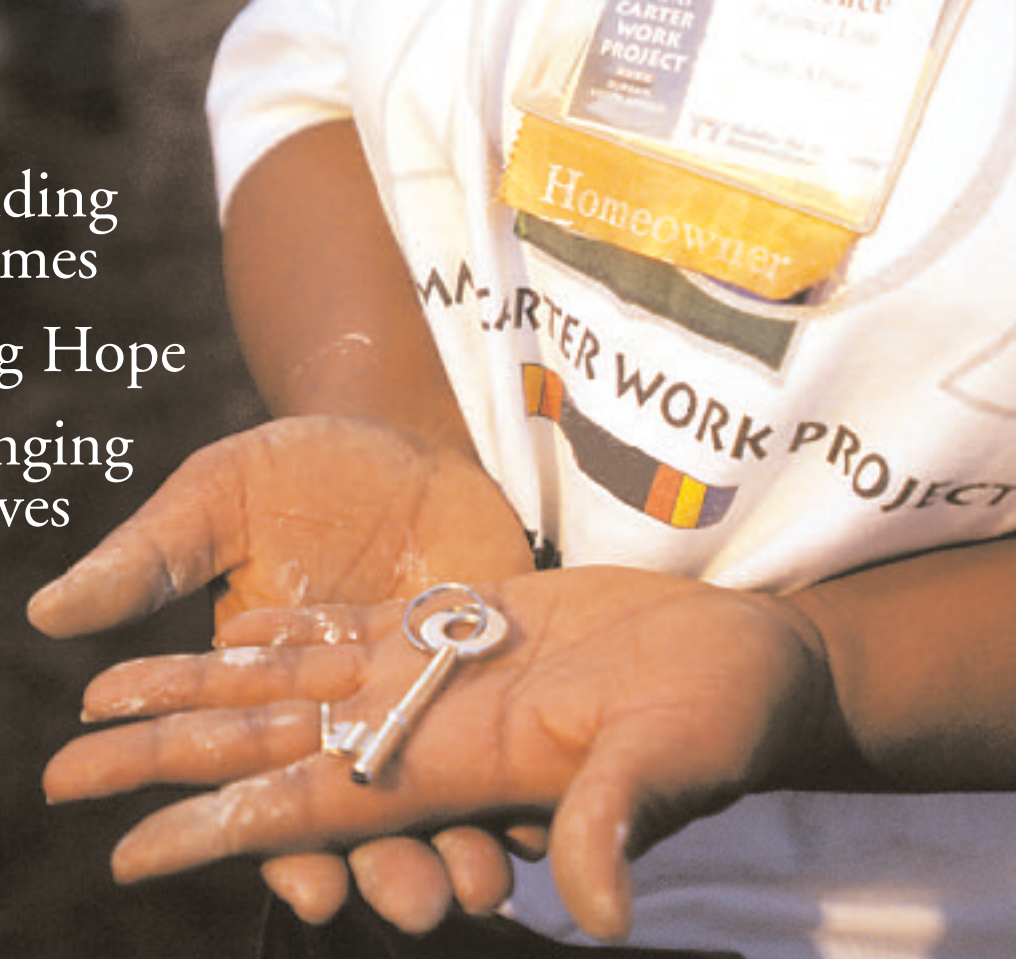


Building
Homes
Sharing Hope
Changing
Lives



Ruth and Felix Reyes share a two-bedroom walkup apartment in Lawrence with their four children, ages 9-14. Space is so tight that the living room has become the master bedroom, and the kitchen is the only place the entire family can gather. There's no yard to play in, and the cramped quarters have brought more than one child to tears. But the rent is still a hefty \$800 each month, plus utilities.

Thanks to Merrimack Valley Habitat for Humanity, the Reyes family will move next summer into a completely renovated, late 19th-century house in South Lawrence. It has four bedrooms, two baths, and a kitchen, living, and dining room. It will cost about \$600 per month, plus utilities.

