

# 2017 HABITAT HOMEOWNER STORIES

## Mary's Story

From the time I was a little girl I always envisioned my life to go a certain way, but I have learned that life doesn't always go the way we plan. I have always been an ambitious, goal-oriented, hardworking individual. I excelled academically and was always active in sports. While in high school I was involved in 2 accidents that caused me to no longer be able to play sports. After high school I decided to postpone attending college due to some minor surgeries and wanting some time-off to recover. However, during this break is when I became pregnant with my son. After my son was born I worked as a waitress while attending school to become a certified pharmacy technician. A few years later I had my daughter. During my pregnancy I lost my job and my car due to unforeseen circumstances. This was one of the most difficult times of my life. I struggled trying to put food on the table, hoping I had enough diapers, and not knowing if I could find a ride to get the bare necessities for my children. There were times when my phone was disconnected and I just prayed for someone to stop by and check on us. My mom and friends were there for me, but sometimes my pride would get the best of me and I was embarrassed to ask for help. As I look back now, I know that God always made a way even though I didn't trust in Him all the time. Those times are what made me stronger and are what helped mold me into the woman that I am today.

I started working 2 jobs, but I knew that it could only be temporary. I went back to school and started taking online classes. I completed my school work while my children were either sleeping or had their cheerleading, football, baseball, dance, and/or soccer practices. I obtained my Associate's Degree and a week later, I was promoted to my current position. My children continue to play sports and always make Honor Roll. They actually both regularly get straight A's. We have been actively involved in our church ever since becoming members 3 years ago. God has opened up our eyes, answered prayers, and created opportunities that we would have never imagined. I am thankful that through all of the struggles we faced, there were still so many blessings. Thankfully, my children have always been able to experience things that they've wanted regardless of our struggles. Now we will finally be able to live in a house that we can call "Our Home". It seems so surreal, but we thank God and we thank Habitat for Humanity Susquehanna. This house shows that hard work pays off and that anything can happen if you set your mind to it and truly believe. We are looking forward to setting and achieving our next goals.





## Amanda's Story

After having my daughter, we were left with nowhere to live but back home to my parents where there is no space. My daughter is 19-months old and is a very happy go lucky baby. Right now we share a small bedroom. I dream about fixing up her own room with her own space.

I'm a hard working single mother who just wants the best for me and my daughter. I chose Habitat for Humanity Susquehanna because it is an amazing program. I feel that it is an amazing opportunity to get the chance to experience this and feel as though I'm not stuck and hopeless. The fact that there are people out there willing to help people who are struggling is a great thing.

## Tiara's Story

Before I had my girls, I wasn't sure if I would ever have children because I was told by doctors I may never conceive following a car accident where I broke my pelvis at the age of three. Then in January 2007, my oldest daughter was born. As a 20-year old, I was working two jobs, attending College and juggling being a full-time mom.

To better take care of my daughter, I transitioned into working one job and attending evening classes for an Associate's Degree in Early Child-Care Development. Life then was difficult, but looking back it was easier then than it is now.

In 2011 I got married to a wonderful loving man because I was the love of his life. In February 2013, while pregnant with my second child, I became a foster mother to my fourteen year old sister and another baby girl who needed a forever family. We were able to adopt her before her first birthday.

By the end of 2013, I went from being a mother of one to a mother of three beautiful little girls. It is my dream to take care of them and give them every chance to be a kid and help them learn as they grow up.

On May 29th 2014, a man out drinking made a bad decision to drive under the influence and hit my husband as he was walking home from work. This took away the opportunity for my children to grow up with two parents.

In 2015, I attended an information session by Habitat at Village at Lakeview Apartments where I learned for the first time about the Homeownership program. It is my dream to raise my girls in a home that is well structured, organized, and safe for my children. Therefore, I'd like Habitat to work with me because they believe in providing homes for families like mine.





## Jennifer's Story

When I was very young I was diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder and as most children with that diagnoses I was placed on medication. This medication caused many side effects which caused me to have some personality oddities and tics; needless to say I was not well received by other children and had a difficult time making friends. I was bullied through much of my childhood which left me feeling alone and rejected. I was an only child and spent most of my time with my parents. Along with having ADD, I was found to have a learning disorder which in itself gave me many challenges throughout school, and still does as an adult. I am proud to say with much perseverance, I was able to complete my AA degree at Harford Community college. I found that when I could work it was difficult to keep any job since I was needed at home. Both my parents had developed health problems and I was needed to help them and do most of the household tasks. My father was placed in a nursing home in 2011 and my mother became reclusive and depressed. My mother died unexpectedly in 2014 with a massive heart attack. Losing my mom was a very difficult time for me, since now I was left alone to take care of the house while my dad was in a nursing home. After my mother's death I realized that I needed to start reevaluating my life. I knew I did not want to die with a heart problem like my mother, so I decided that I needed to lose weight. I started exercising and watching my diet, which was not something I

was used to. I decided to join a gym and walked there every day before I went to work. I stuck to this routine for over a year and am thrilled to say I lost 102 lbs and have been able to keep it off watching my diet and walking daily.

