

# Affordable Homeownership Benefits Us All – Feb2016

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According to the 2011 census, more Canadians currently own a home than at any other point in our nation's history, with 69 per cent of the population having achieved this milestone.

The reasons that so many people place homeownership among their most important life goals are clear: in addition to being the only investment you can live in while it appreciates in value, a home inspires its owners to attain a higher quality of life.

The Toronto Real Estate Board (TREB) has been a long-time partner of Habitat for Humanity GTA and has contributed to builds across the GTA since 2008, because TREB realtor members understand the value a home brings to a family beyond the financial investment.

Prior research by Habitat for Humanity Canada has illustrated this fact and its most recent study, conducted by Boston Consulting Group, reached deeper, quantitatively outlining the impact on society of the

organization's efforts.

The study found that for every dollar spent as part of Habitat's homeownership program, approximately \$4 accrues to society. This represents \$175,000 in societal benefits per partner family, or \$39 million for the 221 Habitat homes built across Canada in 2014. Moreover, since it was established in 1985, Habitat for Humanity Canada has helped 2,700 families achieve home ownership for a total combined benefit of \$470 million.

As part of the study, 200 Habitat partner families were interviewed and their feedback was compared to 330 responses from a control group comprised of those living in rental housing. Habitat partner families reported improved overall wellbeing based on characteristics such as employment quality, income, health, civic engagement, financial literacy and educational attainment.

Specifically, it found that Habitat's partner families work a stable number of hours across fewer jobs for more income than control group respondents. Partner families' incomes grew by 5.2 per cent annually as compared to 3.3 per cent in the control group, benefitting society in federal, provincial, and sales tax revenue.

Similarly, partner families reduced their use of food banks by 60 per cent compared to 40 per cent in the control group. There was also a reduction in the need for social housing, with all partner families who lived in this housing type becoming homeowners, further contributing to the tax base through municipal property taxes. By contrast, 20 per cent of the control group respondents became homeowners and 24 per cent resided in social housing.

Habitat homeowners even lowered their incidence of smoking and engaged in greater physical activity than average Canadian families. They also got out to vote and to volunteer in the community more than those in the control group. Even more notably, partner families are more likely to have children who stay in school and achieve a bachelor's degree or better.

Combining all of these factors, the study found that the societal value of the first and second-generation partner families is approximately \$150,000 in a lifetime. Allowing for an additional 15 per cent to represent all other factors not otherwise quantified, this brings the societal value to \$175,000 per partner family.

Habitat has been so successful in offering a hand up to homeownership by using donated materials, volunteer labour (including at least 500 hours contributed by partner families) and providing families with mortgages. It, however, is just one approach to achieving the goal of owning a home.

For advice on how to make homeownership possible for you, talk to a TREB realtor, and for updates on the

market visit [TREBHome.com](http://TREBHome.com). If commercial property is what interests you, contact a TREB commercial realtor by visiting [TREBCommercial.com](http://TREBCommercial.com).



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