

future homeowners

The Baez Family

When you spend time with the Baez family you begin to see how loving and close-knit they are. As Habitat CFC talked with them about the path that has lead them to become Habitat future homeowners, it is clear that the whole family has been part of the process. As they answer questions, they finish each other's sentences and agree wholeheartedly on how they are feeling about the fact they will soon become homeowners.

Andres and Norelia Baez had been living in the United States for over two decades. The couple met in Bridgeport twelve and a half years ago. Andres from Puerto Rico and Norelia from Colombia, had mutual friends in the Hispanic community that brought them together. Twelve years ago they married and soon their oldest son Josue (11) was born followed by Samuel (9). Over six years ago, Norelia watched as a co-worker applied for a Habitat house and was accepted into the program. "We thought it was a great opportunity, and so we applied," said Norelia. "But sadly, we weren't accepted into the program."

"We realized that Habitat was the only opportunity for us to buy a home in Bridgeport, so we worked harder to get our application in order and applied again," said Andres. "The second time, Habitat accepted us and then we knew we were on track to living in our own home!"

The boys both attend Cesar A. Batalla School. Josue, a 7th grader, likes science and Samuel, a 5th grader, is interested in technology. "Our new house will be on Clinton Avenue, right by our school. We will be able to still go there and keep our friends," said Josue. Besides excelling in school, the boys love sports and are active soccer play-



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ers. Currently living in a two bedroom apartment, when asked how they feel about getting their own bedrooms soon, the boys looked surprised. "We really get our own rooms? That's awesome!" exclaimed Josue. "All of these years, we never had a backyard and my brother and I can't wait to have space for a trampoline. I've been thinking about that, but I didn't realize I will have my own bedroom too. I can put up all of my sports collection and make my room the way I want it to look."

"For me, knowing that we won't have to worry that the interest on our mortgage will go up over time makes me feel secure and know that we can continue to afford our house as we pay off the mortgage," said Norelia.

"All of the hard work we put into our 500 sweat equity hours will allow us to get a Habitat mortgage with zero percent interest, but we also learned so much working on building Habitat homes," said Andres. "And the education classes we attended have taught us how to plan for homeownership."

Norelia added, "We know that because of the way the houses are built with energy efficiency in mind, it will help us keep the cost of our utility bills lower so hopefully we can save for our sons' educations. We appreciate everything Habitat has done for our family."



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