat for Humanity’s [Jimmy & Rosalynn Carter Work Project](#), which will build over 150 homes in Canada this summer.

Affordable housing issues and aspirations

Homeownership remains a top achievement for most people. Nine out of 10 Canadians (91 per cent) say that owning a home is one of their greatest achievements in life. Among renters, a majority of Canadians (77 per cent) cite owning a home as one of their top goals.

While homeownership has become much more challenging for Canadians, it remains completely out of reach for many low-income families. That means too many are without access to safe, secure and affordable housing. Habitat’s model of affordable homeownership bridges a gap for people, providing working families on low incomes with the opportunity to purchase their own Habitat home.

Barriers to homeownership

Survey respondents identified high cost as the top barrier to homeownership (91 per cent in Canada), followed closely by difficulties obtaining a mortgage (75 per cent). Most do not expect the situation to get much better: a majority of Canadian respondents (84 per cent) believe housing costs will go up in the next five years.

According to the survey, most Canadians have struggled with housing costs at some point in their lives, and over 40 per cent currently struggle to pay housing costs. In order to pay those housing costs, many have had to cut back in other important areas such as food (40 per cent), dental care (30 per cent) or education (12 per cent).

Benefits of homeownership

Habitat's model of affordable homeownership helps families build strength, stability and independence – and builds stronger, healthier communities at the same time. Affordable housing is a foundation for reducing poverty and achieving economic growth, with the potential to positively impact an even wider range of societal issues.

A [2015 Boston Consulting Group](#) report on Habitat for Humanity Canada's social impact calculated that for every \$1 invested in Habitat, there are \$4 worth of benefits to the community, resulting in almost \$48 million of benefits in 2016. According to the survey, many Canadians know that access to decent and affordable housing can contribute to a community's overall health and help kids do better in school. At least eight out of 10 Canadians agree that having affordable, stable housing contributes to public health (87 per cent), community safety (90 per cent), economic growth (92 per cent) and children's education (91 per cent).

Continuing Habitat's action on this issue, from July 9 to 14, former US President Carter and his wife will be building homes as part of Habitat's [Jimmy & Rosalynn Carter Work Project](#). While President and Mrs. Carter are focusing their efforts on Edmonton and Winnipeg, almost 50 communities across Canada will be participating, helping build over 150 homes alongside 150 families to mark Canada's 150th. To find out more, visit habitat.ca/150ReasonsToBuild.

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[Click here to access the 2015 Boston Consulting Group report: *Transforming Lives: The Social Return on Habitat's Work in Canada*](#).

PSB conducted the survey on behalf of Habitat for Humanity and Habitat for Humanity Canada between April 14 and April 24, 2017. Five hundred Canadians and five hundred Americans aged 18+ were surveyed.

About Habitat for Humanity Canada

Founded in 1985, Habitat for Humanity Canada is a national, nonprofit organization working toward a world where everyone has a decent and affordable place to call home. Habitat for Humanity brings communities together to help families build strength, stability and independence through affordable homeownership. With the help of volunteers, Habitat homeowners and 56 local Habitats working in every province and territory, we provide a solid foundation for better, healthier lives in Canada and around the world. For more information, please visit www.habitat.ca.

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