



Habitat for Humanity[®] Northern Region

**Healthy Homes
Programme Evaluation**

February 2023



Acknowledgments

We would like to thank Te Whatu Ora – Health New Zealand who have made this evaluation possible, supported by Healthy Home Initiative Auckland Providers AWHI and Noho Āhuru, as well as the partner families that shared their experiences with us.

The survey, data and case studies detailed in this report are from the period between January 2021 to December 2022.

Enquiries to

Habitat for Humanity Northern
8 Ormiston Road, East Tamaki
northern@habitat.org.nz

Contents

Executive summary	3
Key evaluation findings	4
Alicia's journey	8
Georgia's journey	9
Dominique's journey	11
Jacinta's journey	12
Jessica's journey	14
Kim's journey	15
Matekino's journey	17
Meleane's journey	18
Luticia's journey	19
Social return on investment	21

Executive summary

Habitat for Humanity is a registered charity and Community Housing Provider that supports whānau to build and improve a place to call home here in New Zealand and around the world. We believe decent, healthy, and affordable housing plays a critical role in strong and stable communities.

Habitat for Humanity Northern Region operates across Tai Tokerau and Tāmaki Makaurau (including Waiheke and Aotea/Great Barrier Islands), from Cape Reinga to the Bombay's. We build and manage affordable housing, deliver essential repair and renovation services and advocate on behalf of those in housing need.

Our Healthy Homes Programme (HHP) supports whānau (renters or homeowners) whose poor health can be attributed to living in substandard housing. Habitat works collaboratively with a range of partners including Te Whatu Ora – Health New Zealand, Healthy Homes Initiative (HHI) Providers and alongside whānau to improve their health and housing, as well as reducing energy hardship.

Works and interventions undertaken directly address individual need. This service includes an initial home assessment and a range of minor repairs and interventions that support a warmer and drier home, including a full curtain installation service. We also provide a landlord liaison service and in-home advice on behaviour changes to make homes healthier and more cost effective to run.

Impact Lab's GoodMeasure Social Return on Investment (SROI) report shows significant return for this programme with every \$1 spent on the programme there is a \$6.30 return to society or SROI.

This evaluation is made up of a quantitative survey and a range of in-depth interviews with Auckland whānau to better understand their experiences of the Healthy Homes Initiative. Our team also worked in collaboration with Nevil Pierse, Elinor Chisholm and Philippa Howden-Chapman from Otago University to link in with the wider HHI work.

The purpose of this evaluation is to:

- Understand the impact of the service on both the home and whānau, including health and wellbeing.
- Influence systems change by using results to further our advocacy work
- Secure additional funding for service gaps

The following is a summary of the key evaluation findings and narrative case studies.

Key evaluation findings

Habitat undertook a quantitative survey with whānau who had received Healthy Homes Programme support between 1 January 2021 and 30 June 2022.

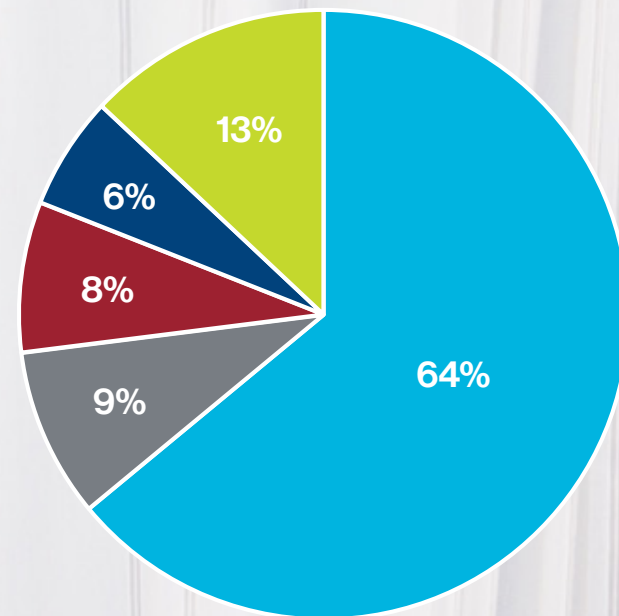
The survey was developed based on previous surveys and in collaboration with key stakeholders. We had a 24% response rate (112 respondents) during the two-week period while this collector was open in September 2022.

