



Raising Faith Stories

Stacia Cooper, Member of The Local Church

In the fall of 2017, I connected with Chatham Habitat for Humanity through a co-worker who asked if I would be interested in serving as a board member. I was honored that the co-worker thought enough of me to ask me to serve. I was intrigued to learn more about Chatham Habitat for Humanity. Subsequently, I met with the organization's Executive Director and left our meeting with a sense of higher purpose, commitment to my community and the hope that I could make a positive impact in a family's life, if even in a small way. In January 2018, I officially joined as a board member and in doing so, fulfilled my intention to serve my community.

When I moved to the area in 2002, I had a vision of what I wanted in a home and in a neighborhood. I wanted my family to feel safe. I wanted the neighborhood to be walkable and provide essential services – a local grocery store, school, doctor, dentist and a church. I wanted a neighborhood that had playgrounds and green spaces – places where our son could safely play and ride his bike with his friends. A good home and a supportive community were very important to me. I believe all of us dream about what good a home is and the community that supports such a home. Our Chatham Habitat partner families have similar dreams.

Lately, I have been thinking quite a bit about community – what it means to me, why it is important to be connected and how to better connect with my surrounding community. When you relocate to a different neighborhood, city, state or country you can feel disconnected and out of sorts. If your neighborhood changes, that too can make you feel disconnected.

My faith teaches me that when I fully participate in my community – when I know who my neighbors are, am aware when they are in need and I'm willing to help them, such acts also help me to grow and mature spiritually. The trick is finding just the right type of service so that it feels natural and not forced. In this very noisy, busy, overstimulating world I confess that at times I have a desire to hibernate and retreat to my home.

I am honored to volunteer for Chatham Habitat for Humanity. My service allows me the opportunity to put my faith into practice within my community by helping people “...to create self-help opportunities for families to own affordable homes, improve their lives, and strengthen their communities”. This is our organization's mission.

Lastly, my faith teaches me that *my faith is with me* - at home, in the office and in my neighborhood - not just in Sunday worship service. I have evidence of this in my associations with Chatham Habitat, my employer, whose earliest motto was “Merciful to All” and The Local Church (Pittsboro, NC) where we believe that you should “Love Where You Are”.