How is this possible? Habitat for Humanity. The family will pay a no-interest, 25-year mortgage to Merrimack Valley Habitat, which will in turn apply their payments toward new or renovated houses for other deserving families.

"It's a dream come true," exclaims Ruth, an energetic teacher's aide who is attending night school so that someday she can have her own classroom. "We're very low income—my husband works and I work and we manage to deal with the food, the rent, and everything."

Ruth, 34, and Felix, 45, are immigrants from the Dominican Republic. Felix, who works in the food-service department of a Methuen hospital, came to the United States as a boy of 11; he brought Ruth to Lawrence as his bride in 1990.

Every Saturday, the couple rise early to feed the children breakfast and head to work on their new house on Market Street, where they have already put in 300 of the 500 hours of "sweat equity" required of every Habitat family. Felix spent his summer vacation working at the house, and he has asked for tools for Christmas.

From left to right:
Dan, 10; Israel, 13; Ruth and Felix; Nathalie, 9; Felix, 14.

The four children can't wait for moving day to arrive. Dan sketches plans for a birdhouse that will look just like the new home, while Nathalie dreams of a pink room fit for a princess. "It means a lot to us," young Felix says quietly.

Our mission is to build affordable houses, at no interest or profit, in partnership with God's people in need. Since 1985, we have built or renovated 52

homes in the Merrimack Valley for families earning between \$20,000 and \$40,000 a year. **We build new homes so deserving families can build new lives. Will you help?**



Did you know that \$20 will buy a 30-pound box of nails? Or that \$150 will finance the purchase of one window? One exterior door costs \$250, and \$500 will buy bathroom fixtures. An entire house can be carpeted for \$1,000 or wired for \$5,000. In our area, one house costs about \$85,000.

We need people to volunteer their labor, donate materials, offer their professional services, and—most important—give money. Please take a moment now to help families like Felix and Ruth's by writing a check or contributing online. In this labor of the heart, every dollar truly makes a difference.

60 Island Street, Lawrence, MA 01840 978-681-8858
www.merrimackvalleyhabitat.org



Serving 22 Communities in the Merrimack Valley



20 Ways YOU Can Help

Since its founding in 1976, Habitat for Humanity International has built or rehabbed more than 200,000 houses worldwide in its effort to eradicate poverty housing and homelessness. Working through 2,100 affiliates in every state and more than 100 countries, Habitat has provided safe, decent housing for more than 1 million people. It does this through unique partnerships of volunteer builders, skilled craftsmen, individual donors, faith communities, businesses, and the prospective homeowners themselves.



Building a house for a deserving family is not just a matter of bricks and mortar. We need many different skills and talents to make affordable housing a reality in the 22 towns and cities we serve.

Through Merrimack Valley Habitat for Humanity, you can:

1. Pick up a tool and help build a house
2. Donate moving, trucking or hauling services
3. Plant a garden at a Habitat house
4. Participate in a youth construction project
5. Help your company establish a matching gift program
6. Videotape or photograph a Habitat event
7. Solicit "in-kind" donations
8. Donate building materials
9. Stuff envelopes
10. Organize a group to come build with us for a day
11. Use your language skills to translate for families who don't speak English
12. Donate land for a new Habitat house
13. Write articles for our newsletter
14. Host a "Learn About Habitat" event for your friends
15. Start a high school or campus chapter of Habitat
16. Ask for gifts to Habitat in lieu of birthday presents
17. Put your programming skills to use on our Web site or office computers
18. Donate your professional expertise in law, financial planning or accounting
19. Organize a car wash, bowl-a-thon, or walk-a-thon
20. Let us use your excess warehouse space



**Call us now at 978-681-8858 and tell us how you can help!
Or visit our Web site at www.merrimackvalleyhabitat.org.**

You may donate online or send your tax-deductible donations to: Merrimack Valley Habitat for Humanity, 60 Island Street, Lawrence, MA 01840

This brochure was printed at cost, with creative services donated by Elwell Design and Kathleen Clute. The Reyes family photo is courtesy of Robert Boyd Photography.



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