

Neighborhood of Hurricane-Ready Habitat Homes to be Built in Brandon

Community Partners Break Ground on Creative Housing Crisis Solution as Habitat Rolls Out New Name

BRANDON, FL (July 23, 2025) – The ceremonial gold shovels were out, but this wasn't your typical groundbreaking. Wednesday morning, local leaders and community partners gathered to launch **Windhorst Commons**, a **23-home, hurricane-fortified** Habitat for Humanity neighborhood in Brandon, addressing the urgent need for safe, affordable housing in Hillsborough County.

Backed by major supporters, these new homes will feature hurricane shutters and other storm protections—part of a broader vision to help families build stability and resilience.

“**Verizon** is proud to sponsor this innovative, community-driven solution,” said **Crystal Bergemann**, senior manager of disaster resilience at Verizon. In addition to storm-strengthening the Windhorst Commons homes, Verizon is also funding the construction of a Habitat home in the new neighborhood for **Michelle Range** and her family. Her previous house, which was handicap-accessible for one of her two sons, was flooded by Hurricane Milton.

Michelle, who works as a club director at the Boys & Girls Clubs of Tampa Bay, told the crowd Wednesday how her family lost nearly everything—and how efforts like this help her keep the faith.

“Thank you to Habitat for being such a huge blessing to my family and so many others,” she said. “And to Verizon, thank you for your generosity and for investing in families like mine.”

**CLICK [HERE](#) TO DOWNLOAD VIDEO & PHOTOS OF THE
GROUNDBREAKING & CELEBRATION
+ SOUND WITH NEW HOMEOWNER MICHELLE RANGE**



L-R: John Doran (Publix Charities), Jason Quintero (Carlton Fields), Richard Rogers (Habitat for Humanity of Tampa Bay Hillsborough), Crystal Bergemann (Verizon), Michelle Range (Homeowner), Tina Forcier (Habitat for Humanity of Tampa Bay Hillsborough), Gwen Myers (Hillsborough County Commission), Brenda Vallecilla (Hillsborough County), Kourtney Sanchez (Tampa Bay Buccaneers), Patie Powers (Leadership Tampa), Carmen Smith (Habitat for Humanity International), Brian Nakamura & family (Homeowner)

In a show of support, **Hillsborough County Commissioner Gwen Myers** joined the celebration alongside sponsors including **Hillsborough County, Publix Charities, Tampa Bay Buccaneers, and Habitat for Humanity International.**

The main road that will run through the middle of the new cul-de-sac community will be named **Justice Landing**, reflecting support from law firm **Carlton Fields**. **Leadership Tampa** is sponsoring Windhorst Commons' neighborhood park.

"Publix strongly supports community, collaboration and helping families put down strong roots to grow and thrive," said **John Doran**, executive director of Publix Charities. "This project is an inspiring example of what we can accomplish together."

Future Habitat homeowners like Range put in hundreds of sweat equity hours and get homes with mortgages that fit their household budgets.

Wednesday's event also marked a milestone as the nonprofit organization rolled out its new name: **Habitat for Humanity of Tampa Bay Hillsborough**, formerly Habitat for Humanity of Hillsborough County.

"Our new name better reflects who we serve and our mission in this community," said Habitat for Humanity of Tampa Bay Hillsborough CEO **Tina Forcier**. "Together with our generous partners, we are creating impactful initiatives that change lives."

The first Windhorst Commons home is expected to be completed in six months, with the entire neighborhood scheduled to be built by the end of 2026.

About Habitat for Humanity of Tampa Bay Hillsborough

Habitat for Humanity of Tampa Bay Hillsborough builds and renovates homes in partnership with people in need of decent, affordable housing, and has worked with local homeowners and the community on more than 500 homes since 1987. Habitat affiliates around the world have helped more than 62 million people build or improve the places they call home.

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