Incentives were offered for completing the survey, with the opportunity to win one of four \$250 food or fuel vouchers. Four families were randomly selected for the vouchers.

Families also had the opportunity to put themselves forward for more detailed conversations around their experience.

Ten families were selected, five from each HHI Provider, with one family then declining to proceed. Families were given a \$250 koha once their interview had been completed.

How did you hear about Habitat?



Energy Hardship

63%

agreed or strongly agreed that **before accessing Habitat's service they could not use a heater whenever they needed** because this made their power bill too expensive

78%

agreed or strongly agreed that since accessing Habitat's services **their home was warmer and drier**

63%

agreed or strongly agreed that **since receiving support from Habitat, they can use the heater efficiently** (having less impact on electricity bill) whenever it is needed.

Health

78%

agreed or strongly agreed that since accessing Habitat's service their **overall wellbeing had improved**

68%

agreed or strongly agreed that since accessing Habitat's service their **health had improved**

Education

95%

of survey participants said they had **learnt something new** from the information and education provided

81%

use the hygrometer to help **decide when to use the heater**

68%

said they **did things differently now** to make sure their home stays warm and dry

71%

use the hygrometer to help them **decide when to open a window** (ventilate)

Programme delivery

99% would recommend
Habitat to others

93% agreed or strongly agreed
that **Habitat provided a
great service**

93% agreed or strongly agreed
that **Habitat's service was
easy to access**

Programme service

The three most helpful interventions
people received were:

- **curtains**
- **blankets**
- **heaters**

Programme opportunities

When asked what they would like more
information about, most indicated:

- **home repair and maintenance**
- **beds and bedding**

Alicia's journey

CASE STUDY 1

“ I heard about Habitat while my eldest daughter was in Kidz First hospital. **She had been in and out of hospital since she was born with asthma, bronchitis, pneumonia – the works.** Kidz First referred us to Habitat through AWHI.

Before Habitat came and did the assessment the home was cold and damp. We had been having issues with our landlord, who had been putting off doing any of the Healthy Home standards. My kids were always sick, always in and out of the hospital. Habitat worked with the landlord to get things done, providing us with all sorts of items that kept us warmer. The best thing was the curtains. Before, we didn't have good curtains, so it was cold. Now with them it is a lot warmer. The house was also draughty, so they gave us door snakes and draught stopped around the doors and windows. Now no more draughts!

They also showed us how we can help ourselves, using the heater timer, opening windows to get the air through,

and using the scoopy and hygrometer. We are still using them all. We were so grateful that they really took the time to show us how we can do it better.

The education side was great, it made an enormous difference to our power bills as well, and we don't need as much to stay warm. The best thing is the girls aren't getting as sick anymore. Instead of being in hospital every week with my eldest, it's now once a month and my youngest has only been in hospital a couple of times this year. That is a huge difference.

Before, I had been unable to go back to work as I needed to be either in the hospital or at home with my children, with my partner also having to take time off, now we are getting back to normal.

As a parent it's not about us, it is about the kids.





Georgia's journey

CASE STUDY 2

“My name is Georgia. I live in a rental property along with my four-year-old daughter Evie. Evie had quite bad respiratory illnesses as a baby. In the first two years of her life she was hospitalized three times with back-to-back illnesses. **Every time she got sick, it was a bad hospital level kind of sick.**

When it got colder the draughts would come straight through and Evie would get sick immediately. **In winter it got so bad we would sleep in the lounge.** I did ask our landlord if he would look at changing the curtains. He just said he had already done what needs to be there legally.

Evie would get so sick that no one was sleeping. When she breathed her chest would cave in, which the specialist said could damage her organs. Then I was like, okay, well, what do we do? We got referred to a specialist for her respiratory illnesses, they referred us to Noho Āhuru who work in with Habitat. I was exhausted at the time, not really sleeping very much. Habitat's Healthy Homes Programme

completed a home assessment, providing us with education and items designed to keep the home warmer, drier, and healthier, including double lined curtains.