I started working at Walmart in 2013 and was able to maintain myself in the house with some financial help from my father until my father died December 2015. This was very devastating to me realizing that now; I am really alone as I have no extended family other than an aunt and uncle. Not only was I devastated from the loss of my father. I soon received the news that the house I had been living in most of my life was not mine and was being foreclosed on by the bank. I also learned that from a water leak last year mold had developed in the basement, which is causing an unsafe environment. Being told I have to move I became very afraid. I know I needed to find a place to live and I knew as a single woman with one income I am limited on the places where I could safely live, and I became very scared of what I was going to do. It is so important to me that I have a forever home that I can feel safe in. I heard about Habitat for Humanity from a very dear woman named Teresa, who is a current Habitat homeowner. I was so excited that I applied right away. I am hopeful that the committee will see that I would be a good candidate for the Habitat Program because I am a hard worker and even though I work at Walmart, I am proud that I do the best job I can to make a difference to the customers and staff. I feel as a Habitat partner I will bring the same positive attitude to the program and the same stick-to-it attitude as I did when I lost the weight and when I lost my parents. It has not been easy and I know I have to keep my chin up and I know I need to keep going, trying to do and be the best person I can.

## Yoseph and Betlehem's Story

Before I came to the US, I was married with a son, living in Ethiopia and had a good job. Then I won a Diversity Visa Lottery and was able to come to the US. It was my dream come true. I lived in my Uncle's house, worked two jobs and after saving some money I was able to rent an apartment where my family and I currently live. I was still looking for a home that would someday be my own.

One day when I was talking with a good friend of mine, he told me he know someone that could help us get a Habitat home. We worked with a representative through the process, until we were pre-approved for a Habitat home.

We are currently working on the financial literacy classes and sweat equity hours and as soon as they are completed, we can move into our home. We can't wait for this to happen!

We choose Habitat because it's a non-profit organization that I know will benefit us. We have learned so much from Habitat for Humanity Susquehanna. I know if we can do it, others out there can do it too.



## Afsaneh's Story

My family's experience with Habitat for Humanity Susquehanna first started with my son who volunteered a few times to help build on site. We are also friends with the Derimakers, a current partner family of Habitat Susquehanna.

I applied because I want to be able to give my children a home to return to in the future. I am a single mother with two sons, Sepehr and Sahand. I support our family by working two part time jobs at 40 hours a week making it difficult to see my children, especially with them being at school then work. In 2009, I separated from my abusive husband and tried to support myself in our home. Unfortunately we lost the home due to a building fire. After my divorce was finalized I was left with basically nothing. I did not receive any alimony and very minimal child support. I was able to start renting a small two bedroom, 1 bath condo but soon will no longer be able to afford it because when my son turns 18 the child support stops.

I would love nothing more than a home for my son to return to during breaks and weekends home from college. I also want a home so that my youngest son will have a safe and secure environment to grow up in. I have turned to Habitat Susquehanna to finally be able to afford our home, remain in one place, and give my children a safe and stable place to return to.



## Lisa's Story

My journey with Habitat began about two years ago. It has been filled with learning, working hard, excitement, dedication and blessings. My road has not been easy as a single parent, but I have always worked hard to make sure my kids had what they needed. This has taught them how to appreciate the value of a dollar. I would like to express my gratitude to Ms. Dee from APGFCU for working with me on repairing my credit so I could continue the approval process to become a partner family. It took over a year but she kept telling me to hang in there and be patient and my blessings will come. To hear the words "YOU ARE APPROVED" was a dream come true for my family. I never thought in a million years that we would be chosen. I have rented since my children were born and had to move several times due to the rent constantly increasing. This has been rough on my youngest son who has an intellectual delay and does not handle changes very well. I have talked with him about having a new house and he tells me he is excited. I will finally have a huge relief lifted off my shoulders knowing that we will have an affordable mortgage. My middle son works full time and my oldest is a full time college student at Morgan State University. We can't wait to help build our home along with helping other partner families in the process. I am so proud of each of my children and look forward to making many memories in "our" new home. Thank you to everyone at Habitat for Humanity Susquehanna for making our dream a reality. – Lisa



## Brandi's Story

I chose Habitat because I am a single mom of a 3 year-old little boy. I wanted a place that will be just ours. Paying rent for an apartment that I may end up having to move from was not what I wanted for my son.

I want security for my son, and I want a chance for him to grow up with a yard and in a town where he can make friends for life. I learned Habitat was coming to my work, so I got an application and started my journey.

I am so excited for me and my son to be in our house!

