

# At Home With a Habitat Family

*Patty Lopez Sandoval and her kids are one of 131 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. Patty arrived in New Haven about a decade ago from Guatemala. She was accepted as part of a resettlement program after escaping extreme violence in her local area.*

Patty and her three children, Candy (11), Styven (16) and Miguel (20), moved into their Habitat home in December 2019. Their home is on Sylvan Avenue in New Haven, and near a dozen other Habitat homeowners living on Sylvan and the adjacent Vernon Street.

Patty applied to Habitat’s homeownership program after living for years in a semi-affordable, but poorly maintained and overcrowded apartment. “Four years ago, I had a dream where I saw a house and was told I could buy it for a low price. I looked at purchasing a home through the bank but they were all very expensive and I kept remembering my dream. Two years later I saw a Habitat house being built in New Haven. I attended the next information meeting and I was very excited about the possibility of having a home.”

“I received a call from Habitat one evening to tell me that I had been selected to be in the program. I remember that I was standing in my living room and all I could do was cry. I said “thank you, thank you, thank you. I was so excited; my dreams had come true!”

**How owning a Habitat home has changed their lives:** Patty says, even in the short time they’ve lived in the house, their lives have changed completely. “My kids are now safe. There is now somewhere for my daughter to play and we can all be outside together in our backyard.”

“Habitat helps me to save money because the rent for our last apartment was very expensive. My work hours have decreased because of COVID-19, (Patty is a school bus driver), and I would not have been able to afford the rent if we were still in our apartment. I have been able to pay the mortgage and still have some money left over for a small savings account. When my work hours return to normal, I would like to start saving money for my kids’ educations.”

Home is more important than ever. Candy and Styven are enrolled in New Haven Public Schools. The district is entirely online right now, so both kids do online school at home. Fortunately, they have enough space to spread out in.

Miguel (20), is also studying online from home this semester. He is taking business classes at Gateway Community College. Miguel has decided to become a professional baker and he would like to own his own business someday. The kitchen in their home is now his workshop as he tests out new recipes and decorating techniques and sells his amazing creations to friends and family to help pay for tuition. Miguel was also extremely important in helping Patty to complete her 400 hours of sweat equity as their Habitat home was being built. He was a fast learner on the building site and shared his new knowledge with other homeowners and volunteers.

Since moving into their home, the family has created a patio in the backyard, purchased a grill, put in fencing, and installed a decorative backsplash in the kitchen. Those construction skills gained while helping to build their home have been useful!

Patty purchased her 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 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.



Photos, top to bottom: Patty and her kids (Miguel, Styven and Candy) in front of their Habitat home; Candy attending 5th grade online; Miguel practicing his (already amazing) baking skills.



## 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), call 203-785-0794, or email [jrook@habitatgnh.org](mailto:jrook@habitatgnh.org)

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Name (as it appears on card): \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form in the enclosed envelope, or contribute online at [www.habitatgnh.org](http://www.habitatgnh.org). Thank you!

*If you wish to be removed from the HfHGNH appeal list, please return this form with your request or email [jrook@habitatgnh.org](mailto:jrook@habitatgnh.org)*  
*Habitat for Humanity of Greater New Haven does not sell, rent or give away names of donors.*





# Habitat News

Habitat for Humanity of Greater New Haven | WINTER 2020

## 2020: A Year Like No Other

This year has been challenging for our families, our community, and our organization. What began in January with the groundbreaking of two homes in the Hill neighborhood of New Haven soon came to a screeching halt as COVID-19 spread throughout the country. We were forced to shutter our Habitat build sites and close the ReStore in mid-March. This created delays in construction and reduced needed revenue at our ReStore. We also postponed our orientation for prospective homebuyers, creating more uncertainty for families desperately looking to own their homes while struggling to stay inside overcrowded or unsafe apartments during a pandemic.

In March, we contributed nearly five-hundred N95 masks to Yale New Haven Hospital to help protect their staff while treating patients. YNHH has been our community partner for many years and we were glad to provide PPE

that would normally be used as a part of construction.

