



The Abiyou's Story:

We are so happy and excited because we moved from apartment to apartment many times for the last three years.

We are a family of five and were living in two bedrooms in a small apartment. Now the children are so, so happy to have their own room and garden, which was their dream. Their question was "When can we have our house and invite our friends?"

We will have bible study at home, and we are thinking to bring our parents over to visit our kids now, because they have never seen them.

We trusted and hoped the Lord would make a good future for our kids!



THE BROOKS FAMILY:

My name is Adrienne Brooks and I grew up in Baltimore Maryland. I was married at the age of 24 and had my first child at 26. I am now 57 years of age with four children and one grandchild. My son still lives at home and attends Harford Community College. He is 18 this year and is just learning independence.

I have been living in Harford County for 20 years. I always wanted to settle in this area but was unable to due to hardships and the economy. This is when my life started getting back on track, still struggling but hopeful.

My co-worker owns a Habitat home and was talking about it one day. I wanted to know more and started researching Habitat for Humanity online and asking my co-worker questions about applying. The next day I walked out of the office where I work and in front of me sitting at a cafe table was a Representative from Habitat for Humanity. Imagine my surprise, I was so excited I could hardly wait for her to finish speaking with the person whom she was with. When she was through I introduced myself and she gave me her card. The rest is history. Not long after I am now approved and will be moving into our very first home together.

This has lifted such a huge burden from our family. It was impossible to keep up with the expenses of everyday life and a son in college. I was drowning in a sea of desperation when Habitat threw me a line and rescued me and gave us hope of living an affordable lifestyle.

I want to thank everyone who helped my family along our journey.

Blessings and Love, The Brooks Family



THE DIAZ FAMILY:

Hello, my name is Delia Diaz, native of Harford County, single mother of six.

I have been in the Property Management field since July 2000 and have plans and dreams of starting my own business one day.

Abuse was no stranger to me...it started before I was born, because I was conceived from a rape. Abuse continued from the age of 5 to 12 years old.

Who would have thought that I would have my right mind today! Nobody but God. I dealt with abusive relationships for many years. I got married and suffered mental, verbal, physical and emotional abuse. In prison in my own home which control and fear kept me from leaving. I was tormented daily, accused falsely, items of sentimental value were taken from me, and the list goes on.

One day I decided I was not going to put up with the abuse any longer. He would not leave the house which meant my children and I would be homeless, if I was to make a healthy decision to break this cycle. We slept in our cars, and we were placed in several shelters. I made up my mind that I would stay single until Mr. Right came along and find me.

There was a time in my life that I had low self-esteem. I did not love myself. I was told that no one would love or want me, and many other negative things, however, I have come to love myself, sounds crazy to say right? However, there are people today that are in the same place I was in and that is not a comfortable place to be.

I am persuaded to allow God to take control of my life; he has changed me and freed me from the abuse and control which I would not wish on my worst enemy.

Having the opportunity to be in a place where I am eligible to become a homeowner through Habitat and not ever having to worry about anyone putting me and my children out of our home, being homeless, sleeping in our car, throwing away everything we own, means the world to me...a blessing from God.

I would like to say Thank You in advance to everyone who has made this happen for my children and me.

Thank you!

THE GREGORY FAMILY:

Hello my name is Tamara Gregory. I am a 32 year old single mom of an awesome 11 year old boy named Stepvan. I was born and raised in California and moved to Maryland after I graduated high school.

In 2001, I graduated from Medix Dental Assisting School. Soon after I was married and raising my son on my own while I dealt with a husband in and out of jail as well as infidelity issues. It didn't take long before I knew that I could only count on myself to make sure we had a roof over our heads and food on the table. I reached my breaking point when my marriage continued to fail and we divorced in 2008.

Over the years renting only became more and more expensive and hard to bear. I decided to give up the home we were renting in October 2012 so I could save up to become a home-owner. Being a single parent with a decent career such as my own made it impossible to get any type of financial assistance.

At one point we house hopped with all our necessities in the trunk of the car we even packed our lunches out of the trunk. After about 4 months of being vagabonds I asked my best friends parents if they would allow my son and me to stay while I was undergoing the process to become a Habitat homeowner. By the grace of our Lord and Savior, they accepted and have been my biggest support system through this whole transition.

My son and I have been such soldiers through this whole transition!! I always wonder, as a mother, if the life I have



shown him was best but I look back and see nothing but showing my son that we are overcomers and can take on anything we want as long as we strive for it!

I learned about the Habitat program from my office manager Kim she said, "Tami you should totally apply" so I did and I am so grateful to have done so. I went for orientation in January 2013 and left crying because I knew it would be a long process because of my debt. I just wanted a stable home to raise my son on my own again.

