

# District comes together to aid mother and child

By: [Alex Szwarc](#) | [Macomb Township Chronicle](#) | Published December 20, 2019



Chippewa Valley Schools and Macomb County Habitat for Humanity are teaming up to get Taylor Matt and her daughter, Sophia, home for Christmas.

Photo provided by Diane Blain



The goal is for this Clinton Township home to soon be occupied by Taylor Matt and her daughter, Sophia. Each year, Chippewa Valley Schools partners with Macomb County Habitat for Humanity to build a home for a low-income working family.

Photo provided by Helen Hicks

MACOMB TOWNSHIP — The need for help is real this holiday season.

Chippewa Valley Schools and Macomb County Habitat for Humanity are working together to try and get Taylor Matt and her daughter, Sophia, home for Christmas.

Taylor is 24 and living in Roseville with Sophia, 5, who attends Parkway Christian School in Sterling Heights.

Macomb Habitat needs to raise additional funds to finish the house by a year-end deadline. They are looking for donations or skilled workers who are willing to help donate their time to finish their home.

“If the project doesn’t get completed, then I technically lose my home and all the work I put in during the last year with my finances; I lose it,” Taylor Matt said.

If the home isn’t complete by Jan. 19, it becomes a rental unit.

A letter from Chippewa Valley Schools Superintendent Ron Roberts to district families indicates that every year, Dakota and Chippewa Valley high school students partner with Macomb County Habitat for Humanity and Macomb County to build a home for a low-income working family.

“This year, due to vandalism that occurred while the homes were temporarily stored at Baker College and other unexpected building issues, the home, which was scheduled to be finished in December, remains empty and unfinished,” Roberts states. “Therefore, the Macomb County Habitat for Humanity organization is asking for our help.”

In the two days after the letter was sent out, over \$2,000 was raised.

In May, juveniles vandalized two homes — one of which was for the Matts’, at Baker College in Clinton Township — leaving holes in the drywall, chopped-up cabinets and more. Matt said there was an estimated \$50,000 in damages.

“When I heard about it, I thought I was going to lose the house,” she said.

The home is 1,100 square feet with three bedrooms and one bathroom.

Macomb County Habitat for Humanity President & CEO Helen Hicks said Matt’s qualifications lined up nicely to be in Habitat’s program.

Matt is currently working full-time and living with a relative.

“Habitat has spent a lot of money on this house they hadn’t budgeted for,” Roberts said. “We see our partnership with Habitat as the perfect school-community partnership. We have students that not only learn skilled trades, but they also make a connection with the people they’re building the house for.”

The Matts’ home was built at Dakota High School by district students involved in the construction trade program, along with Habitat staff.

“I care about giving my daughter a future and a healthy environment in a home,” Matt said. “I want her to grow up in a house, not a relative’s home.”

Since the home was on Baker’s property, it wasn’t insured, resulting in rising costs between several moves.

“At Habitat, there’s no handout; it’s a hand up,” Hicks said. “It’s not just someone handing them something. This young woman has worked very hard to get her credit in order and qualify for this house.”

Claire Brisson, Chippewa Valley Schools director of career technology education, said when the district began partnering with Habitat, it hoped that students would gain more than just technical skills.

“Making a difference in the community is no longer an abstract concept but is brought to life,” she said. “That is the gift that Taylor Matt gave our students when she shared her personal journey with them back in October.”

The district began its partnership with Habitat for Humanity during the 2005-06 school year. So far, students have assisted in building 11 homes for Habitat.

Brisson added that the program wants to support efforts to help Matt and her daughter move into their new home.

To contribute, visit [macomb habitat.org/donate/](https://macombhabitat.org/donate/) to make a matching donation from a gift made by the Ford Fund.

Matt thanked everyone who has helped with the project, noting that they're making something possible for her and her daughter that she never thought would be possible.

In addition to donations, Macomb County Habitat for Humanity is seeking skilled workers to help with the final stages of repair and construction of the home. Please contact Habitat at (586) 263-1540.