

BUILDING THE *Beloved* COMMUNITY



A Weeklong Interfaith Initiative, Film Project, and Interfaith Dialogue
in Celebration of the 2023 UN's World Interfaith Harmony Week

A Report Prepared for the World Interfaith Harmony Week International Competition

February 1-7, 2023



BAHA'I

Lay not on any soul a load that you would not wish to be laid upon you, and desire not for anyone the things you would not desire for yourself.

Bahá'í'llah, Gleanings



BUDDHISM

Treat not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful.

The Buddha, Udanavarga 5:18



CHRISTIANITY

In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets.

Jesus, Matthew 7:12



CONFUCIANISM

One word which sums up the basis of all good conduct: loving-kindness. Do not do to others what you do not want done to yourself.

Confucius, Analects 15:23



HINDUISM

This is the sum of duty: Do not do to others what would cause pain if done to you.

Mahabharata 5:1517



ISLAM

Not one of you truly believes until you wish for others what you wish for yourself.

The Prophet Muhammad, Sahih al-Bukhari 13, Book 2, Hadith 6



JAINISM

One should treat all creatures in the world as one would like to be treated.

Mahavira, Suttrakritanga 1:11:33



JUDAISM

What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor. This is the whole Torah; all the rest is commentary. Go and learn it.

Hillel, Talmud, Shabbath 31a



NATIVE SPIRITUALITY

We are as much alive as we keep the earth alive.

Chief Dan George



SIKHISM

I am a stranger to no one; and no one is a stranger to me. Indeed, I am a friend to all.

Guru Granth, Sahib, 0. 1299



TAOISM

Regard your neighbor's gain as your own gain and your neighbor's loss as your own loss.

Laó Tzu, Tai Shang Kan Ying P'ien, 213-218



UNITARIANISM

We affirm and promote respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

Unitarian principle



ZOROASTRIANISM

Do not do unto others whatever is injurious to yourself.

Shayast-na-Shayast 13:29





Background of Initiative to Celebrate World Interfaith Harmony Week

For the second year, Pikes Peak Habitat for Humanity celebrated World Interfaith Harmony Week (WIHW) with a *Building the Beloved Community* initiative. Though the initiative rollout began in January to expand engagement opportunities, daily interfaith activities occurred Feb. 1-7, 2023. *Building the Beloved Community* was created by Pikes Peak Habitat's Interfaith Build for Unity (IBU) Subcommittee, a group of 19 individuals from different faiths who unite to build affordable homes for workforce families in El Paso County, Colorado, USA. While the subcommittee remains committed to ongoing interfaith work, we again chose to celebrate the 2023 WIHW as a special venture to recognize the importance of interfaith harmony, mutual understanding and love of one's neighbor.

With the goals of enhancing our WIHW celebrations from last year and expanding knowledge of WIHW, this year Pikes Peak Habitat partnered with a variety of faith organizations to create numerous opportunities for engagement, dialogue, and volunteerism Feb. 1-7 (highlighted below). To enhance education related to WIHW's message, Pikes Peak Habitat created a weeklong "Interfaith Challenge" found on our 2023 WIHW webpage. As part of the webpage, an interactive calendar for each day of the WIHW showed specific ways for individuals to engage daily. A separate PDF for each day allowed participants to learn about the UN initiative, how the Golden Rule or concept of helping others translates to multiple faith traditions, and about tangible action steps to "Build the Beloved Community" and embody the WIHW resolution. Each day participants were asked to select and complete one of the actions as a way to enhance engagement.



Discussion during 2022 dialogue

In an assembly like this we have a lot of thoughts and feelings, many disagreements and contentions, but we've also got incredible opportunities. It's not often that such diversity can unite with absolute unity."