Habitat linked me up with Harford Community Action Agency and I met my budget counselor "my bestie" Yvette whom I adore for sticking by me through this process. Believe me, many times I

cried because it felt like it was taking so long and I wanted to be done. I can now say I am debt free after 1 year!! Yvette kept me on track and showed me the tools I needed to accomplish my goals I quickly learned there is light at the end of the tunnel!

I know through my Heavenly Father that I am truly blessed to have this opportunity to finally pay off , without him and my support system I would not be where I am today and I am truly grateful for the strength to be the overcomer that I am!!!

*"There's no place like home."
-Dorothy-*

Finding a place that I can call my home has been a long and emotional journey for me. However, through this adventure, I have gained a multitude of life skills and insights. I have met some wonderful, selfless people whose dedication and kindness have changed my life in a way that I never dreamed possible, and I have grown immensely through this process. It has been an enlightening and insightful adventure that I put my entire heart and mind into. As a profession, I work in a homeless shelter. I work the late shift from 7pm-7am on Saturday and Sunday nights. Yet, I have never had a place to call my own home.

Three years ago, I was a candidate to receive a home through Habitat for Humanity. I was living in Cecil County. Though hard work and dedication and what can only be described as blood, sweat and tears, I was ecstatic to know that I was going to at last have a place to call my home. I was crestfallen when my landlord of three years informed me that I needed to relocate from my current home, as they were selling the house where I rented an apartment. I only had five weeks to find a place, raise money, and move. I only had a small fixed income. For ten months I was left with no choice but to rent rooms from different people I knew. After some time, I found an efficiency apartment. I called Habitat for Humanity to let them know I had found a stable living situation. I was devastated when I found that I had to restart the whole process all over again in order to be eligible for the program. My misfortune of having to jump from place to place had hurt my financial situation and I needed to clean up my finances in order to be eligible for a home. I set up an orientation meeting with Deb G. I was referred to a financial coordinator in order to



resolve my financial issues. I worked with the financial coordinator and just short of a year into the process, I suffered another horrible setback when I found everything I owned was destroyed by a fire in a storage unit. The next day, the financial coordinator informed me that she was sending my file back to Habitat. Working with the wonderful financial coordinator, I achieved the incredible milestone of being able to live on a budget and make regular deposits into my savings account.

It's difficult to describe my emotions when I was informed by Deb G. that she received my file and I could now move forward on becoming a Habitat homeowner. Several months later I received a call from Deb informing me that underwriting had approved me. She offered me a home. At

that point I was over the moon! She offered me a brand new, three-bedroom home at 408 Charlestown Place, Charlestown, a sweet little home on a quiet street, in a safe neighborhood. I was speechless. It was an extremely emotional moment for me. I gratefully accepted my new home. It's unimaginable to think what it is going to be like living in my own house. Previously my life consisted of moving from room to room, and for two years I was in a small cramped one room apartment. It's a miracle! This is truly a dream come true. Words cannot express my deepest heartfelt gratitude to each and every volunteer who worked to make my dream come true by building me a home. I would like to extend a gracious thank you to construction engineers, contractors, everyone in the Habitat office and all volunteers. There is a saying "home is where the heart is." I feel like I have been given the beautiful gift of a place to rest my head and to put my heart.

Thank You!!!! And may God bless each and every one of you. You will be a part of my home and remain in my heart forever.

Linda F. Holmes

THE MORALES FAMILY:

John Morales & Jeanette Chavez

The home ownership process has moved quickly for this family and they so deserve it.

John and Jeanette and their 3 children, Shakile, Jordan and Nashalay currently live in a two bedroom apartment that is not working for them. The two older boys share a room and Nashalay has been sleeping in the living room on a sofa.

The apartment is too small and during a home visit by members of our Family Selection Committee they noticed some things that posed potential safety hazards, such as no smoke detectors, some sewage problems and electrical issues. Portions of their bathroom have mildew and are actually soft from a leak issue and attempts to have it corrected by apartment management have been non-responsive at best. Despite their best efforts to keep their home spotless, they also had issues with infestation because the building as a whole wasn't exterminated.

They are a hardworking, loving and faithful family who didn't see a way out of their circumstances. A friend of theirs from church who purchased their home from Habitat for Humanity, shared with them a little about Habitat's home ownership program. John contacted the office, they attended an Orientation and now they are actually neighbors with their friend! They put in a lot of hard work in between to get where they are, but they are constantly thanking God for this new beginning.



THE PIMENTEL FAMILY:

After experiencing numerous traumatic, abusive and painful experiences in life, including the loss of my husband, I was ready for a change and ready for a home. I was ready to take control of my life to offer a better future to my loving boys Lorenzo and Alonzo.

Habitat for Humanity Susquehanna played a big part in this journey by connecting me to the resources needed to build not just a house but to build hope and a home. I was determined to complete a career and be a homeowner. Today, I am a successful nurse and a future Habitat home owner. Thanks to Habitat for Humanity, my family and I will have a place that we can call home.