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Huntsville Botanical Garden to provide plant, landscape expertise for new Habitat for Humanity homeowners

HUNTSVILLE, Ala. (March 22, 2023) – Huntsville Botanical Garden (HBG) signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Habitat for Humanity of the River Valley today, forging a new partnership between the two organizations. The MOU outlines the Garden’s commitment to provide training for new local Habitat homeowners so they can learn the basics of plant care and landscape maintenance for their new homes.

Habitat for Humanity of the River Valley offers their partner families an opportunity to own a home that is stable and affordable. Habitat homeowners help build their own homes alongside volunteers and pay an affordable mortgage. While Habitat’s mission is focused on providing housing, Habitat for Humanity of the River Valley recognized there was a knowledge gap for new homeowners when it came to how to care for their new landscapes.

"One of our priorities is to coach our partner families to be self-sufficient," said Habitat's Executive Director Jeremy Foulks. "This partnership will strengthen the homeowner's knowledge and experience so they can continue to take pride in their new home for years to come. Our entire staff is enthusiastic about this cooperative effort."

"We are so excited and eager to contribute to the wellness of our community in this way," said HBG Chief Executive Officer Sue Wagner. "It makes so much sense for us to combine our expertise—theirs in building houses and ours in horticulture—to help these homeowners on the path to successfully caring for their new homes, inside and out."

In addition to helping build the houses, Habitat for Humanity of the River Valley also offers classes and counseling on finances and homeownership to help clients become successful homeowners. Beginning in May, HBG’s Learning, Programs and Education (LPE) department will

offer classes for Habitat clients to learn how to care for, maintain or improve the landscapes that come with their new homes.

“One of the Garden’s core values is ‘collaborate with compassion,’” said HBG’s Director of LPE Rebecca Turk. “Our educators, horticulturists and plant scientists are such valuable community resources, and we are always happy to share expertise outside the physical boundaries of the Garden.”

HBG is partnering with local sponsors to provide a basic set of lawn care tools for each homeowner in the class. Classes will focus on lawn care basics, how to choose and grow new plants suitable for their landscapes and basic tool maintenance.

“The Garden’s mission is to connect people to plants in order to support a healthier quality of life for the region,” said Wagner. “This partnership with Habitat for Humanity of the River Valley directly supports our mission to help improve quality of life for the people in our community, and we are honored to work alongside their organization.”

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About the Huntsville Botanical Garden

The Huntsville Botanical Garden is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that exists to connect people to plants in order to support a healthier quality of life for the region. Open year-round, the Garden contains diverse ecosystems to explore within its 118 acres. From grassy meadows to woodland paths, aquatic habitats to stunning floral collections, the Garden invites guests of all ages to discover the beauty and wonder of the natural environment. For more information, visit hsvbg.org.

About Habitat for Humanity of the River Valley

Habitat for Humanity of Madison County was established in 1987 as an affiliate of Habitat for Humanity International. Habitat for Humanity brings people together to build homes, communities, and hope. We have helped over 300 families in Madison & Limestone Counties achieve their dream of affordable homeownership. Habitat for Humanity builds strength, stability and self-reliance through affordable homeownership. For more information, visit www.habitatrivervalley.org.