

Family thankful for Habitat home

NIAGARA FALLS, ON – Today, Habitat for Humanity Niagara held a home dedication ceremony to thank its supporters for helping to make the dream of homeownership a reality for Lesley, Lyvie and their three children.

“It’s been an amazing experience to work with Habitat for Humanity,” says Lesley, new Habitat homeowner.

However, the build didn’t start out as planned, because two days before the first build day thieves broke into Habitat’s trailer and stole all of the tools and equipment needed to build the house. Although 25% of the tools were eventually recovered, many businesses and individuals helped Habitat replenish its stock with new tools and financial donations to ensure the house would be built.

After leaving the Bahamas to start a new life in Canada seven years ago, Lesley and Lyvie had little money and were living in a shelter - they left everything behind. Moving from one place to another, they never imagined that they would ever qualify to own a home one day.

Three years ago they applied to Habitat’s homeownership program and at that time didn’t meet the criteria to be eligible for Habitat’s program and were given information to improve their situation.

And they did. They worked hard at it.

They submitted another application, and after an extensive process their family qualified and were accepted into Habitat’s homeownership program.

But owning a Habitat house isn’t as simple as getting the keys and moving into a new home. Families purchase their Habitat house with an affordable, no-interest, no-down-payment mortgage. They contribute to the local economy and pay taxes just like any other homeowner would.

In addition, Habitat homeowners commit 500 volunteer hours, helping build their own homes, and attend a series of workshops to prepare them for the financial obligations and responsibilities of owning and maintaining their home.

“A safe, decent and affordable home gives families the strength, stability and independence they need to create a better life for themselves and their families,” explains Mark Carl, Habitat Niagara CEO. “It transforms the lives of families, especially the children who have improvements in health, happiness and grades.”

“Thank you so much to our Habitat family for giving us the opportunity to make this house our home, especially for our three children to grow up in,” Lesley continues. “Our children are so happy to have a backyard to play together and invite their friends over to play, which is something they never had. Thank you for the hand up. It means the world to us. We will cherish our new home.”

Habitat Niagara couldn’t have built Lesley and Lyvie’s house without the support of individuals, community groups and businesses, and would like to give special thanks to: City of Niagara Falls, Cotton Inc., Dave Wiens Construction, Greenstone Panels, John Deere, Niagara Casinos, Niagara Community Foundation, Niagara Regional Housing, Niagara Peninsula Aboriginal Areal Management Board Building Futures program, Oakridge Woodworking, OPG, Roberts Electric, Scotiabank, and Walker Industries.

About Habitat for Humanity Niagara

Habitat Niagara builds decent, and affordable houses, 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 hand out." Established locally in 1993, Habitat Niagara is constructing its 65th home in Niagara at the end of this year, serving 71 families over the past 26 years, creating stable and secure housing for 248 children. Recently, Habitat for Humanity Niagara was recognized in Maclean's magazine for a second year in a row as ranking in [Canada's best charities 2020](#).

Habitat for Humanity Niagara also operates a home improvement retail outlet – the ReStore – selling donated new and used building materials, hardware, appliances, 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

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