

Partner Family

Now more than ever, Help Build It!



Building Change

The Thornhill Family



"No matter what sort of difficulties, how painful the experience is, if we lose *hope*, that's our real disaster" – 14th Dalai Lama

In 2016, Sharon Thornhill's life changed forever when her son Shane was murdered. Before his passing, she

made him the promise that she would take great care of his two daughters. Shortly after, Sharon gained sole custody of both granddaughters and started moving place to place to find a home. It was a grief-stricken time for the Thornhill Family, but Sharon kept hope.

Two years ago, the Thornhills moved to West St. Tammany Parish, where Sharon works as a teacher. She currently rents an overcrowded, sub-standard apartment with her granddaughters: 15 year old Jaelynn and 7 year old Gracie. Everyday Sharon worries about the health and safety of her family. The family is constantly sick due to the extreme mold in apartment, resulting in many missed days of work and school. The complex is unkempt and although Sharon has voiced concerns nothing is ever done about her complaints. With neighbors constantly fighting and lack of intervention from property management, Sharon is apprehensive of her girls being in such a hostile environment.

Frustrated with the state of her housing, Sharon looked for other options but could not find anything that could fit into her budget. Angry, tired, and resigned Sharon thought there was no answer in sight, until one day she learned of Habitat for Humanity St. Tammany West (Habitat STW). That same day, Sharon visited the St. Tammany Homeownership Center where she had her first meeting with housing counselor Jennifer. That day she learned of an organization with the mission of building homes, communities, and hope.

Sharon partnered with Habitat STW for the ability to purchase a beautiful, affordable home with a 30 year zero –interest mortgage. During the program she must complete 300 sweat equity hours by working on construction sites, working at the Habitat for Humanity St. Tammany West ReStore and completing 60 hours of homeownership education courses.

It's a lot of hard work balancing her job and the homebuyer program, but Sharon stays motivated by knowing she will be fulfilling her son's promise of providing a safe home for their girls. Jaelynn and Gracie are looking forward to having their own rooms and Sharon believes the stable environment will improve their performance at school.

"Life will be so different after moving into our Habitat home," Sharon states. "It will be the last time my girls will ever have to move. This house is going to alleviate so much stress and anxiety for my family. We'll finally have a place to call our own, a place where our mail can be sent. The girls are over the moon about having their own rooms and can't wait to invite friends over. The first thing we're going to do when we move in is throw a party for all of our friends and family.

The Thornhill Family home will be funded by the proceeds of the Habitat STW ReStore. Habitat for Humanity ReStores are home improvement stores and donation centers that sell new and gently loved furniture, appliances, home accessories, and more to the public at a fraction of the retail price. The money raised through the Habitat STW ReStore helps to ensure that everyone in our community has a decent and affordable place to call home. Habitat STW is very thankful to all the donors, shoppers and volunteers who helped families in our community realize their dream of homeownership.

"To all the volunteers- thank you," says Sharon. "I cannot express it enough. You all are just angels with a special kind of heart. I appreciate everything you do. Without you, it wouldn't be possible for my girls and I to have the home we so desperately prayed and hoped for."