

Habitat Homebuyer

Now more than ever, Help Build It!

Building A Future

The Keyes Family



In her 27 years, Laura Keyes has had to do a lot of waiting during life changing events. As a young child of separated parents, she moved around numerous times waiting for the day when she would finally be placed in

her father's care.

In August 2016, Laura, along with her young son, D.J, had to evacuate the rising waters in her Hammond apartment during the Louisiana Floods. Unfortunately, the flooding sufficiently damaged her home. After losing everything, she then had to wait for relief funds before trying to piece her life back together as best she could.

Shortly after, she noticed changes in her son's behavior. A graduate from Southeastern University in Early Childhood Education, Laura observed that D.J was falling short on his development and showed behavioral traits of autism spectrum disorder. After conducting developmental evaluations and waiting for results, D.J. was diagnosed with autism. No longer willing to wait, Laura knew it was time to be proactive and make a change to better her and her son's life.

To accommodate to her son's schooling and therapy schedule, Laura switched jobs and is now an ABA Line Therapist at the Spears Learning Center. She currently lives with her Nanny and her sister where she must share a room with her 2-year-old son. With the need for home visits from therapists, Laura worries about disrupting the rest of her family and she dreams of having her own permanent place that she and her son can call home. She has searched for housing in the community to stay close to

D.J's school, but could not find any that wouldn't leave her rent burdened. One day D.J's therapist mentioned Habitat for Humanity St. Tammany West as an option. Laura applied and soon partnered with Habitat in order to not only build a home, but the strength, stability, and self-reliance she needed for her future.

"To me home is a stable, safe environment" says Laura. "I want to be able to provide my son a stable home, especially since it takes awhile for him to get used to new places. I feel guilty for moving him around so much, so the next move we make will be for good."

Although it is tough being a single, working mother and juggling sweat equity hours, Laura's biggest motivation for completing the program is her son and knowing that he will have a better life because of it.

"I started having a stable childhood once I moved into a stable home, and I just want D.J. to have a great childhood as well," says Laura. "The first thing I'm going to do when we move into our house is take a picture of DJ in his new home. Then, I'm going to start tracking his height on the wall, since we've never been able to do that in our other houses."

Habitat for Humanity has been selected to be one of the recipients of the 2018 Northshore Homebuilders Association's "Raising the Roof For Charity" Raffle House proceeds. With the purchase of a ticket you could win a beautiful 4 bedroom, 2 bathroom home in The Estates at Watercross, valued at \$415,000. Funds from the Raffle House ticket sales will go towards the construction of Laura's Habitat home. If you would like to purchase a raffle ticket in support of Habitat for Humanity St. Tammany West and Laura Keyes please visit habitatstw.org/2018-raffle-house.