

# Habitat Homebuyer

*Now more than ever, Help Build It!*

## Building A Future

*The Bickham Family*



"God made a way".

This is what Courtney Bickham says whenever you ask about her current journey to homeownership. Courtney lives in a 2 bedroom, 1 bath apartment with her

children: 11-year-old Mason, 8-year-old Zyria, and 4-year-old Tre'Von. The apartment is extremely overcrowded and each year the landlord increases the rent.

Already rent burdened, Courtney knew she had to make a change in order to find affordable housing for her family. She learned about Habitat for Humanity St. Tammany West (Habitat STW) through friends and decided to apply for the Homebuyer Program. In order to advance into the program she had to improve her credit. It was a tedious process, but she persevered with motivation from Habitat STW Housing Counselors and knowing that owning a home would enhance her family's future.

"Mr. Kevin told me to keep pushing and that's what I did," says Courtney. "I knew that it would all pay off in the end. Just to see the smiles on my kids' faces when we can finally move into our home."

With the help of the St. Tammany Parish Homeownership Center, Courtney improved her finances and became a Habitat Homebuyer. A sitter for My Purpose Community Services, Courtney juggles working full time, taking care of her family and completing her 300-400 hours of sweat equity. She is enjoying every single minute of working at the ReStore, building on the construction site and completing Homeownership Education classes.

"I really enjoy all of the classes," says Courtney. "We get to learn a lot of new skills that prepare you to become a homeowner. It's really nice that we can bring our children to the classes because they can become familiar with these skills as well. A class that really stood out was the Fire Safety and Prevention Class. The families were able to be really hands-on during the presentation and I'm glad my kids were able to experience it."

This will be Courtney's first time being a homeowner and she cannot wait to move in. Her children are very excited to have their own rooms and finally have a personal backyard to play in. The first thing they will do is decorate each room based on their personalities. "To me home is a place that's just for me and my kids," explains Courtney. "A place where we can all be comfortable. It's going to bring us all closer together and definitely minimize stress. It's what we've been dreaming of."

Habitat STW has been selected as one of three recipients of the 2019 Northshore Home Builders Association's "Raising the Roof for Charity" Raffle House. With the purchase of a ticket for \$100 you could win a beautiful 4 bedroom, 3 bath home located in Southern Oaks in Madisonville, Louisiana. Proceeds from raffle tickets purchased in support of Habitat STW will go towards the construction of the Bickham Family Home. If you would like to purchase a ticket in support of Habitat STW and Courtney please visit <https://habitatstw.org/2019-raffle-house>.

"Thank you so much to all the volunteers and donors. You don't have to do this, but you are," says Courtney. "You're truly putting a smile on our faces and making a difference in our lives."