

Habitat Homebuyer

Now more than ever, Help Build It!



Building A Future

Edward Dowling



“If this is a dream, don’t wake Paw Paw up,” says Edward Dowling.

Ever since being accepted into Habitat for Humanity St. Tammany West’s Homebuyer Program Ed Dowling has been working towards his dream of homeownership.

For 12 years Ed served in the military until becoming a professional musician who entertained audiences with his trumpet playing for Princess Cruise Lines. Unfortunately, Ed was diagnosed with an artery disease that ultimately resulted in the removal of both of his legs. He underwent prosthetic surgery and became a wheelchair user. Due to this change, Ed was no longer able to continue his duties on the cruise line and had to quit.

After this major life change, Ed moved from place to place trying to find a better living situation. He currently lives in a very small apartment that is not handicap accessible. He constantly crashes into things in his home and feels unsafe using certain amenities. His shower is angled and does not have grab bars for proper support and entry. His cabinets are also too tall making it hard for him to navigate his own kitchen. To not feel comfortable in one’s home is extremely frustrating, which led Ed to search for other housing options.

One day he received a call from another Habitat affiliate with available rental places, however, his goal was to work towards owning his forever home. The affiliate forwarded him to Habitat STW where he visited the St. Tammany Parish Homeownership Center to learn more. He immediately applied and was approved to start his journey.

As part of the homebuyer program, Ed must complete 300-400 sweat equity hours that include working at the Habitat STW ReStore, building on the construction site, and attending homeownership education classes. He is currently completing most of his hours at the ReStore and is loving the experience.

“I have a day gig now!” he says with excitement. “I absolutely love working at the ReStore. I mostly work on merchandising and organizing items. It’s been wonderful working with everyone at Habitat. As an organization, they have very high standards for their employees and it shows. Everyone who works at Habitat truly cares about the people and it makes the experience even better.”

After completing the program, Ed is looking forward to moving into his new home with his feline friend “Mouse.” By working with Habitat STW, Ed will have an affordable monthly mortgage and finally own a home that is handicap accessible. The first thing he will do after moving in is play his trumpet and fly the American flag that he’s owned since 1974. He is also very excited to christen his “American Dream” with a good old fashioned BBQ in his backyard.

“To everyone who has ever donated to Habitat, volunteered, or shopped at the ReStore; thank you and God Bless,” says Ed. “You are truly changing people’s lives and doing great work.”