While away from the build sites, the ReStore, and the office, our staff and volunteer

committees worked virtually to develop new health and safety procedures, create an online process for family selection, and continue communication with all families in the program. When we re-opened in May we were ready to invite volunteers, donors, and ReStore shoppers back to Habitat.

Unfortunately, the pandemic has negatively affected many of the funding organizations we rely on. Over 70% of our operating budget is reliant on contributions, gifts, and grants, all of which have been impacted. We urge you to consider making a gift this season to help us fund new homes in the coming year.

## Welcome Home!

This past fall, families closed on properties at 2 Button Street, 91 Lamberton Street and 24 Glen Haven Road in New Haven. The pandemic may have delayed the construction of these homes but the joy that was felt at their closings was not diminished. The families contributed more than 400 sweat equity hours on Habitat build sites from September 2019 to October 2020. Looking forward, our family selection committee has just begun the process of selecting our future homeowners whose houses will be completed in 2021.

## New Haven County ReStore: An Important Part of Our Mission

We have become increasingly reliant on the revenue generated by our ReStore in these uncertain times. After retail shopping restrictions were lifted, we were contacted by hundreds of generous donors who have supplied us with items for the ReStore throughout the summer and fall. Our shoppers have responded positively and we have seen sales increase each month since re-opening in May. Our organization has always worked to diversify its funding sources and we look forward to growing the ReStore now and in the coming years.

The ReStore provides financial support for Habitat home building in New Haven County, provides a lower cost alternative to a traditional store, and encourages reuse and recycling by diverting construction, household items, and appliances from landfills. Our ReStore sells new and gently used appliances, furniture, household and decorative

items, kitchen cabinets, and more!

Shop the ReStore located at 286 South Colony Road in Wallingford. We receive new items every day so stop in often for the best selection. Current store hours are available at [habitatgnh.org/restore](http://habitatgnh.org/restore).

Do you have items to donate to the ReStore?

We offer a pickup service in New Haven County and in the towns of Clinton and

Killingworth. Email [restore@habitatgnh.org](mailto:restore@habitatgnh.org) or text (203) 800-5517 with pictures of the items, your name, and location, and we will respond to you. We appreciate your donation offers!

## Volunteer at the Habitat Build Site!

We have already started on two homes that will be completed in early 2021 and we need your help! Anyone who is 16 years of age and older is welcome to join us on our build sites alongside other volunteers and future homeowners. No prior construction experience is needed and we will supply all necessary tools, equipment and instruction. Visit [habitatgnh.org](http://habitatgnh.org) to sign up and review our health and safety protocols, or contact [amangles@habitatgnh.org](mailto:amangles@habitatgnh.org) or (203) 785-0794 for more information.

We have currently suspended volunteer opportunities at our ReStore and our office. You are welcome to check back in the new year to see if volunteering has returned at these locations.

## Cars for Homes Donations

Our affiliate continues to see success in the Cars for Homes program, all thanks to individuals in the community who choose to donate their vehicle to Habitat! All vehicle donations generate funds that are used right here in the New Haven community.

Donating your car, truck, RV, boat, motorcycle or other vehicle is easy. Call (877) 277-4344 or visit [habitat.org/support/donate-your-car](http://habitat.org/support/donate-your-car) to enter your vehicle's information and schedule a pickup. Following the donation, you will be provided with a tax receipt. Vehicles DO NOT need to be in running condition to be donated.

## Habitat for Humanity of Greater New Haven Awarded 4-Star Charity Rating for Third Year

We are thrilled to announce that Charity Navigator (the largest evaluator of charities in the United States) has awarded Habitat for Humanity of Greater New Haven a 4-star rating for the third year in a row. This is the highest rating that can be awarded. We appreciate the hard work from our Board of Directors who helped to make this designation possible and we will continue to be accountable, financially responsible, and transparent in our work in the years ahead.

**Why support Habitat for Humanity of Greater New Haven? We are a locally funded, community-based organization. Since 1986 we have been serving low-income families from our community, and working to stabilize and revitalize neighborhoods, block by block.**

