

**Sunday Column – Forever Home**  
**For publication 5.13.17**

Earlier today I was writing an article for the PAWS Humane quarterly newsletter. I ended by making the statement that, “our work is as much about people as it is about animals”. To work in this field requires a love of people and a willingness to work toward the best possible outcomes for them and their pets.

I suppose that is a big part of what attracted me to Habitat for Humanity. The vision is simple and to the point: “A world where everyone has a decent place to live.” When a member of my church asked me if I would be interested in joining the Auburn Opelika Habitat for Humanity board I couldn’t say no.

There are those who think Habitat for Humanity is a house giveaway program, but it is nothing like that. Our homeowners participate in the building of their homes and they help to build the homes of others. Because many of the materials are donated or purchased at a discount, and because most of the labor is volunteer, the cost of the home is very affordable.

Once completed, the prospective homeowner purchases the home at cost and makes a monthly mortgage payment until the home is paid off. It is the most rewarding experience to be part of this work and to attend a house dedication where the keys are handed off to the new homeowner and family.

Auburn Opelika Habitat for Humanity holds an annual event, called Habitat Around the Heart. This year it is scheduled for Friday, May 19 from 6 – 9 pm at the Bottling Plant Event Center in Opelika.

There will be a cash bar with dinner catered by Chef Jonathan Walker. Live jazz by Cullars Improvisational Rotation will be heard throughout the event. As always, the event will include silent and live auctions. This year you will be able to bid on several vacation packages, including a 3 night stay in a Tennessee mountain cabin, a Sonoma Wine Tour and a trip to Italy.

Tickets for Habitat Around the Heart are only \$35. They can be purchased at the Auburn Chamber of Commerce, the Bottling Plant Event Center, or at the Habitat for Humanity office. Just call the Habitat office at (334) 745-2123. You can also purchase tickets on line by going to [www.auburnopelika Habitat.org](http://www.auburnopelika Habitat.org).

Support a great organization while enjoying an evening you will remember by attending Habitat Around the Heart on May 19.

*Bobbi Yeo lives in Opelika, AL. She is the CEO of PAWS Humane in Columbus, GA, an animal shelter and veterinary clinic offering low-cost spay/neuter and other services to the public. Email her at [byeo@pawshumane.org](mailto:byeo@pawshumane.org) with your comments and story ideas.*