

stories from the home

Aging with Dignity: Habitat's Impact on Senior Living

October 2024

Catherine Biggus has lived in her home since July 1972. For 52 years, she and her late husband took pride in maintaining the property, where they raised their three children. Even at 81, Mrs. Biggus continued to care for the home, recalling how her husband enclosed their porch, and she recently enjoyed painting the bottom exterior of her home herself.

In 2008, when her husband's health began to decline, he moved into a nursing home. Biggus, with the help of her children, kept up with home maintenance. After her husband passed away, Biggus turned to local resources to help her safely age in place. She sought help from Rebuilding Together, which provided exterior repairs to her porch.

Biggus later contacted Habitat for Humanity of Frederick County's Home Repair program. Her main concern was repairing a ramp for her home's entryway and adding grab bars in other areas. The ramp had originally been installed to help her husband after he became wheelchair-bound, but it also provided safe access for Biggus herself.



Catherine Biggus standing proudly on her repaired ramp.

Biggus reflected on the challenges seniors face in finding resources to help them stay in their homes. She noted how many of the homes on her street had been sold and shared her concerns about the high costs of nursing homes and assisted living facilities through her experience with her late husband.

"If you need anything done, just call Habitat," she said.

The two volunteers not only completed her repairs but also gave her advice on maintaining her ramp through the seasons.

Because of programs like Habitat's Home Repair program, Biggus now has a peace of mind knowing her home is safe, allowing her to focus on other essential needs like her healthcare. The improvements have given her the ability to age in place comfortably, avoiding the worry of having to leave behind her beloved home of 52 years.



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