*-Chaplain Major Kevin Hostettler,
United States Air Force Academy*

The week's daily call-to-action activities included:

***Please find links on page 11**

- Participate in the seven-day online "Interfaith Challenge" and engage daily with Pikes Peak Habitat's social WIHW media posts
- Pikes Peak Habitat collaborates with Interfaith America, a national interfaith organization, to create a short mini documentary highlighting our Interfaith Build for Unity; and Chloe Henry, Pikes Peak Habitat's faith in action program manager, and interfaith leader.
- Pursue "faith in action" by volunteering in the filmed Interfaith Build for Unity volunteer day on Pikes Peak Habitat's construction site.
- Participate in the Interfaith Build "stud signing" ceremony to write prayers, blessings, and words of encouragement for our homeowner on the wood framing of her home.
- IBU Subcommittee members (local faith leaders) convene for a dinner and pre-event reception in preparation for the interfaith dialogue.
- Participate in Pikes Peak Habitat's "Building the Beloved Community: Interfaith Dialogue Surrounding Affordable Housing and the Racial Homeownership Gap" event in partnership with the Pikes Peak Inter Faith Coalition to promote mutual understanding and goodwill.



Building the Beloved Community Initiative Leading to World Interfaith Harmony Week

“Building the Beloved Community” refers to a term originally coined by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., a devoted faith leader and American civil rights activist, to describe a “community that includes diversity and allows for tension undergirded by love to lead to transformation and to create a community of justice, equal opportunity, and dignity for all.” **As Pikes Peak Habitat’s interfaith subcommittee thought about what it would take to build a community centered on justice, harmony, and dignity, we recognized that, as a religiously diverse community, building the beloved community requires our faith leaders and citizens to embody the goals set forth by the UN WIHW resolution.** Because of this, we made building the beloved community a local focal point of our 2023 WIHW celebration.

This grassroots WIHW initiative was spearheaded by Pikes Peak Habitat’s Faith in Action Program Manager Chloe Henry in collaboration with additional Pikes Peak Habitat employees, the Pikes Peak Inter Faith Coalition, Pikes Peak Habitat’s Interfaith Subcommittee, the U.S. Air Force Academy Community Chapel, Interfaith America, and many diverse faith communities. Although Pikes Peak Habitat is a Habitat for Humanity International affiliate, our scope of work and operations focuses only on El Paso County in Colorado.

To build the beloved community and embody the WIHW goals, our interfaith subcommittee created numerous engagement opportunities, starting with a Martin Luther King Jr. Day of service in Jan. 2023 at both of Pikes Peak Habitat’s ReStores (affordable home improvement stores), geared toward faith community participation. Numerous diverse faith groups participated. Tamer Sayedahmed of the Islamic Society of Colorado Springs



First United Methodist Prairie Campus Volunteers

shared, “It’s my honor to help Habitat for Humanity... to help each other as a community, as human beings, and [to] support each other with a common cause.” **Perhaps the volunteer day’s goal was best summed up by the scripture reference written on the back of the First United Methodist-Prairie Campus congregants’ shirts pictured above: *to love each other.***

Following the service day, a “Building the Beloved Community” pledge banner (language featured on p.10) was available for all to sign until Feb. 7, marking the end of the WIHW celebrations. The intent of the banner is to showcase our unity surrounding the idea of creating a community undergirded with love for one’s neighbor.

WIHW Week: Film Project with Interfaith America

During WIHW, Pikes Peak Habitat had the privilege to partner with [Interfaith America](#), a national interfaith organization, to create a short documentary as a part of their Emerging Leaders Program, highlighting Pikes Peak



Habitat's Interfaith Build for Unity Project, and Chloe Henry, Pikes Peak Habitat's faith in action program manager and emerging interfaith leader. Pikes Peak Habitat's desire to film this short documentary at this time was strategic to promote WIHW and to include it in our celebration of the annual international initiative. Once completed, this video will bring attention to the IBU project nationally—a project that seeks to showcase love of one's neighbor and mutual understanding by bringing together diverse faith groups to serve a family in need of affordable housing—and record a special day up-close of volunteers who gave their hearts and hands to work on the IBU house, including signing the 2"x4" studs in the framing. This took place at Pikes Peak Habitat's construction site on Saturday, Feb. 4 as a way to engage more individuals during WIHW.

Filming an Interfaith Build Volunteer Day

Filming our interfaith volunteer day on our construction site brought together 26 volunteers across two shifts, morning and afternoon, showcasing the power of collective action from people of diverse faiths for good. Faith leaders who were unable to volunteer either attended only the stud signing ceremony, or alternatively sent in a prayer to be written on their behalf. Volunteers and stud signers consisted of Catholics, Jews, (Reform and Conservative Jewish Movements), Protestant Christians (Baptists, Episcopalian, Lutherans, Methodists, non-denominational Christians), Muslims, Tibetan Buddhists, and individuals identifying themselves as spiritual. Additionally, two U.S. Air Force Academy Chaplains participated either through volunteering or sending in a prayer. Members of an army unit also volunteered.

