

# The Wahidi Family A Journey to a Home of Their Own

Abdullah Wahidi, his wife Roona, and their four children—Rahmatullah (15), Assadullah (14), Esmatullah (13), and Waheedullah (6)—recently became homeowners through Habitat for Humanity of Greater New Haven. Their family joined 150 others in New Haven County who have found homes through Habitat’s program. We had the opportunity to speak with Abdullah and Roona about their path to homeownership and the profound significance it holds for them. Here is their story.

Originally from Afghanistan, Abdullah worked with the U.S. government through USAID, while Roona cared for their three children. Facing increasing threats from the Taliban and limited opportunities for women, they applied for immigration in 2014 determined to make a new life for their children. They arrived in the U.S. in 2017.

Life in the U.S. was safer, but it brought new challenges. The Wahidi family spent six years in a cramped, two-bedroom apartment where they welcomed their fourth son. The area they lived in was not safe and there was no yard or greenspace nearby so the kids were rarely outside. With paper-thin walls, the neighbors would complain if the kids made noise inside the apartment. *“I didn’t know what to do”,* Roona said when describing how difficult the situation was, *“I watched my kids become depressed and unhappy. It was really hard to keep them quiet all the time and they shouldn’t have to be. It was a very difficult time for our family.”*

Abdullah applied to Habitat’s Homeownership Program in November 2020 and in January 2021, he received a life-changing phone call. *“I remember I got the call from Habitat saying I had been accepted into the program and for the first time, I felt like I could have a home for my family”,* Abdullah said. *“As soon as they told us the address for the house, my wife and I went to see it and immediately said yes!”* For two years, Abdullah worked on other Habitat homes, gaining valuable skills and understanding of the construction process while he waited for the construction of his own home to start. He contributed to building seven Habitat homes, including his own, and finally moved his family in earlier this year.

The peace and safety of the neighborhood have profoundly impacted the Wahidi Family.



The home is close to the kids’ school, and while the home is a modest size, the family is thrilled with the extra space. The kids can spread out and do their homework, something impossible in their rental, and the yard is a cherished part of their home. *“It might seem small to someone else, but having a place for the kids to run around and play ball and just be themselves, has changed everything. My kids are so much happier now. They can be kids. Our whole family is happier. We have found our place. I didn’t know if that would ever happen. It means everything.”*

Owning their Habitat home has transformed the Wahidi’s view of what community means. For Roona, coming to the U.S. gave her the opportunity to pursue higher education. Now that she has a stable home and her kids are settled, she feels comfortable doing so. *“I am now attending Gateway Community College and my goal is to become a medical sonographer.”,* Roona said, *“My parents back in Afghanistan and my kids are so proud of me.”* For Abdullah, he believes that Habitat’s program is not just about having a house, but also being part of a larger community of people who care. He remains inspired by the spirit of the volunteers he worked with. *“These people didn’t know me or my family, but it didn’t matter. I thought my community in America was the group of people who came over at the same time as our family did. But my community is much bigger than I thought. We built a house together. I want the volunteers to know that the home is everything to us. Thank you.”*

MANY HARD-WORKING FAMILIES QUALIFY FOR HABITAT’S PROGRAM IN OUR COMMUNITY. WE NEED YOUR HELP TO SERVE THEM. PLEASE HELP US BY DONATING TODAY.



Top: The Wahidi Family Habitat home. Above: The Wahidi Family outside of their new home at their dedication ceremony. Inset: The youngest Wahidi son, Waheedullah, ready to play ball in his new yard.

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...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 [spurvis@habitatgnh.org](mailto:spurvis@habitatgnh.org)

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## Our First Zero Energy Ready Home

We are excited to share that our most recently completed Habitat home at 35 Nelson Street is our organization's first Zero Energy Ready home. The new home of U.S. Army Veteran Christ Anes and his family has a unique floor plan with the living space all on one floor. This highly efficient home has Energy Star-rated appliances and lighting fixtures, an electric heating and cooling system, and an electric heat pump water heater. The walls, attic, and floor system are also insulated to top standards. Not only are Zero Energy Ready homes environmentally friendly, but they are also extremely low-cost for habitat families.

## A Habitat Home on the Shoreline

Thanks to a generous donation of land by Kent and Susan Allen, we are excited to announce that in 2025, we will be breaking ground on our organization's first Habitat home in Madison. Kent grew up in Madison and he and his family strongly desired that a portion of his family's land allow another family to experience the stability of owning their own home. We are thrilled to not only partner with the Allen Family but also with longtime community sponsor Raise the Roof who has sponsored 21 Habitat homes so far. We are still in the planning and site preparation stage but hope to begin construction in Spring 2025. Follow our Facebook page for updates on this exciting project and ways to get involved.

## Volunteer with Habitat

Have you always wanted to volunteer with Habitat? Now is the time! We offer volunteer opportunities on our build sites alongside Habitat homebuyers and our staff as a group or an individual. No construction experience is needed. We supply all necessary tools, equipment, and instruction. We also have opportunities at our ReStore where volunteers help to sort, clean, and organize donations, create displays, greet customers, and help with the store's day-to-day operations. Volunteers must be at least 16 years of age to help on the build sites and at least high school age to volunteer at the ReStore.

Visit [habitatgnh.org](http://habitatgnh.org) to sign up or contact Allison at [amangles@habitatgnh.org](mailto:amangles@habitatgnh.org) or (203) 785-0794 for more information.


## Cars for Homes

Donating your car, truck, RV, boat, motorcycle, or any other vehicle through the Cars for Homes program helps us build homes in the New Haven community. Vehicles do not need to be in running condition to be eligible for donation. Call (877) 277-4344 or visit [habitat.org/support/donate-your-car](http://habitat.org/support/donate-your-car) to provide your vehicle's information and schedule a pickup. Following your donation, you will receive a tax receipt. Your contribution makes a significant impact in supporting our mission.

## Shop our ReStore

The ReStore offers a wide selection of new and gently used household items, including furniture, appliances, lighting, cabinets, vanities, and more. The funds generated from ReStore sales are channeled into supporting Habitat's homebuilding program in New Haven County. The ReStore is a great place to donate your items to a local cause or hunt for household treasures.

A pickup service may be available for your items. To donate, please call or text the donation line (203) 800-5517 or email [restore@habitatgnh.org](mailto:restore@habitatgnh.org) to schedule a free pickup. We pick up in New Haven County, plus the towns of Clinton, and Killingworth. To shop, visit 286 South Colony Road, Wallingford, CT 06492.

 Check out our Facebook page and website, or join our email list to learn about upcoming Habitat homes, ceremonies, and all things Habitat for Humanity of Greater New Haven.

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Top: The completed Zero Energy Ready Home at 35 Nelson Street.  
Above: A model of the future saltbox-style Habitat home, designed by architect Duo Dickenson, that will stand in Madison. Civil engineering provided by Michael Ott. Structural engineering provided by Tom DiBlasi.

