



**The Smith's Story**

The Smiths live on Huntington Street in the Newhallville neighborhood of New Haven in a home Habitat gut rehabbed in 2010. Prior to becoming first-time homeowners, Fred and Nita Smith's quintessential New Haven story together began in 1976 with a blind date at the Educated Burgher on Elm Street, continued with a marriage proposal at the Rusty Scupper, employment at two local hospitals, and raising three kids. The Smiths have deep connections within the Newhallville neighborhood. Fred grew up on Shelton Avenue and they spent nearly two decades living in apartments on Winchester Avenue and Thompson Street. The Smiths were delighted to be chosen for Habitat's Homebuyers' Program, and they were thrilled that the location of the home would be in their old neighborhood.

Fred and Nita believe that owning a home is the culmination of "everything we have worked for all these years and the values we have passed down to our kids. Working hard and never giving up on what is really important in life." After Fred and Nita were selected to become homeowners, Habitat began its efforts to gut rehab their future home. For the Smiths, it was both a daunting process and a life changing one. "I remember that first day when we went to the house to start working. The walls were all torn down, it was freezing cold, and I wondered how it was possible that this would be our home someday." Fortunately, Nita and Fred received the support of hundreds of volunteers from the Greater New Haven community and Habitat's construction staff. Together they fully rehabbed the early 20th century home.

The Smiths are extremely proud homeowners. A special part of the home for Nita is the small foyer. "I tiled that foyer myself. I can't believe I learned how to tile! I feel pride every time I step on that floor." They begin every morning at 5:00 am with a cup of coffee on their small, covered back porch. Nita says, "early in the morning, even when it rains or it's cold, I look

out at the yard and I feel the stillness of the morning. Fred looks out and sees his yard, which we've turned into a garden, and it's ours."

Habitat is the story of providing life changing opportunities, but it is also the story of empowerment. The Smiths work to make Newhallville a better, safer place to live. They have worked hard to make the exterior of the house and its landscaping beautiful. Their home's appearance makes an important positive impact on the neighborhood. "As I make an effort to have nice landscaping in front, so do my neighbors. The other Habitat families around us do the same." Beautification goes beyond their home, however. There are clean up days in the neighborhood. Then there are neighborhood management meetings and smaller meetings with their alderwoman on a regular basis. The Smiths make sure they stay in touch with the families around them to share information about neighborhood happenings. Nita emphasizes how important it is to truly take possession of where you live and not to give in to intimidation. Nita says that anytime a group is hanging out in her driveway or in front of their house and she's not comfortable, she talks to them directly with humor and firmness. She says, "Gentlemen, you will be moving on. We don't have people hanging around in front of the house!" In response, she hears appropriate "Yes ma'am's." "I know those boys' parents," she says, "and they know by now that I will make a fuss." Fear and apathy destroy neighborhoods and the Smiths actively work to combat them. For that and so many other things, we are extremely grateful the Smiths joined Habitat's family.

**"I had people to help me. I also helped myself. Now I help others."**



**Habitat for Humanity**

OF GREATER NEW HAVEN

This holiday season, please donate to Habitat for Humanity of Greater New Haven. An ambitious homebuilding schedule is planned for 2013 and we need your help to accomplish our goals. We want to give more families, just like the Smiths, the opportunity to own a home of their own and become invested in their community.



**Help Us Build Community**  
*...one house, one family at a time*

For more information about **Habitat for Humanity of Greater New Haven, Inc.** visit [www.habitatgnh.org](http://www.habitatgnh.org) or call **(203) 785-0794**

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