

# Building a **Habitat** **Home** of Their Own



*Alvan and Latonya Bailey and their two children, Alvan Jr. (14) and Laundyn (6), became Habitat homeowners in December 2021. They join 138 families who already own a Habitat for Humanity home in New Haven County. We talked to the family recently about their journey to homeownership and what it means to them. Here is their story in Latonya's words.*

Our experience with the Habitat for Humanity Homebuying program was a Godsend. From beginning to end everyone involved was very informative, patient, as well as hands on, which made this experience a success. Our living situation before we became homeowners was not good. We lived above a store in New Haven. We could afford the monthly rent, but the trade off was a crowded space, loud downstairs, and people hanging around outside at all hours. It wasn't safe, especially at night. The exit door other than our main entrance was often bolted shut and we couldn't open it. The store had a kitchen and I was always afraid of a fire and that we'd be trapped. The heat frequently didn't work in the winter, and in our son's bedroom, it never worked at all. We had to use a space heater in his room and again, we were terrified about a fire, so his room largely went unheated.

We applied to Habitat's program thinking we probably wouldn't be accepted. It seemed too good to be true. When the organization called with the good news, I was in the shower and my husband burst in to tell me and we were both so shocked. We just screamed and cried.

Building the home was not easy. A lot of the building happened last summer and it was hot! The volunteers were amazing. It's really hard to believe that people who don't know you will come out and work with you during long, hot days, bad weather, hard working days, and everything else. It made us feel like a real part of a community. We are all forever grateful to each and every person who helped us. We feel humbled.

Ever since owning our home we have experienced such a feeling of peace and accomplishment. Our children have plenty of space to play, invite friends over, or just sit on the porch and take in some fresh air in a safe space. We were able to give our son a graduation from middle school party in our yard. We built a little firepit and this fall we're out there roasting marshmallows and having a good time. Our



14-year-old loves to read and he spends a lot of time in his room reading his books. My son's room has heat now. That's the kind of thing that's easy to take for granted, but it's not a given! Our 6-year-old loves to bake in the kitchen with me and she's unicorn crazy. She's decorated her room with unicorns everywhere. She wants a unicorn birthday next year. The basement isn't finished yet, but Alvan already uses it as an escape pad. He enjoys mowing the lawn and I plan to decorate for every holiday. We are excited that Alvan's family is coming to visit us from South Carolina for the first time over Thanksgiving.

These are things we longed to do and we can finally say we did it, thanks to Habitat for Humanity of Greater New Haven, all of the volunteers, our family partner, Pia, the donors, and the whole community.

We encourage everyone to continue to dream, help other people, and keep the Faith. Know that prayers do get answered. We know because we're finally living what we prayed for.

***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.***



Top right: The Bailey Family outside their brand new Habitat Home on Middletown Avenue. Above left: The Bailey Family in their kitchen. The family added the island after they moved in. Alvan and Latonya put their new construction skills to good use when they modified and tiled an island they purchased used. Above right: The Bailey Family on their front porch. Latonya is excited to decorate as the seasons change.

## 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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Please return this form with a check for donation in the enclosed envelope, or contribute online at [www.habitatgnh.org/donate](http://www.habitatgnh.org/donate). Thank you!

*If you wish to be removed from the HfHG NH appeal list, please return this form with your request or email [spurvis@habitatgnh.org](mailto:spurvis@habitatgnh.org)*

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

## Welcome Home!

Habitat's volunteers and supporters made it possible for two families to move into their new homes this past summer. The Tirado Family has settled into their Habitat home on Weybosset Street and the Alrashid Family has been enjoying their new Habitat home on Cross Street. Both families worked very hard to complete over 400 hours of sweat equity, almost all of it on Saturdays, before purchasing their homes. Habitat homeowners Alicia and Aamel are excited for the many memories both of their families will make in their new homes.

We were also able to celebrate this past May with the Bailey and Bayor-Loue Families on Middletown Avenue. Both families closed on their Habitat homes just before the December holidays in 2021 and it was a joy to be back together with them and the volunteers who helped to build their homes. They are only a few blocks away from the Tirado and Alrashid families, and we look forward to building more Habitat homes in the Quinnipiac Meadows neighborhood in New Haven.

We recently accepted pre-applications for our homebuying program and the Family Selection Committee is working diligently to select the families who will build and purchase their Habitat homes in 2023 and 2024. We are looking forward to working with the selected families in the year ahead.



## Starting Now: Habitat Homes on Russell Street

We are thrilled to be starting a three-home project on Russell Street this fall! We have purchased properties at 264 and 257 Russell Street in New Haven, which will eventually become the location of three Habitat homes. 264 Russell Street, which is the future home of Abdullah Wahidi, his wife, and four children, is a large lot that will be split in two to be more manageable for both homeowners and provide space to build a second home. 257 Russell Street will be the future home of Natalie Ortiz and her three daughters. We are excited to start a total rehab of this home built around 1900. The current structure is smaller than the usual Habitat home, so it will be both rehabbed and expanded to have three bedrooms and 1.5 bathrooms. Both families have worked on other Habitat homes and are looking forward to working on the houses that will be their own.

It is important to our organization to build multiple homes in the same area as it stabilizes the neighborhood through homeownership and also helps us to reduce costs travelling between build sites throughout the city. These Habitat houses will join another home we have already completed on this street. Your donation will help to support the construction of these three Habitat homes.



## Volunteer at the Habitat Build Site and the ReStore!

We are always building Habitat homes and looking for volunteers. 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.



ReStore volunteers help to sort, clean, and organize donations, create displays, greet customers, and help with the day-to-day operations of the store.

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.

## Cars for Homes Donations

Our organization continues to see success in the Cars for Homes program, and we were recently named one of the top ten large affiliates in the country for Cars for Homes revenue. We share this honor with, and thank everyone who chooses to donate their vehicle to Habitat! All vehicles 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.

