

A Thank You Letter from a **Habitat Family**

The Rivera family is one of 121 families who own a Habitat for Humanity home in New Haven County. Each home built by Habitat for Humanity of Greater New Haven is a collaborative, community effort. Habitat homes are built with funds donated from the local community and through the generosity of more than 2,600 volunteers each year.

Michael Rivera vividly remembers getting a phone call in May, 2017 from Habitat for Humanity of Greater New Haven saying that his family had been accepted into the homebuyers program. “I was at work at the time and I started screaming and crying. My boss hugged me and everyone was cheering. I felt like my family had won the lottery,” Michael said.

Michael and Kiara Rivera have two girls, Sorian (age 7) and Kylie (age 1). At the time they applied for Habitat’s program, they were living in a small apartment building in New Haven. While they could manage to pay the rent each month, Michael and Kiara constantly worried about their health and security. The building was poorly maintained, and the lock on the front door was frequently broken. As a consequence, people would enter the building and use drugs in the hallways. The family frequently found drug paraphernalia and strangers sleeping in the stairwells. When a woman was shot and killed outside of their building one night, Michael and Kiara were determined to leave. A family friend told them about Habitat’s program, and they decided to apply.

The affiliate builds in many neighborhoods in New Haven, but The Hill is where more than half of Habitat’s 121 homes are located. There are eight Habitat homes on Vernon Street, and the Rivera’s home located at 45 Vernon Street was completed in July 2018. The home was built with the labor of hundreds of volunteers from the community and Habitat’s small construction staff. Michael and Kiara worked side by side with volunteers from all over New Haven County, and ultimately, they contributed more than 400 hours of “sweat equity” towards the construction of their home and other Habitat homes. Each Habitat home is a community effort to fund and build, and the result is not just a home. It’s also a catalyst for transformation, both for the family who builds and lives in the home, and for the neighborhood and our larger community.



The Rivera girls helping with planting in front of their home



The Rivera family on their front porch ©YNHHS

For the Rivera family, the things that mean the most to them are having a safe and stable place to raise their kids, having a backyard where their daughters can play, being part of a community on Vernon Street, and having a mortgage lower than their previous rent. They are now able to save money each month and they opened college savings accounts for their children. They are experiencing the joy of having a family home that was built with their own hands.

Michael and Kiara sent this thank you message to our organization, directed to our donors and volunteers:

The house means the world to us and our kids. It’s provided us a safe environment to raise our two beautiful girls. We are very excited to spend our first holidays together as a family here. The home provides us stability in the city where I grew up. It means everything to have a safe place for our

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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, call 203-785-0794, or email jrook@habitatgnh.org

\$500 \$250 \$100 \$50 \$35 Other \$ _____

You can make your tax-deductible gift to:
Habitat for Humanity of Greater New Haven, Inc.
37 Union Street, New Haven Connecticut 06511

Check Credit Card: Visa MasterCard AmEx Amount \$ _____

Name (as it appears on card): _____

Card Number _____ Exp. Date _____ Phone _____

Signature _____ Email: _____

Please return this form in the enclosed envelope, or contribute online at www.habitatgnh.org. Thank you!

If you wish to be removed from the HfHGNNH appeal list, please return this form with your request or email jrook@habitatgnh.org

Habitat for Humanity of Greater New Haven does not sell, rent or give away names of donors.



Habitat homes on Vernon Street ©YNHHS

families to launch themselves into a cycle of progress, possibility, and a better quality of life. Homeownership rekindles hope and allows families and our community to thrive.

There are many hard-working families that qualify for Habitat's program in our community. We need your help to serve them. Please help us by donating today.

Habitat News

Habitat for Humanity of Greater New Haven | WINTER 2018

Habitat ReStore: Shop and Donate!

The organization has a donation based retail store (named ReStore), located in Wallingford. Proceeds from the store are used to build Habitat homes in New Haven County. ReStore sells new and gently used building materials, appliances, furniture and household items, windows, doors, cabinets, and more.

Come to the ReStore and hunt for bargains and treasures: 286 S. Colony Rd., Wallingford.

Have items to donate and you cannot bring them to the ReStore? Email your request to restore@habitatgnh.org or text/call (203) 800-5517. We pick up throughout New Haven County and in Clinton and Killingworth.

Become a Habitat Volunteer!

Habitat volunteers are a diverse group of individuals who give their time and talents to further our mission of building affordable, decent homes alongside qualified low-income families in our community.

Construction: Habitat volunteers build and rehab houses from start to finish under the guidance of our professional construction staff. No prior construction experience is necessary and we supply all of the tools and safety equipment needed for a fun and productive day! Individuals and groups of volunteers ages 16 and older are needed Tuesdays-Saturdays.

ReStore: At the ReStore in Wallingford, volunteers help with customer service, merchandise display, price research and other tasks as needed. Individuals or pairs of volunteers ages 15 or older are needed Tuesdays-Sundays.

Office: There are sometimes special projects where volunteers are needed in the office to help with mailings, data entry, or filing. This opportunity takes place during the business day.

Contact our volunteer coordinator at (203) 785-0794 ext. 110 or register and sign up via VolunteerUp on our website at www.habitatgnh.org.

Cars for Homes

Each year our Habitat affiliate is able to help a greater number of Habitat families thanks to donations of cars and other motorized vehicles through the Cars for Homes

children to grow up and be able to enjoy living in New Haven with our own backyard where they can play safely. We are so happy to be in a friendly and safe neighborhood with other neighbors who are respectful and caring to each other. We are truly blessed for this opportunity and the generosity of this organization and all the people who worked so hard to make our family's dream come true. We cannot thank you all enough.

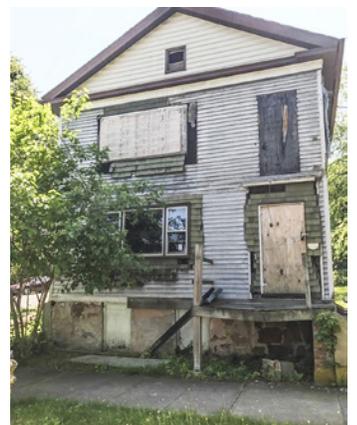
*Many blessings from our family to yours,
Michael & Kiara Rivera*

The Rivera family purchased their home from our organization with a 25-year, zero percent interest mortgage. A typical Habitat home sells for \$96,000 with a monthly mortgage payment of about \$300, excluding insurance and taxes. Owning a well-built, Energy Star certified home provides stability and allows

Program. Help up spread the word: have a car, RV, boat, motorcycle or other vehicle you want to get rid of? All conditions accepted! The program is easy and convenient. Call 877-277-4344 for more information or to schedule a pick up. In return, you will be provided a tax receipt and all proceeds from your donation will help build Habitat homes in New Haven County.

Saving Historic Homes in New Haven

We believe it's important to save historic homes in New Haven and to create affordable housing at the same time. The affiliate has completed 66 historic rehab home projects over the years, and our most dramatic home renovation is underway now. The Merritt Brown home, an oyster captain's home located at 387 Lenox Street in Fair Haven Heights, was built in the 1830s. It sits above the Quinnipiac River in a neighborhood where homeowners have invested their time and labor into restoring their own historic homes. 387 Lenox was in terrible condition and close to falling down when the organization purchased it. By the end of 2018 a Habitat family, the Sanchez family, will be the new owners of the historic home. Watch our website (www.habitatgnh.org) for the announcement of the dedication ceremony in December or sign up for our news blasts on the homepage of our website. This will be a wonderful opportunity to tour a unique Habitat home and meet the family. All are invited!



Top: 387 Lenox Street before renovation · Bottom: Progress happening!