

The Reid family in 2004
on Dedication Day.

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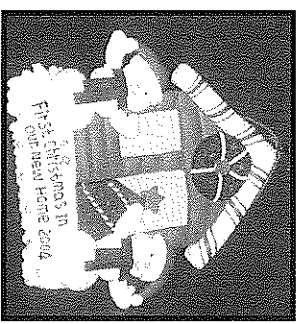
Here at Habitat for Humanity of Greater New Haven, we keep in close contact with the families living in the homes we have built. We thought you might want to know what happens to Habitat families after they move into their homes.

Tangela Reid moved into her Habitat home at the corner of Henry Street and Sherman Avenue, New Haven, in 2004. It's a wooded lot and the house has a beautiful wrap around porch. I visited her this fall in order to capture her story. Tangela greeted me at her door with a smile and showed me her immaculate house. The walls are still bright white and carpet looks like it's never been walked on. "I don't like clutter," she laughed. We sat down and she talked about what it was like to move into her own home.



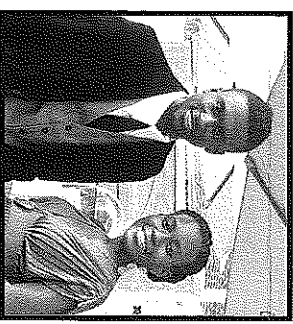
Tangela in her new home today.

Tangela says she did it for her children. "I wanted to show them that having a house and paying a mortgage is worth working for. It's our home and it's a place where we can relax and be peaceful and we don't have to worry." The house quickly became the financial center of their lives. Having a home is "... more important than having cable or a cell phone. This is an investment." Tangela told me what many other homeowners have said, building the house teaches you about construction and it gives you self confidence. Taking ownership brings with it new responsibilities and sometimes, sacrifices. Rather than getting the newer car or the fancy phone, it's important to budget and have a rainy day fund.



Cherished keepsake ornament.

"I grew up when I moved in. This is what being an adult is. Owning my own property, paying a mortgage, creating a home for my kids." Tangela is confident that her kids will become homeowners themselves someday. Tangela's daughter, Erica, is living with her and working. Her son Deshawn is a freshman at St. Joseph's College in Philadelphia. Tangela was beaming with pride when she talked about moving her son to college. She reassured me that he's eating well and getting along with his roommates. "We talk everyday", she said.



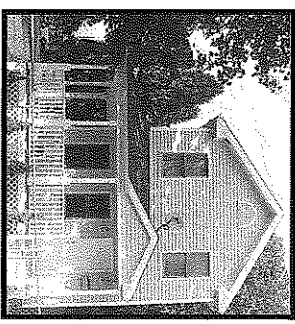
Tangela's children.

The Reid family is like other Habitat families in our community- good families, good neighbors. Tangela was given an opportunity to work alongside volunteers and Habitat to make a better life for herself and her kids, and she took it. Tangela told me before construction got started at Henry Street, Harriet Banks, another Habitat homeowner, told her to go to the lot, pick up a fist full of dirt and pray. "Take ownership over that land," she said, and Tangela did. That first Christmas a co-worker gave her an ornament that said *Your First Home* and that small statement said it all.

Tangela sends a message to the volunteers who worked on the home and the donors who funded it, "I am so grateful for everything you've done for me and the kids. I was so emotional at the Dedication Ceremony that I could hardly speak. I couldn't love my home more. Thank you."

William P. Casey
Executive Director

Eric Fieldal
Board President



The Reid family home.

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