While they did the assesment they also told us the gutters were full and there was overflow coming down. This meant it was damp and mouldy; all the things a respiratory illness kid cannot be around.

They cleaned the gutters and put up new curtains everywhere which has made a world of difference. Now the draughts don't come in, we can close them around five or six o'clock and the house stays warm.

The main difference is that we can sleep in our rooms again. Getting Evie back into her own room has also meant I could catch up on all the sleep I'd lost. Evie is so much better now, it's easy to keep her warm and there is no lasting damage to her lungs.”



“ I think the service
was fantastic!

- Partner Family

Domonique's journey

CASE STUDY 3

I'm a 34 year old mum of three. My partner and I have been living in this rented property since early 2021 after being in Kainga Ora homes. Our children are ten, six and five.

It was a change moving into a private rental after being in social housing for nine years, it's been a good change but full of learnings. When we moved in here, we noticed there was a lot wrong with the house. The house looked good but was damp. We did not have the heat pump and only net curtains up, so it was damp and cold. Especially the south side as it doesn't get any sun. **It would get so cold in winter that we would sleep all together in one room to try and keep the kids warm so they wouldn't get sick all the time.** Our power bills were high, but what choice do you have?

Our kids were regularly getting strep throat, so the school first referred us to Turuki Health who then contacted Habitat on our behalf. Habitat came

in and did a home assessment and measured up for curtains. When they came back, they brought curtains for the whole house, a heater, hygrometer, scoopy for the windows, door snakes, and blankets. One of the best things they did was teach us how we can dry the house out, to close the curtains before it gets cold and open the windows each day. My kids do this now every morning before school and use the hygrometer to measure the moisture in the rooms. If it is to damp, they know how to open the curtains and windows to dry out.

We noticed a big difference in having the curtains, instant warmth and we no longer lose it straight out the windows. **The best thing is my kids aren't getting sick anymore. They are healthy and know how to help themselves!**





Jacinta's journey

CASE STUDY 4

Jacinta and her family were living in a rental property dealing with mould and respiratory issues. **The living environment had impacted her son's health, with him having to take time off school and sports.** Jacinta also had to pause her studies to care for him. The stress was putting a strain on the whole family.

"We found out about the Healthy Homes Programme when we were living in a place that I knew couldn't meet Healthy Home standards. The thing that prompted me to get in touch was that my kids kept getting sick. There was also a lot of maintenance work in the home that needed to be done. This caused a lot of tension between us and the landlord. We were just going around in circles. We went through so many organisations, moving from one organisation to another.