At the start of both shifts, Chloe Henry introduced WIHW, its goals, and described how volunteering

with the interfaith build is a tangible way volunteers are putting *love for neighbor* into action—a common theme found in numerous holy texts.

Subsequently, all volunteers introduced themselves and their faith/belief system. Volunteers were encouraged to live into the spirit of the interfaith build and WIHW by challenging them to engage in meaningful dialogues with others while volunteering.

Volunteers from different faiths worked on construction of the IBU house for Anna, our current IBU future homeowner. Anna is a single mother to three daughters, and a caretaker to her mother who suffers from epilepsy. Her oldest daughter is battling brain cancer. Anna was joined by Jessica, our third IBU homeowner, who is also a single mom to her 7-year-old son, and works for a local school district. Though the two future homeowners met for the first time that morning, they quickly realized they would one day be neighbors.



Jessica and Anna (L to R) being interviewed

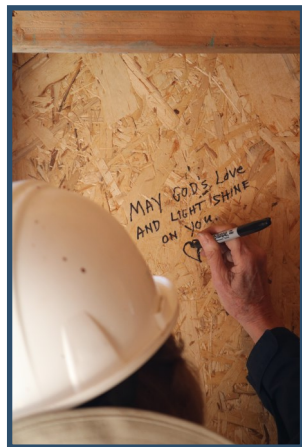
The Ridge at Sand Creek neighborhood, where both Jessica and Anna will live, is a planned mixed socioeconomic neighborhood for 30 Habitat homeowners. Our neighborhood is comprised of:

single moms and dads, teachers, veterans, refugees, multi-generational families and retirees. Homeowners come from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds, and over time, strong bonds have developed among homeowners. Our homeowners showcase a tangible example of true love for one's neighbor and physically building the beloved community.

During the volunteer day, Anna expressed what it means to have diverse faith groups work on her house. "I feel appreciative for every single thing they do, for being a part of this journey with me. There are no words I can express because it's beyond that. I want to say thank you and that is not even enough." She shared her gratitude "for the opportunity to be able to have interfaith groups build together [in] unity and become one."

Interfaith 2"x4" Stud Signing Ceremony

During the volunteer day, Pikes Peak Habitat hosted a stud signing ceremony during which volunteers signed the wood framing of the interfaith house for Anna's family with prayers, scripture, blessings, and words of encouragement from their own faith tradition as a physical representation of interfaith unity. As the volunteers gathered for the signing, Chloe Henry shared,



Faith communities sign the wood framing of the interfaith home for Anna's family

shared, "While our collective actions today have helped to physically build Anna's house, now our prayers and blessings get to uplift our homeowners as they make this house a home. As Anna and her family walk around their completed home in the coming months, may they be reminded of the prayers and blessings (cont.)

"May this home be blessed with joy and kindness by all."

*-Temple Shalom
Interfaith Home stud inscription*



"May the Lord bless this house and make it a home; full of generous welcome for all who visit, brimming with warmth and entertainment for family and friends; overflowing with hospitality and nourishing provision; a haven for safety and peace in night and day; and a place of refreshment of growth and happiness; may the Lord bless this house and make it a home. Amen."

Interfaith Home Stud Inscription



surrounding them from all directions, and of the diverse faith communities that have come together across lines of difference to cheer Anna’s family on.”

Interfaith Dinner

At the end of the interfaith volunteer day on the Pikes Peak Habitat construction site, celebrations for WIHW continued with a dinner and pre-event reception at the home of Chloe Henry for all members of the IBU Subcommittee and their significant others. Because the IBU Subcommittee started during the COVID-19 pandemic, many of our faith leaders had not met each other yet in person. Thus, in the spirit of the UN resolution, Pikes Peak Habitat thought there was no better way to work towards harmony and understanding during WIHW than to invite our faith leaders to break bread together at the home of our faith in action program manager (Chloe is also staff liaison to the committee).



