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National student writing contest now open asking “what does home mean to you?”

NIAGARA REGION, ON Students in Grades 4, 5 and 6 are asked to share what home means to them in a national writing contest that is now open and accepting entries. Three grand prize winners will each receive a \$30,000 grant to help a local Habitat for Humanity build a place to call home for a family in need of affordable housing.

Every local student who enters the Meaning of Home contest earns a \$10 donation towards Habitat for Humanity Niagara. In addition to the grand prize winners, nine runners up will receive a \$10,000 grant for their local Habitat build.

Founded by Sagen™ in 2007, the Meaning of Home contest has raised over \$1.7 million to help build decent and affordable housing in communities across Canada. Over 80,000 students have shared the importance of home in poems and short essays. Last year a record-breaking 12,000 entries were received.

“Over the last couple of years, we have had to change a lot about our lives and reflect on what having a safe, decent and affordable home means to us,” says Christy Guttin, Community Engagement Officer of Habitat for Humanity Niagara. “This contest shows how children can have an impact on their community.”

“Home has been a refuge for so many over this difficult time. Home begins with four walls, but it doesn’t end there. It means so much more – more time with family and a safe and healthy place to study, to grow and to build community,” says Julia Deans, President and CEO of Habitat for Humanity Canada.

“This contest is a valuable learning tool for students to reflect on what home means to them and their family,” says Stuart Levings, President and CEO of Sagen. “As a founding sponsor of this contest, we are proud that the Meaning of Home contest has encouraged over 80,000 students to become more active and compassionate citizens.”

Submissions are being accepted by mail or online at meaningofhome.ca until February 18, 2022. Winners will be announced by June.

The Meaning of Home contest would not be possible without the generous support of Founding Sponsor Sagen and Awards Sponsors Chapman’s Ice Cream, Urban Systems Foundation, and Home Trust.

About Sagen™¹

As a sponsor since 2000, Sagen has donated over \$5 million in support of Habitat Canada and has helped thousands of Canadian families realize their dreams of affordable homeownership. While Sagen's financial support provides crucial funding for Habitat Canada's homeownership program, its support extends far beyond. Throughout the sponsorship, Sagen employees, including President and CEO Stuart Levings and his executive team, have lent their leadership experience, industry knowledge and time to help launch many of Habitat's signature programs, including the Sagen Homebuilding Grants, the Global Village Volunteer Program in Canada and the Meaning of Home Contest. These programs, along with Sagen's support and involvement in them, has significantly increased Habitat Canada's ability to raise funds, recruit volunteers and, ultimately, support more families and build stronger communities. Find out more at www.sagen.ca

About Habitat for Humanity [NAME]

Habitat Niagara builds decent, and affordable homes, providing no down-payment, interest-free mortgages to qualifying families who would otherwise not be able to purchase their own homes. Habitat is not a giveaway program in that we provide "a hand up not a handout." Established locally in 1993, Habitat Niagara is constructing its 71st home in Niagara at the end of this year, serving 77 families over the past 29 years, creating stable and secure housing for more than 270 children.

Habitat for Humanity Niagara also operates a home improvement retail store – the ReStore – selling donated new and used appliances, furniture, kitchens, building materials and home supplies. Habitat for Humanity ReStores play an integral part in Habitat's mission, providing financial support for our work. The Niagara ReStores are located at 2499 Hwy 20, Fonthill, 185 South Service Road, Grimsby, and 150 Bunting Road, St. Catharines. For more information, please visit www.habitatniagara.ca

About Habitat for Humanity Canada

Founded in 1985, Habitat for Humanity Canada is a national charitable organization working towards a world where everyone has a decent and affordable place to call home. Habitat Canada brings communities together to help families build strength, stability and independence through affordable homeownership. With the help of volunteers, Habitat homeowners and 50 local Habitats working in every province and territory, we provide a solid foundation for better, healthier lives in Canada and around the world. Habitat for Humanity Canada is a member of Habitat for Humanity International, which was established in 1976 and has grown to become a leading global nonprofit working in more than 70 countries. For more information, please visit www.habitat.ca.

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