

Transcript from the Chamber on March 2, 2023:

## HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

**M. Babchuk:** After going through a divorce, Sean found himself with no other choice than to move himself and his sons in with his parents. While he was grateful for the temporary living situation and made it work, it was cramped and not sustainable. At the same time, he was dealing with the pressures of being a new single parent and just trying to set an example for his children. Feeling desperate, Sean sought help. "I don't even remember what I typed into the computer," he said. Something to do with "housing" and "help me." And the Habitat for Humanity website came up.

He honestly didn't believe that this type of program existed in this world. A hand up, not a handout is exactly what Sean was looking for, and the Habitat program, which involves 500 hours of volunteer work, helped him rebuild his confidence. He formed strong bonds with the Habitat staff, volunteers and fellow homeowners and particularly enjoyed being on the build site.

Sean described the Habitat program as a snowball of positivity that got bigger and bigger with each step that he went down this path. He said: "It's been my belief, and now it's confirmed, that programs and groups of people like this are really what hold this world together."

Sean completed his 500 hours of volunteerism and moved into his Habitat home with his sons in December of 2022, but he isn't finished. He wants to give back to the community. "Now that I've gotten myself out of this jam, I intend to take a page out of the Habitat book and start helping more people who need it. It's amazing the confidence you can pass on just by doing something that was handed to you."

I couldn't be more proud, as Sean is my son, and he has worked so hard to better his life and the lives of my grandchildren Owen and Jason. But also, I am so grateful to be acquainted with an organization that provides entry-level, affordable family home ownership through a collaborative non-profit model. And I'm honoured to now be part of the Habitat for Humanity family that not only provides housing but also lifelong skills and a sense of community to the people that it serves.