Chloe Henry and IBU Subcommittee members

Thirty-two individuals attended the dinner, a collective group of Catholics, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Jews (Reform and Conservative Jewish congregations), Muslims, Native Americans (specifically, representatives from the Native

American Women's Association), and Protestant Christians (Anglicans, Baptists, Episcopalians, Lutherans, Methodists, non-denominational Christians, Presbyterians).

Guests were encouraged to bring a side dish that represented their faith or culture to spark conversation. A sampling of dishes included a family recipe of guacamole from Michoacán, Mexico; kugel, a traditional Jewish dish; home-made hummus and bread; and three sisters salad, a traditional Native American dish.

The evening reception not only offered a space for faith leaders to get to know each other over a shared meal, but also provided an opportunity to prepare for the Interfaith Dialogue the next day. During the reception, Pastor Paula Stecker of Christ the King Lutheran Church prepared subcommittee members for their role of table facilitator during the interfaith dialogue, stressing the importance of using a “mutual invitation” framework to ensure that all table participants feel heard. She shared points of the “Respectful Communication Guidelines” to create a culture of trust and empathetic listening.

With the intent “to love God and neighbor; to love the good and neighbor,” the IBU Subcommittee felt it was important to dedicate time to discuss table facilitation guidelines to ensure our interfaith dialogue provided a safe and welcoming space for intentional interfaith dialogue that surrounds a critical priority in our community: affordable housing and working to build the beloved community.



“Building the Beloved Community” Interfaith Dialogue

Our celebration of WIHW culminated in our “Building the Beloved Community: Interfaith Dialogue Surrounding Housing Affordability and the Racial Homeownership Gap,” held on Sunday, Feb. 5, 2023, and hosted by Pikes Peak Habitat in collaboration with the Pikes Peak Inter Faith Coalition and the 10th Air Base Wing. The event took place at the 10th Air Base Wing Community Chapel on the USAF academy. Thanks to the recruiting efforts of our interfaith leaders, attendance at the event doubled compared to last year’s WIHW celebration.

Approximately 75 individuals attended the event, representing the following belief systems: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Humanists, Jews (Reform and Conservative Jewish congregations), Muslims, Native Americans (Native American Women's Association), Pagan Universalist, Protestant Christians (Anabaptist Mennonite, Anglicans, Baptists, Disciples of Christ, Episcopalians, Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, Evangelical Covenant Order Presbyterians, Lutherans, Methodists, non-denominational Christians, Presbyterian Church U.S.A., United Church of Christ), Roman Catholics, self-identifying spiritual individuals, and Unitarian Universalists. Also in attendance were representatives from the Pikes Peak Inter Faith Coalition, chaplains from the U.S. Air Force Academy Community Chapel, students from the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs religion department, and philosophy professors from Pikes Peak State College.

A video of Habitat for Humanity International’s pledge, Building the Beloved Community, kicked off the presentation to help frame the conversation. IBU Subcommittee member, Chaplain Major Kevin Hostettler provided an opening prayer and invited individuals to participate according to the dictates of their own beliefs.

Chloe Henry then welcomed the audience, provided background information on WIHW, and described the global initiative’s goals. During her remarks, Chloe shared that the dialogue event was created to provide space for individuals to enhance mutual understanding and respect across faiths. She briefly touched on some of the overarching barriers to

“The main is the love, [and compassionate] message for harmony to become people with a more peaceful life and a more meaningful life. The main Buddhism teaching says we have to have respect for all different religions, different traditions, or different faiths . . . equally we are the same. They love happiness they do not love suffering.”

*-Geshe Wangden Tashi
Tibetan Meditation Center*

“Dear friends, let us love one another for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.”

*-1 John 4:7 (NIV)
Interfaith Home stud inscription*

*“May this house become a home of sanctity, peace and love.
Mazel Tov!”*

*-Temple Beit Torah,
Interfaith Home stud inscription*



homeownership, and described how building the beloved community will require individuals of all faiths coming together to build the community we desire, a willingness to work across lines of difference.

Chloe also shared how, during his civil rights protest march in Selma, Alabama, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was surrounded by leaders from different faiths including Rabbi and scholar Abraham Joshua Heschel and Sister Antona Ebo who also believed in building the beloved community.

