The Malave-Reyes family is one of more than 100 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 2,400 volunteers each year.

Dedication day, the ceremony marking the completion of a Habitat home, at 84 Clifton Street in New Haven last April was a joyous day. Angel and Jahaira and their three children, Nerelyn (14), Angel Jr. (8), and Adrian (4), stood on the porch of their new home and said “thank you” to the crowd for the opportunity to own a home of their own. Seven months later, the Malave-Reyes family’s gratitude and joy has grown even deeper as they experience the positive changes that come with living in a Habitat home.

Angel and Jahaira grew up in West Haven and New Haven. They met as co-workers at Honeywell (where Angel still works, 17 years later). At the time they applied for Habitat’s program they were renting a three-bedroom apartment in New Haven that they could afford. However, as often happens with people living paycheck to paycheck, the tradeoff for affordable rent is often unsafe and substandard living conditions.

Their apartment was located on the first floor of an old, poorly maintained building. The sewer system would back up when the rains were heavy. The plumbing in the building was neglected to the point where the pipes were leaking behind the walls and a serious mold problem developed. They searched for safer apartments with rent they could afford, but obstacles stood in their way: high rents, one of the highest occupancy rates in the United States, a lack of rental units that can accommodate families, and the difficulty of coming up with funds for a deposit. Angel and Jahaira were unable to convince the property owner to fix the plumbing and mold problem, even when they sought an attorney’s help.

Sadly, their youngest son, Adrian, developed severe asthma and other respiratory problems that they and their doctor felt were at least partially attributable to their apartment. Members of their church told them about Habitat’s program and they applied. Angel said, “I didn’t dare hope that our application would be approved. It seemed too perfect and I didn’t want to be disappointed.” After two rounds of applications, a review of their financial and work history, and two interviews, including an interview in their home at the time, the family was approved by the Habitat Board of Directors. Angel and Jahaira described the notice of approval as one of the best moments of their life.

Angel and Jahaira began volunteering at the site of their future home in January, the coldest time of the year, along with hundreds of community volunteers and led by Habitat’s construction staff. Every Saturday Angel, Jahaira and...
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ReStore
In 2013, HHGHNH opened a ReStore, a donation-based retail store, located at 286 South Colony Road, Wallingford. Proceeds from the store are used to build Habitat homes in New Haven County. The ReStore sells new and gently used building materials, appliances, furniture and home improvement items such as windows, doors, cabinets and more. The ReStore has successfully attracted a strong following of customers and donors.

Store hours are Tuesday-Thursday, 10am-6pm and Friday-Saturday, 10am-4pm.

Items may be donated by calling (203) 774-7560 or emailing restore@habitatgnh.org. Pick up service is available for large items.

Volunteer!
Every year volunteers donate thousands of hours to HHGHNH. The support of individual and group volunteers helps us achieve our goal of building affordable, decent homes for qualified working low income families.

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!

ReStore: At the ReStore in Wallingford, volunteers help with customer service, merchandise display, price research and other tasks as needed. Contact the Habitat Volunteer Coordinator at (203) 785-0794 or register and sign up via Volunteer Up on our website at www.habitatgnh.org

Cars for Homes
We are able to help more low-income families thanks to donations of cars and other motorized vehicles through the Cars for Homes Program. 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 877-277-4144 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.

Helping Veterans
In 2015, Habitat GNH launched a Veterans Build program that provides homeownership opportunities for veterans in need. We completed the first home for Cheryl Eberg, a veteran of the U.S. Army and Connecticut National Guard. Construction of our second Veterans Build home will soon be underway. The future homeowner is Michael Doyle, a former U.S. Marine sergeant, who is currently employed by the West Haven V.A. as a Peer Specialist. Mike’s home will be completed by late spring 2017.

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