



Norma Catota

Building with Edward Jones Region 86
and the Presbytery of East Tennessee

Even a mask cannot hide Norma's joy when thinking about how she is building and purchasing a safe and affordable home. Her eyes light up as she talks about her new home and how it will change the lives of her husband and children. Norma, along with her husband Samuel and their three children Samuel (13), Heighlee (10) and Cristian (2), are ecstatic to build a home of their own this spring—a milestone this family has worked so hard to achieve.

Having moved to the United States from El Salvador 13 years ago, Norma says she is ready to have a home "for my babies." This home will provide the space they desperately need to study, play and grow.

Norma and her family of five currently live with her mother-in-law in a two-bedroom house. Having more space and enough bedrooms for everyone is not only crucial for Norma's growing children, but especially for this entire family's stability and health. During the pandemic, both Norma and Samuel have reported to their essential workplaces, as Norma works in manufacturing and her husband is a construction worker, while their two older children attend school.

However, despite their steady jobs and how hard they work to support their family, Norma and Samuel are still unable to afford a conventional mortgage. Therefore, they are weathering the current health crisis in a very cramped situation.

A situation no hardworking family should have to face when trying to stay healthy in a pandemic.

Facing the affordable housing crisis that has affected so many working families in our community, Norma was encouraged by a Knoxville Habitat supporter to apply for the program and was accepted. Now, as part of the 500 hours of *sweat equity* she is earning (through the homeownership education program), Norma attends weekly budgeting classes where she learns to manage her finances and prepare for the momentous opportunity of becoming a homeowner.



Once the family is moved in, Norma looks forward to cleaning her home (an activity she enjoys and will, no doubt, take pride in!) and having a yard where her kids can do the things they love most: spending time outside and playing soccer.

With the support of Edward Jones Region 86 and the Presbytery of East Tennessee, Norma's family will be blessed with opportunities they never imagined.