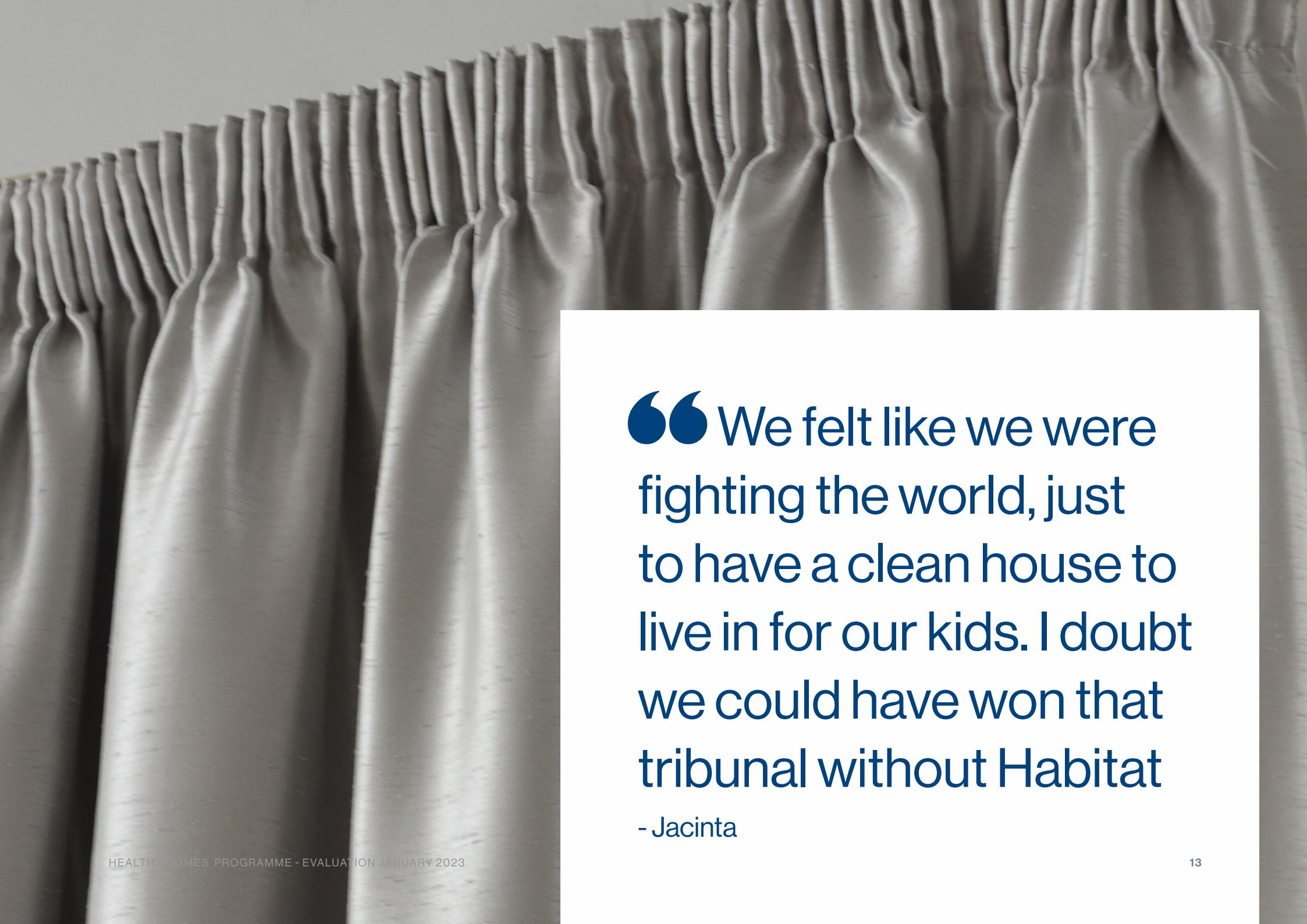
We finally got referred to AWHI who made us aware of the help that was available to us. To be honest, I thought we had to just try and find it on our own.

AWHI then referred us to Habitat and MBIE also got involved. One organisation connected us to the rest."

The Healthy Homes Programme assessment and the hygrometer gave Jacinta proof of the living conditions they were dealing with. This gave her the confidence to advocate and voice her concerns. With the support of AWHI and Habitat her family were able to navigate the challenges with their landlord.

"Honestly, I cannot put in words the toll that house took on us. We felt like we were fighting the world, just to have a clean house to live in for our kids. I doubt we could have won that tribunal without Habitat voicing their concerns. We are now in a new rental where we can thrive. We didn't realise how much our housing conditions were bringing our soul down. Now my children are flourishing."

Jacinta now wants to advocate for others facing the same hardships.



“ We felt like we were fighting the world, just to have a clean house to live in for our kids. I doubt we could have won that tribunal without Habitat

- Jacinta

Jessica's journey

CASE STUDY 5

Jessica's daughter had been in and out of hospital with asthma and respiratory illness for most of her young life. Illnesses that were attributed to living in cold, damp, and draughty rental properties.

The family had been moving from one rented property to another for years.

"I was just a single mother of four kids. Landlords were taking advantage of our situation. There was no security for us, we were always moving and always sick. It just made me feel like I never wanted to move again. **I never unpacked our belongings. I just kept them boxed up ready to move again.**

We had rented quite a few places over the years, all with very similar issues. Not insulated, cold, draughty, and mouldy. When we moved into this one there were draughts through the windows and the doors as well as mould in the carpets. It was the same thing all over again. As my daughter's asthma is a respiratory illness we were referred to Asthma NZ who then put us

onto Habitat. Habitat completed a home assessment, working with our landlord to improve the home.

