

KEOWEE KEY COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP (KKCP)



Habitat for Humanity: Neighbors helping Neighbors

Oconee County Habitat for Humanity (OCHFH) founded



in 1986 is an affiliate organization of Habitat for Humanity International. Its purpose is “To demonstrate the love of Jesus Christ throughout Oconee County by working with economically deprived people to help them create a better human habitat in which to live and work.” Governed by a Board of Directors and its committees, they support families and various programs. To date, OCHFH has built 118 houses, rehabilitated 13, and is currently working on eight more in Seneca and one in West Union.

OCHFH builds throughout Oconee County and provides homes to people who currently live in substandard housing, with an income within a specified range related to the median income of Oconee County, and who are willing to put in 250 hours of “sweat equity.” The sweat equity consists of volunteer hours in the construction of their home or someone else’s, working at the Resale Store, or through other volunteer work.

Homeowners typically get a 30-year interest-free mortgage from OCHFH. Mortgage principal, property taxes, and insurance amount to about \$400-\$450 per month and are paid by the homeowner.

OCHFH usually builds four houses per year. Construction is funded by payments on mort-

gages, donations, and proceeds from their Resale Store located at 130 Bountyland in Seneca. This year, they were fortunate to have been selected as the charity for the Keowee Key Men’s Golf Association (KKMGA). KKMGA donated over \$5,000 to OCHFH’s Holzhauser Education Fund.

Named for long-time volunteers and Keowee Key residents, Grace and Bill Holzhauser, the Holzhauser Education Fund (HEF) was created in 2011, by the OCHFH’s Board of Directors to supplement home ownership to include education assistance for adults living in Habitat homes as well as graduating high school seniors. Since its inception, the HEF has given out 194 grants, totaling \$139,370. A good number of homeowners and their children have obtained their GED with the program’s assistance.

One unique aspect of OCHFH is that it is an all-volunteer organization, with no paid employees. About 250 volunteers, work in the Resale Store and assist with construction. Subcontractors with specialized skills are used for HVAC installation, roofing, gutters, and drywall finishing. OCHFH provides the labor, materials, and subcontractors for all the homes built at an average of between \$100,000 and \$110,000 for three- and four-bedroom homes, respectively.

This year, they partnered with Prisma on a build day and also had their first Collegiate Challenge. For the Collegiate Challenge, nine students from Boston University spent a week of their spring break helping build a home in Seneca. In that week, they went from putting in floor joists to installing roof trusses. The students took a half day off and with OCHFH members toured our beautiful area with a hike to two waterfalls followed by a sunset dinner at Chattooga Belle. Another Challenge is being planned for next spring.

OCHFH’s mission was broadened in 2020 after Seneca was struck by a sizable tornado. They jumped into action and collaborated with several churches, the Salvation Army, and the United Way to provide funds, labor, and subcontractors to help repair the damage to 19 homes.

OCHFH is looking for volunteers, not just to build homes or work in the Resale Store. They need people to drive the truck and pickup donated items at donors’ homes; review applications for homes as a member of the Family Selection committee; guide families during the process of getting a home as a family partner; write grants; perform website maintenance; coordinate our

public relations and social media; provide financial training for potential homeowners; coordinate our donations; review education grant applications; organize and coordinate volunteers; evaluate and purchase property to build on, and assisting with the landscaping of homes.

If any of these interest you, please contact one of the following: the Resale Store at 864-888-2118; John Prather, our construction coordinator at jwpratheriii@gmail.com; or our President, Cecil Murray at 574-274-9780 or cwmurray@mindspring.com. Their Resale Store (864-888-2118) would love to pick up your used furniture or other items you no longer need. Sales of these items help to build more homes.

Oconee County Habitat for Humanity is also a partner in the Keowee Key Community Partnership. When you make your donation to help deserving families, please note “KKCP” on the memo line of your check.

Taking a Required Minimum Distribution from your IRA? How to do it tax efficiently.

In the past, one benefit of donating to charity was to help lower your taxes. With the much higher standard deduction now in effect, that’s not necessarily the case. That donation to your church, charity, or food group may do the organization a lot of good, but it may no longer do a whole lot for your taxes.