Chloe said **“just as Dr. King surrounded himself with partners from different backgrounds and faiths to work towards a more harmonious and just society, so must we. To create the community we desire, we need each other, from all faiths, backgrounds, and beliefs.”**

Development Corporation; and Max Kronstadt, co-founder, Colorado Springs Pro-Housing Partnership. Panelists opened the discussion by describing some of the barriers to homeownership that they see individuals struggle with in their current roles.



Attendees participate in interfaith table discussions



A panel of experts discussed homeownership barriers and positive examples of building the beloved community locally in El Paso County, Colorado. Panelists for the event included: Catherine Duarte, HUD programs manager, City of Colorado Springs; Heather McBroom, interim executive Thrive Networks; James Johnson, property acquisitions manager, Solid Rock Community

Heather McBroom shared, “Historically, in areas of higher poverty there’s not a lot of generational wealth. [Thrive Network provides] the framework so they can launch entrepreneurial businesses.”

Subsequently, attention turned toward proactive steps that their organizations are taking to address the need for affordable housing, an issue affecting everyone in our community, no matter their background or faith.

Following the panel discussion, audience members were invited to partake of a shared meal and conversation to articulate why their personal belief system makes this topic important to them, brainstorming ways that faith communities can engage in solutions, and learning from others. Facilitated table discussion focused on how to come together and build the beloved community, as a community embodying the WIHW goals.



Time also allowed for participants to learn about each other's faith traditions. Facilitators at each table stressed the importance of respectful dialogue, and the preassigned seating of participants ensured that a diversity of opinions and beliefs were present at each table.

Attendee Donna Randolph shared, "Hearing from community members who are working hard to reverse and prevent racial inequity in homeownership in Colorado Springs was a profound, educational, and inspiring experience...I was privileged to meet and engage with people of many faiths, and forged connections that have already facilitated further engagement with this ongoing team effort."

Ongoing Interfaith Efforts Through Pikes Peak Habitat's Interfaith Build

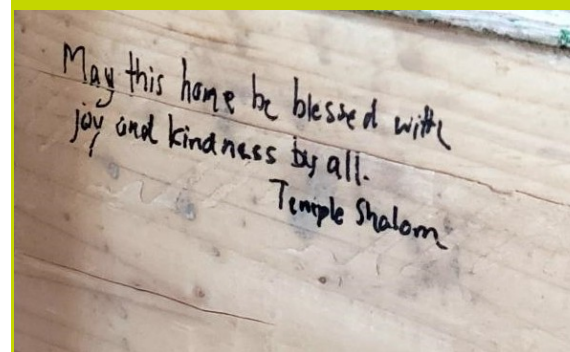
Beyond the *Building the Beloved Community* initiative, specifically in celebration of the 2023 WIHW, Pikes Peak Habitat and its IBU Subcommittee will continue to offer opportunities for interfaith work locally through Pikes Peak Habitat's IBU project. Supported by a dedicated group of volunteers from a diverse set of faiths and beliefs, the IBU encourages people to put aside their differences, put their faith into action, and to work together to build homes, communities, and hope.

During the construction of the IBU house, groups of five individuals from a faith tradition are paired together for the day on our construction site with another group representing a different belief system, and both groups volunteer together as equals. The IBU committee also hosts quarterly interfaith events including an interfaith youth event, and home dedication ceremony.

The first celebration of WIHW in 2022 created significant momentum to successfully finish the first Interfaith Build home for Ms. Andino and her son, and now we are planning the home dedication for Anna's family, our second interfaith build family, in April 2023. Construction on our third Interfaith Build for Jessica's family will begin in August 2023.

"In Judaism we have a midrash, or a legend about the creation of the world, in which we say at the beginning of creating the world, the world was one giant ball of light – of goodness. And then for some reason, we aren't really sure why, God drops the ball and it shattered into a million different pieces. And then every time a person does a good deed, does a mitzvah, brings some light into the world, we repair a little bit of that shattered vessel. And our work as humans is to work together each from our own traditions, each from our shared values, and our own distinct values, to work to repair and create that ball of light we can all bask in."

*-Rabbi Iah Pillsbury
Temple Beit Torah*



"Blessings to all who live in this house."