In every home that we move into, Habitat is there for us. They put up curtains and give us draught stoppers and items to keep the home warmer. Once the curtains went up, you could feel that it was nice and warm. No more draughts. We couldn't feel anything coming through. **It's made a huge difference and has given us peace of mind. My kids don't get hay fever, asthma or eczema, they don't have anything now.**

For people like me, who may be single mums, with poor credit and reliant on benefits, it can be a struggle to find decent, affordable homes for our families. It was nice to know that someone out there was looking after us. They cared."





Kim's journey

CASE STUDY 6

After living with family for years Kim wanted a place of her own for herself and her two children. She moved into what was a temporary home at the time, as it was slated for demolition. Then Covid hit and the family stayed on, with the landlord fixing up what he could to make it liveable for the family of three, but there were ongoing issues with mould and no curtains at all in the home.


“My son’s social worker told us about Nohu Āhuru and the Healthy Homes Programme. When Nohu Āhuru first came into this house, they found issues everywhere, then referred us to Habitat.

Habitat did an assessment of the house, having a look at everything. They gave me a list of issues that I could contact the landlord about, things I did not even know we were entitled to. **The landlord put in a range hood over the oven, and an extractor fan in the bathroom, painted the ceiling and changed out the kitchen**

sink because it was leaking. Through Habitat we received fully lined curtains, they helped me fix the heat pump, and told me how to clean the filters, as well as fixing window latches and power plugs around the house.

Straight away, we noticed the warmth stayed inside the house. And, when it’s hot outside I can have the windows open, draw the curtains and it stays cool inside. **Through the winter my kids had no flus. It has been a big help having the curtains compared to the winter before.**

I feel like Healthy Homes did a really good job and it’s helped. Before I had to run full power all the time just to keep warm. Now, I can only have it on for 10-15 minutes and it’s too hot. Since having the curtains, **the house is much drier, warmer, and it saves me money on my power bill. We love it.**”



“ Before Habitat came into our lives my children were forever getting sick. Our home was cold, damp, and mouldy. Now, we rarely visit the doctors!

- Partner Family

Matekino's journey

CASE STUDY 7

“My name is Matekino. I am a victim support worker at Papakura Police Station. In this home there is me, my partner and my three sons, all aged under five. Over Covid we couldn't afford our rental so had to move in with my sister where all five of us slept in one room for almost a year.

My two sons were sick. They kept getting fevers and had a cough that sounded like a foghorn. I was always taking them to the doctors. I didn't know what was going on. I was taking them to the doctor's every third day. I was so worried, as a mum you think of the worst-case scenario. **They were diagnosed with bronchitis and respiratory illness, then I got pneumonia which was the worst I had ever felt.** It was when we were sick, I started thinking about Healthy Homes because I didn't want us getting sick again. At the time I also had the stress of figuring out where we could live.”

After stints in emergency and then transitional housing, the family got a private rental about 18 months ago.

Matekino was referred to Habitat's Healthy Homes Programme by their social worker. Habitat provided them with educational material, installed double lined curtains, and gave them items designed to keep the home warmer, drier, and healthier.

“We got a hygrometer which we use in our rooms, it lets me know how humid it is inside and at what times. Habitat showed us how to set the timer for the heater. **I didn't know any of those things before. It is so simple. Having the support of the social worker and Habitat was good. It took a lot of stress off me.** From the moment we got the review done; we got the curtains two weeks later. I would like to say Healthy Homes is something to look into, especially if you've got kids.

My kids don't get sick now, which is good because I need to go to work. It is manageable now.”





Meleane's journey

CASE STUDY 8

Meleane's family of ten purchased their home to be close to family. The home was in a bad state, needing repairs throughout, including rotten flooring in the bathroom, exterior cladding along with the kitchen and bathroom needing new tapware.

At the time, Meleane's husband was ill and unable to work, so the necessary repairs were unaffordable. Te Puni Kōkiri supported the family by repairing the bathroom and referred them to AWHI and Habitat. Habitat then recommended the repairs be made through their Home Repair programme.