But there’s a little-known loophole of sorts... if you are over the age of 72.

Once you hit 72, the IRS requires you to withdraw from your IRA, add that amount to your adjusted gross income and pay taxes on that amount. It’s called a required minimum distribution (RMD).

But here’s the thing... Those withdrawals can go straight to charity and you’ll never pay any taxes on them. In fact, the law says you can donate as much as \$100,000 via your IRA annually... and none of it will be taxed. To take advantage of these tax savings, you merely tell your IRA custodian (whatever bank or investment firm holds your IRA) to send your RMD, or a portion of it, to the charity of your choice. You can distribute the funds to as many agencies as you’d like. But the key is that you never touch the cash. It needs to go straight from your IRA to the charity. If it funnels through your bank account first,

KEOWEE KEY COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP (KKCP)

you'll likely trigger income taxes. Here's why this strategy is so appealing for folks who can take advantage of it. Let's say you have an RMD of \$10,000. Normally, that income would be taxable. Even after your standard deduction, you'd likely send several thousand dollars to the IRS. But if you donate it to charity and do some good for the world... you'll also do good for your wallet. That's because you won't pay any taxes on the \$10,000.... you'll have \$10,000 less in overall reported income... and you'll still get to use all of that new standard deduction. Don't want to send all your RMD to charity, then think about sending a portion. Whatever amount you have your IRA custodian send directly to charity will be tax-exempt for you. You can also have your IRA custodian make a check out to the charity, mail it to you and deliver it to the charity. By doing the RMD in this manner, you can identify yourself as a Keowee Key member when you mail it off to the charity, thereby assuring that it will be reported back to the Keowee Key Community Partnership as a donation coming from Keowee Key. The trick

is to have the funds go from your IRA account directly to Charity and not into your bank account. It's a win, win, win scenario.

One of the biggest advantages the Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) rule provides is the ability for taxpayers to lower their adjusted gross income. This is much more valuable than taking an itemized deduction, which merely lowers taxable income. Because Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) is used for many tax calculations, having a lower number can allow the donor to stay in a lower tax bracket, reduce or eliminate the taxation of Social Security or other income, and remain eligible for deductions and credits that might be lost if the taxpayer had to declare the distribution as income.

See the below chart to get a better understanding.

Example:

If you give \$10,000 and are in the 24 percent bracket, your standard deduction (Married Filing Jointly) today is \$25,900, so you get no tax benefit. But, if it qualifies as a QCD, then you get a

\$2,400 benefit. Have your IRA custodian make that donation directly to your favorite charity and both you and the charity you support will win!

Support Local!

Consider local 501(c)(3) nonprofits for your giving: If you are inclined to do some good while lowering your taxes, look no further than the Philanthropy page of Keowee Key's internal website. This page (under the heading, "Member Central") provides links to the donation pages of many of the most deserving, effective nonprofits making a difference today in Oconee County. All 22 charities listed partner with the Keowee Key Community Partnership (KKCP). As such, they commit to spending donations received from Keowee Key members in Oconee County. They also agree to keep track of total donations coming from Keowee Key members and report that sum back to KKCP. They do not provide the names of donors, just how much they have received and from how many donors. KKCP then uses that information to seek matching funds from local businesses. The intent is to generate extra funds for our favorite charities as well as positive publicity for both Keowee Key and the businesses that support our giving. Since KKCP's inception just over three and a half years ago, over \$1,000,000 has been reported back to us as being donated by Keowee Key members and businesses in Oconee County. Wow!

"The mission of the Keowee Key Community Partnership is to improve the lives of the less fortunate in Oconee County by partnering with non-profit organizations making a difference in Oconee County, informing Keowee Key members about them, encouraging their support, and seeking matching funds for members' donations."

As with any financial decision, each person's needs are unique, and you should consult your attorney, accountant, and/or financial advisor before making any decision.

Keowee Key Community Partnership (KKCP) partners with deserving, effective, nonprofit organizations that make a difference in Oconee County. These Partners record those donations from Keowee Key, but report only cumulative results back to KKCP, enabling KKCP to seek matching funds. No individual donor names or donation amounts are ever shared with KKCP by Partners, and no money passes to or through KKCP.