-St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church



After our second year celebrating WIHW, our goal moving forward is to continue to expand the diversity of the participants from the 2023 WIHW engagement opportunities, while creating conversation of tolerance and support for one another.

Call to Action & Moving Forward

Because our desire is for participants to live out the goals set forth in the WIHW resolution and continue to engage with interfaith work after participating in the engagement opportunities of the 2023 *Building the Beloved Community* initiative, Pikes Peak Habitat's Executive Director and CEO Kris Lewis encouraged attendees to put their faith into action to live out the goals of WIHW and work on building the beloved community. Proposed ideas for future interfaith activities included attending a religious service of another faith tradition, volunteering with Pikes Peak Habitat's IBU, and sharing a meal with a friend from a different faith.

As Pikes Peak Habitat moves forward to support ongoing interfaith efforts throughout the year, it is our hope that the tenets set forth by World Interfaith Harmony Week of mutual understanding, respect, and love for God or the good of one's neighbor will continue to unite our diverse faith congregations around the need in our community for affordable homeownership, not in spite of our differences but because of them.

May we be united to build the beloved community.

"At the end of the day, may all sleep in peace."

-Interfaith Home stud inscription



2023 Stud Signing of Anna's Home

"May all beings have happiness and causes of happiness. May all be free from suffering and the causes of suffering."

-Buddhist Faith Community Rep.



Helpful Links

Interfaith Challenge and Initiative Webpages

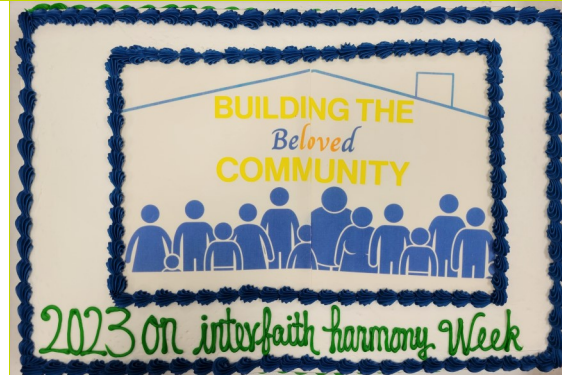
- [Pikes Peak Habitat’s 2023 World Interfaith Harmony Week Website](#)
- [Pikes Peak Habitat’s “Building the Beloved Community” Pledge](#)
- [Feb. 1 Interfaith Challenge PDF - Learn about the UN Initiative](#)
- [Feb. 2 Challenge PDF - Learn about Barriers to Homeownership](#)
- [Feb. 3 Challenge PDF - Learn about the Racial Reconciliation Roots of Habitat for Humanity](#)
- [Feb. 4 Challenge PDF - Pikes Peak Habitat’s Interfaith Build for Unity](#)
- [Feb. 5 Challenge PDF– Attend the Building the Beloved Community Interfaith Dialogue](#)
- [Feb. 6 Challenge PDF - Colorado Housing Policies Affecting Homeowners](#)
- [Feb. 7 Challenge PDF - Action Steps for Interfaith Engagement](#)

Relevant Interfaith Build for Unity Videos

- [“Together as One - Introducing the Interfaith Build for Unity” Video](#)

Press Releases and Media Coverage for Initiative

- [Press Release for “Building the Beloved Community Initiative”](#)
- [Media Coverage: Habitat for Humanity Hosts a Community Interfaith Event](#)
- [Media Coverage: “Building up Others: Habitat for Humanity From My Perspective.”](#)
- [Media Coverage: Pikes Peak Habitat for Humanity Shows Support for Martin Luther King Jr. Day](#)



“May this home be blessed. May good fortune follow those who pass through its doors. May this floor provide a stable place to stand. May these walls soak in the rich sounds of laughter and loving and offer protection from the fiercest winds.”

-Pauli

First Congregational Church



BUILDING THE BELOVED COMMUNITY PLEDGE

We believe that every single one of us — regardless of who we are or where we come from — deserves a decent life.

Like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., we believe in a Beloved Community of justice, equal opportunity and love of our fellow human beings.

We want to help build a world that leaves no room for poverty, prejudice or violence.

We pledge to work together with our neighbors, side by side, to create strength, stability and self-reliance for all.

Chloe Henry
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