"At the time I was the only one working and couldn't afford the payments, so we didn't go ahead with the repairs, but Habitat Healthy Homes programme provided us with curtains and taught us how to keep the house warm, along with keeping the house aired so it doesn't become mouldy. My kids are sick nearly all the time, which affects their schooling as well. I have an asthmatic child. Ever

since Covid's come around she has had to have at least one day off from school a week because of her asthma, she gets wheezy. I think it is because of the home.

This house is so bad I am sure if there was a storm or earthquake it would fall down. We are still having ongoing illness. We try and do things, stop the wet and damp from progressing. Owning our own home is challenging, we have our mortgage payments and then the water every month. Everything's just sky high at the moment."

Meleane's story highlights while Healthy Homes interventions can help with keeping homes warmer, drier, and healthier, there are still many whānau falling through the cracks due to wider issues with existing housing stock, funding constraints, and the rising cost of living.

Luteisha's journey

CASE STUDY 9

“My name is Luteisha and I have five children, four who live with me in this rental house. We moved in about two years ago, and I work at a local Kohanga Reo.

We were referred to Habitat by Middlemore Hospital after my son Rocky was hospitalized with rheumatic fever in 2020. The hospital told us that rheumatic fever comes from living in a cold damp environment. **The house felt damp all the time and smelled musty, but we were so desperate to secure a rental we had to take what we could at the time, to be close to schools and work.**

Habitat came and did a home assessment, finding quite a few things wrong with the home. They then sent off recommendations to our landlord. The best part was he didn't have to pay for any of it which was a great outcome for everyone, as everything happened straight away from there.

Prior to Habitat coming we had been sleeping on mattresses on the floor, which wasn't a healthy way to live, but beds were a luxury we simply couldn't afford.

We got beds, a heater, installed double lined curtains, installed smoke alarms, window catches for security, blankets, and best of all, showed us how to air the house out and measure for humidity in the air as well as fixing draughts around the doors and windows. The bonus is we're saving money on our power bills!

Now our home feels warm and healthy, and we are all sleeping much better in our own beds. Life is calm now, so we can focus on other areas of our lives, like Rocky getting fitter and stronger again. This support has changed our lifestyles a lot. I would encourage others to reach out if you need help, there is so much support out there for families.”





“ Our children were often sick, and all the help has improved our kid’s health so much. It has helped me to not feel guilty as a mum for their wellbeing too, so, thank you!!”

- Partner Family

Social return on investment

IMPACT LAB GOODMEASURE REPORT
NOVEMBER 2021



of programme investment

=



in value to society

GoodMeasure Outcomes



Improve Housing

measures costs savings associated with increased housing quality



Increase Academic Achievement

measures increased income and government savings associated with different levels of academic attainment



Improve Physical Health

intrinsic measurement of an improvement in physical health

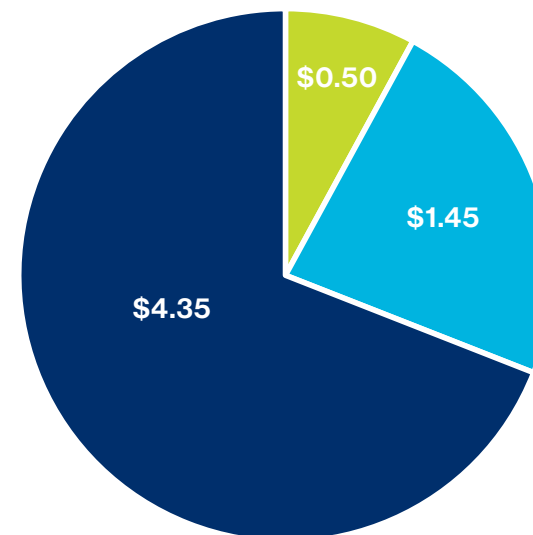


Reduce Asthma

measures income and hospital costs associated with asthma






Aligned to Treasury's Living Standards Framework this value back to society is broken down as:

- Income and Consumption
- Job and Earnings
- Health





he waka eke noa

-  Phone: 0800 422 4828
 -  [habitat.org.nz/northern](https://www.habitat.org.nz/northern)
 -  Habitat for Humanity Auckland / Northland
 -  Habitat for Humanity Northern
 -  @habitatnorthern
-